DISTRICT INVESTIGATION.

(Continued from First Page.)

vide a government for the District of Columbia," approved February 21, 1871, he entered into contracts with the proper officers of said District, created by said acts as agents of the United States, to execute certain extensive improvements in said District, which work he faithfully performed in accordance with the plans and specifications of the proper officers of said District; that said contracts provided for the payments for this work to be made in lawful money of the United States every four weeks as the work progressed, which provision the District officers as agents of the United States signally failed to carry out.

Your memorialist further represents that he performed his entire work for said District in accordance with his contracts and the specifications of the Board of Public Works, and in performing which your memorialist has expended the sum of $250,000, and in return has received for said work nothing but certificates of indebtedness amounting on their face to the sum of $111,000, and which your memorialist received under protest; the market value of said certificates being only from 35 to 40 cents on the dollar, thereby realizing, as he has, the meagre sum of $44,000, the entire sum received for his work in Georgetown, D. C.

Your memorialist, therefore, prays that the matters and things pertaining to the work and improvements done by your memorialist for the District of Columbia, under contract with the Board of Public Works, be referred to a committee for investigation, with power to send for and examine the papers, contracts and other evidence pertaining to said works and improvements, and said committee be authorized to report a bill for the proper relief of your memorialist; and he will ever pray, &c.,

SAMUEL STRONG.

[Indorsement.]

FORTY-THIRD CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION.

Petition of Samuel Strong, praying the appointment of a committee to examine his claim against the authorities of the District of Columbia, for certain work performed by him, and to report a bill for his relief.

IN. March 23, referred to the Joint Select Committee to inquire into the affairs of the District of Columbia.

The Witness. That has not come up yet. I am ready for that when it comes up. I suppose the committee will notify me.

Mr. Wilson. It is now, Mr. Strong, because that has been referred to us. A. Then I must have my attorney here.

Q. That has been referred to this committee for its consideration. A. Then I hope the committee will allow me the privilege of having my attorney here.

Q. I wish to ask you now who drew up this paper for you? A. That was drawn up by a man by the name of Rhinehart.

Q. How long ago? A. It was drawn up—is there no date to it there?

Mr. Wilson. There does not seem to be.

The Witness. I do not recollect; the files will tell.

Q. How long since you had this drawn up? A. It may be two or three weeks. I cannot tell within a week.

Q. On the back of it it seems to have been referred to this committee on the 23d day of March? A. Yes, sir; it was handed in, I think, on Monday.

Q. How long—three or four days.

Q. Were the statements in this memorial true at the time it was prepared? A. It was got up very hastily. There are some alterations to be made in that, but I thought it would come out when the examination took place.

Q. Wherein is it untrue? A. In regard to the amount of the securities—the bonds—what was put up. I believe it amounts to more than that.

Q. How much more than this will it amount to? A. I am not prepared now to tell. I want to be notified whenever that question comes up, so that I can be prepared myself to answer your questions.

Q. Then you sent in this memorial to Congress stating these facts, over your own signature, without knowing them to be true? A. O, no.

Q. Are they true, or not true? A. They are true; that I have a claim against the government.

Q. Is it true that you have a claim to the extent you have set forth in this memorial? A. I will show all I have.

Q. That is not my question. I want to know whether or not it is true that you have a claim against the Board of Public Works to the extent that you have set forth in this memorial?

Witness. How much is the extent of it?

Mr. Wilson. You say that you have paid out $250,000, and that you have received certificates amounting on their face to $111,000. A. I will be prepared, if you will give me three or four days, to answer all these questions. I am not now prepared. I have no attorney here. I supposed this investigation—

Q. Then you got up this memorial and sent it to Congress, making these statements, without knowing the amount of certificates that you had? A. Exactly so. I supposed that would all be brought out on examination.

Q. How much is the amount stated here, $111,000, variant from the facts in the case? A. I do not think it will vary much from that.

Q. This is just about right? A. I should not be surprised if it comes out pretty near right.

Q. How much do you think it would vary from this? A. I am not prepared to say.

Q. Have the Board of Public Works issued to you no more certificates than to the amount stated in that memorial? A. I think it is likely that is correct; that is as near as I can get at it.

Q. Since you put this memorial before Congress have you had any settlement with the Board of Public Works? A. No, sir.

Q. Have you had any adjustment of any account whatever? A. No, sir.

Q. Have you had any negotiation with the Board of Public Works since you have been subpœnaed as a witness in reference to this matter? A. No, sir.

Q. None whatever? A. No, sir.

Q. Has there been any attempt? A. Not on anything that is in that memorial.

Q. Have you had any settlement of any account with the Board of Public Works since you sent this memorial in? A. No, sir. I think I have given you all the information I have here at the boundary.

