

223. *The Chairman.*] I should like to ask Mr. Ussher whether the slip at the back of the north wing—the old slip, I think it is called—whether any quantity of that was removed while the excavations were being made at the back of the building, or subsequently?—I should say it was cut through more than removed. You are alluding to the depression of the ground.

224. No; I mean above the slip?—No.

225. Since the back part was excavated has this given trouble?—This, I understand, has been widened out a little, to admit of greater width between the airing-court and the toe of the slip.

226. Well, when that back trench was excavated, did this slip give any trouble then?—You mean by travelling towards it?

227. When the excavation was made, did it result in that slip having to be shored up or any quantity of stuff removed?—I do not think there was any large quantity of this removed.

228. Was the stone filling in these trenches put in by your orders?—Yes.

229. What sized stones were ordered to be put in?—Well, as regards specifying the size of the stone, there was no specified size given, but they were good large boulders—I suppose running from 10in. to 12in. They were mixed more or less; the large stones were put there with smaller ones.

230. Do you think such a drain likely to remain permanently open?—You mean, would it not silt up?

231. Yes?—I supposed the space was sufficient between the stones to allow the water to percolate through.

232. *Mr. Mountfort.*] Was there no field-pipe put down in any of these stone drains, or was it thought that it was not wanted?—Yes, that was the reason.

233. Your answer is that a field-pipe was not put down because it was not wanted, in your opinion?—Yes. We did not think it required any pipe. I presume you mean tiles?

234. No; a 6in. or 8in. pipe?—Well, we took it there was quite space enough among the stones to allow the water to percolate through. It has a good fall—a very heavy fall—given to it.

235. *Mr. Skinner.*] I should like to ask a question in reference to the drains. The drains, I see, are not specified. Did the Government put in these drains from the ground-level?—Which are you alluding to?

236. I am alluding to the general drains throughout—all the drains from the ground-line?—Yes, they were put in.

237. By whom?—By the Government, I take it to be.

238. My reason for asking is this: I see they are not specified in the specification. Of course the water must be taken away somehow. Whose business was it to do so?—One plan was submitted by Mr. Lawson, showing the general scheme of taking away the foul and the clean water.

239. That was not in the original contract?—It was put in by the Government.

240. Subsequently?—Yes.

241. *Mr. Mountfort.*] Following up that question, did the drainage-works immediately follow upon the fixing of the downpipes, or were they allowed to go on shooting their water into the ground for any length of time?—I am not in a position to answer that question.

242. *Mr. Lawson.*] Do you not remember a letter being sent by me requesting that the work should be attended to—the general scheme of drainage?—Yes.

243. That is the drainage referred to there?—You submitted a tracing of your proposals for carrying away the water from the building.

244. What is asked is, whether that was immediately done?—It was carried out. As soon as the plan of drainage was determined upon it was given effect to.

245. *Mr. Mountfort.*] For instance, did the water continue to run off the roof for a month?

*Mr. Lawson:* Yes; for months.

246. *Mr. Blair.*] Mr. Lawson sent that on the 8th May, 1883—the plan of this drainage—and the work was authorised on the 15th June?—Yes. I cannot say when it was finished; but all that, we can get. It was authorised within five weeks of Mr. Lawson's applying for it.

247. *The Chairman.*] Was the drainage carried out by contract or by day-labour?—By day-labour.

248. *Mr. Gore.*] Mr. Ussher, as to this part of the foundation that has been called defective, where you found the hole stopped up with all sorts of rubbish and timber—I wish you to be particular in answering this, because the charge is a very serious one—did it appear to be built in the concrete wall, or was it put there after the concrete had been finished?—To me it had the appearance that some of the sticks were pulled out of the concrete, which was not in a very firm state, in the wall.

249. That is to say, it had not the appearance of being ordinary walling?—No, there was this break.

250. What size?—About 2ft. long by 1ft. in depth.

251. Do you know if there was any drain-pipe near going through that wall?—There is. I know there is a pipe going through here somewhere in this neighbourhood. As to whether it goes through at that very spot I could not say without looking at the drainage-plan.

252. Is it not quite likely that the hole was made after the building was erected and finished, or nearly finished, for the purpose of carrying a drain-pipe through, by the Government—after I had finished the wall?—It might be; I could not be positive.

253. Do you know as a fact that Mr. Brindley did make holes through that wall to carry drain-pipes through?—No, I could not swear to that.

254. You could not swear that he did not?—No.

255. Do you know that there are drain-pipes at the back of the wall?—That I cannot say without consulting the drawings. The drawings will show all that. All that were put in by the Government are shown on the plan.