

some period or other, and that I had put that memo. upon it about the new wall to be built, and that this was the plan they sent back to me and it was enclosed to Mr. Kensington

77. Who sent back?—The Corporation must have sent this back. It was handed to me, I believe, by one of the juniors, and enclosed in the letter. That is all I can tell you about it, but I have just the recollection of writing that on a matter in connection with a Corporation document, so that after I had written it it must have gone on, and was in the document they sent back to me and which went to Mr. Kensington.

78. You notice on that plan you added with a pen and have written "Government section"? —Yes, what is said here is "New wall for street to be built here by Corporation. Section taken over by Government."

79. Was that intended to convey the impression that the wall was to be built along the front of the Government section, and thus carry out the projected street-widening?—I understood that that was the new wall to be built by the Corporation.

80. On the front of the Government land?—I do not know.

81. You would not have written that statement, "New wall to be built here," if it was intended to be built anywhere else?—I should not think so.

82. And you are not quite clear whether you intended the Department to believe that was where the wall was to be built?—No. I want to make it quite clear that if I had the least idea that the Government had any misconception of the position I should have made the position very plain. There was no intention to deceive the Government. So far as they are concerned, they have been paid an amount in excess of the value of the land.

83. *The Chairman.*] It did not concern the Government where that was?—Not in the least. It was purely a matter between the Corporation and the owner.

84. *Mr. Fisher.*] The only question is, the section was asked for street-widening purposes, and the words would give the impression that some of it was to come off the Government section, which was never contemplated. I suppose you have not had any chance or means of proving that your visit to Mr. Kensington was a solitary visit, and that you were not accompanied by anybody?—No; but I am quite sure that I never interviewed Mr. Kensington except by myself. I am quite sure I never interviewed him otherwise—at least, I have no recollection of it. And I am quite sure His Worship the Mayor and myself were never there together.

85. Have you any recollection of my raising the question about the 4 perches the city was to have obtained? You remember I raised it on the 8th June?—I remember something being said which I think was reported in the paper. I am not a member of the City Council, and I was not there, and I do not pay much attention to the criticism and observations passed there. It is like observations in the Legislature.

86. *Mr. Witty.*] I should like to ask: in the first instance, when you sought this land, it was purely a business transaction on his part. There was something to gain by acquiring this as a business man?—Which piece?

87. The 6 perches?—No; I should never have had my attention directed to the matter had it not been for the Corporation being anxious to go on with the matter, and my architect telling me that I must have land if the Corporation were going to take 4 perches away, or have the whole matter recast.

88. You say you were never in Mr. Kensington's office with the Mayor?—Oh, no! absolutely never.

89. If the Mayor says you were with him he was mistaken?—Seeing Mr. Kensington personally? On one occasion I was with the Mayor. The only occasion was when we went up to the office to see about this 4 perches, but Mr. Kensington was not there then. Mr. O'Neill, the Chief Clerk, was.

90. Was there any agreement between you and the Mayor as to sharing any profits?

*The Chairman.*: I do not think that is a fair question.

*Witness.*: I think that is a very proper question. If there is any idea in the minds of the Committee that the Mayor had any interest in my land matters in Woodward Street I want to at once disabuse the Committee. The Mayor has never had the faintest interest, nor has any conversation ever taken place about it; and it was a matter of amazement to me that there should be a shadow of such a suspicion in connection with Mr. Hislop.

91. *Hon. Mr. Mills.*] I understand you to say, in answer to Mr. Fisher, that you had not been with the Mayor at Mr. Kensington's office at all?—No, except when we went up one day after this discussion in the City Council about the 4. We went to have a discussion about the plan, and I saw Mr. O'Neill, the Chief Clerk, and asked to see the plan.

92. You and Mr. Hislop did visit the office on one occasion?—On that occasion. We had no business except that.

93. On that occasion when you were there, did you see Mr. Kensington?—Oh, no! he was not there; I think he was away. I asked the question if he was in, but he was not in. I think he was away up country somewhere at the time.

94. I thought it might be a misunderstanding between you on the date?—Oh, no! It was the only occasion I was ever in the Lands Office with Mr. Hislop, and Mr. Kensington was not there.

95. *Mr. W. Fraser.*] Following the question put to you, what was the date of that later visit when you and the Mayor went to Mr. Kensington's office?—It was after the matter had been brought up in the City Council.

96. This year or last year?—This year.

97. During 1908?—In 1908. It was quite a recent occurrence.

98. You stated that you did interview Mr. Kensington on the 29th April—at least, somewhere about the end of April?—Somewhere about that date—prior to the 2nd May.