Q. That has nothing to do with that affair at all. What did you draw that in? A. In certificates.

Q. When did you get that? A. In the neighborhood of a week ago.

Q. Since you were subpœnaed? A. No, sir; it was before I was subpœnaed; I am well aware of that.

Q. Have you had any negotiations with the Board of Public Works since you were subpœnaed to appear before this committee? A. No, sir.

Q. None whatever? A. No, sir.

Q. Have you had any meetings with them? A. No, sir.

Q. Have there been any writings drawn up with a view of adjusting your matters with the Board of Public Works? A. There might have been; I have a proposition to settle and leave it to arbitration, but they have never done anything about it.

Q. When was that? A. Twice. My lawyer wrote to them twice on that point.

Q. When did you make them that proposition? A. He has kept a copy of the letters. I can get them and bring them here.

Q. Is it within a week? A. Not to my recollection.

Q. Have you had any negotiations within a week with the Board of Public Works? A. I have signed no papers with them.

Q. Have you had negotiations within a week with them?

The Witness. What do you call negotiations?

Mr. Wilson. A settlement. A. No, sir.

Q. Have you had any interviews or correspondence of any kind with a view to a settlement? A. No, sir; I have hardly spoken to them. I saw Mr. Willard this morning and spoke to him, and spoke to Mr. Magruder. That is about all I spoke to.

Q. Nothing more than that? A. No, sir.

By Mr. Merrick: Q. What value do you state the certificates at in that memorial? A. I do not know, sir.

By Mr. Wilson: Q. I want to ask you one other question. Was that the market value or the real value of these certificates at the time you filed that memorial? A. I think that was all they were fetching outside.

Q. Was that what they were generally regarded as being worth? A. Yes, sir.

By Mr. Merrick: Q. Did you not give William A. Cook a check that has not been presented at the bank? A. I do not remember.

Q. Did you not give William A. Cook a check for his own benefit and that of A. K. Browne? A. I cannot remember.

Q. Would you remember it if you had done so? A. I cannot say. I never knew that I had given Mr. Shepherd a check for the sum of five hundred dollars until I looked over my books.

Q. I am not asking you about Mr. Shepherd? A. I do not know.

Q. Did you not give Mr. William A. Cook money for the purpose of having it paid to some other person; and if so, to whom? A. I do not remember.

Q. Did you not show Mr. Boyd, your nephew, the stub of a check, showing that you had given a check to William A. Cook and A. K. Browne for their joint and several benefit? A. No, sir; I showed him a check that I had given to Mr. Browne. It is in the book here now.

Q. What is the amount of that check—the date of it? A. I was mistaken in that. I said $125; I see it is $150. June 13, $150, 1873.

Q. Who was Mr. A. K. Browne? A. Attorney-at-law.

Q. Is he a member of the legislative department of the District of Columbia? A. He is in the upper board. I loaned it to him and took his note, and have it now. It is in the hands of Mr. Cahill for collection.

Q. Let me look at it, if you please. A. Here it is, [producing it.]

Q. It reads: "Pay to A. K. Browne; note." When was that note given? A. The same day.

Q. When did you make the entry of the word "note" in this stub here? A. That I cannot tell you. I have not his note here. I will send down and get it for you if you want it.

Q. That is not the question. The question is when you made that entry. A. I have no recollection.

Q. Did you make it at the same time you made the entry on the stub of the check? A. I do not remember. I think it likely I did.

Mr. Merrick. I will pass it to the committee in order that they may compare the handwriting. [Passed to the chairman.] A. I will swear it is in my handwriting—the whole of it.

Q. Did you not tell Columbus Alexander at his house since this examination began that you had given a check to Cook and Browne? A. I might have told him that and I might not.

Q. For $3,000? A. I might have told him. I went there merely to find out what he was doing. I wanted to see if they had the same party that they had last year. I went there for the purpose of getting out of him what I could.

Q. For the purpose of entrapping him? A. No, sir; for the purpose of seeing if they had the same gang of men that they had last winter, and I saw you there, too, [referring to Mr. Merrick.]

Mr. Merrick. Yes, I was there, and have been there very often, for that is the office where we do business.

Q. You say you might have told him that you gave this check for $3,000, and that if you did so it was for the purpose of deceiving him? A. I did not deceive him. I wanted to find out what he was doing. I was there twice.

Q. Did you not admit in the presence of Mr. Mackall also that you drew that check? A. I know Mr. Mackall very well, and it is altogether very likely I did.

Q. Was that statement true or false? A. I was merely guessing at the time to see what they wanted. They had been at my place a great deal at different times, and I wanted to give them their full.

Q. Are you guessing now? A. I am now under oath.

Q. Is there any difference between your statements when made under oath and when not under oath? A. I judge my oath is as good as yours anywhere, and I can prove it.

Mr. Merrick. We will not discuss that question now.

A. I am ready to do it any time, here or anywhere else.

Q. Did or did not Mr. Cook render a decision in your favor before he decided that Mr. C. E. Evans was entitled to receive $3.20 per square yard outside of his contract price of $2.90, and did you or not pay him for that decision? A. Not one solitary cent did I ever pay him for that.

Q. What matter was it that he decided in your favor as attorney? A. I cannot tell that he ever decided any thing in my favor.

Q. How many conversations have you had with Mr. Magruder touching this investigation since it began? A. I think it is the first time I have spoken to him since this investigation commenced—I mean when he was here to-day.

Q. Did you have a conversation with him in front of the National Hotel? A. Yes, sir; I did meet him and walked to the corner with him and into Mr. Dubant's. I never, however, had any conversation on this business with him there. Here he is; let him speak for himself.

Q. I am asking your to speak for yourself. You are a man whose oath is as good as anybody's. I can speak for myself. I do not propose to ask him anything else now. I have laid the foundation.

The Chairman. Look at this check [handing check-book to witness] and see if that memorandum about the note was made at the same time that the other was made. A. It is the same handwriting, but I might have put it down since that time.

Q. What do you think about it? A. I think the ink is paler than that; it appears so to me.

Q. Do you think it was made at the same time? A. I do not think it was by the looks of that, when I come to look at it thoroughly. If the honorable chairman wants me to get the note I will go and get it. I think I may be mistaken in that. It is altogether likely. I see there is a difference in the ink.

Q. Have you any recollection now of making that memorandum afterward upon this check-book? A. I might have made it a week after, or I might have made it a month afterward. I have no recollection of it.

Q. Might not you have made it within a very short time—within a very few days? A. No, sir.

Q. You are very clear upon that point? A. Yes, sir.

Q. You are clear it must have been made within a week after the other? A. No, sir; it might have been made a month. I have left the note to be sued, and I might have made it a month.

By Mr. Merrick: I ask that that note may be produced, in order that we may compare the date of the note.

Witness. I will produce it.

The Chairman. You may bring in the note if you please.

By the Chairman: Q. Have you not made that memorandum since we asked for those check-books? A. No, sir; I have not.

By Mr. Jewett: Q. Are you the Strong who had a couple of witnesses who testified here the other day arrested for perjury? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Had you any talk with any of the officers who served the subpœna upon you? A. On what subject?

Q. On the subject of the subpœna? A. I do not recollect. I know the officers very well that served it. I went home after I got the warrants out.

Q. Did you explain to any one the reason you did not appear here promptly in answer to the subpœna? A. I do not recollect that I ever said anything. I know I have been sick, very sick. I am not well now.

Q. Did you say to any one, to the officer, or any other one, that you had on hand important settlements that you wanted to make before you came here? A. No, sir; not to my knowledge; not at all.

By Mr. Wilson: Q. Who sent you to Columbus Alexander? A. I went there of my own authority.

Q. Did anybody ask you to go? A. No, sir.

Q. Did anybody suggest to you that you had better go? A. No, sir.

Q. You went there on your own motion, exclusively? A. I did. I have been connected with Mr. Alexander before in different matters. I have known Mr. Alexander for a great many years. I am an old acquaintance of his.

Q. Did you go and communicate to anybody your interviews with Mr. Alexander? A. I think I told Mr. C. L. Cunningham.

Q. Did you communicate to anybody else? A. I think I did to Mr. Rockyfellow.

Q. To anybody else? A. I do not remember.

Q. Do you say you cannot remember whether you communicated that to anybody else? A. I might have told Mr. Boyd and told fifty people of it; I do not know.

Q. Did you tell Mr. Magruder? A. Not to my recollection. He is here, and he can answer. I cannot remember.

Q. Do you remember that you did not tell him? A. I do not remember that I did. He is here.

Q. Do you remember that you did not? A. I do not remember that I did.

Q. Do you remember that you did not? A. I have no recollection of doing it.

Q. Do you remember you did not tell Mr. Magruder? A. I say I may have told him. If he says so, it is so. I have no recollection. My memory is not as good as it was some years ago.

Q. Did you tell Governor Shepherd? A. No, sir; not to my remembrance. I cannot say whether I did or not; I may have told him or I may not.

Q. What is your best impression as to whether you told Governor Shepherd of your interview with Mr. Alexander? A. I might have told him; I cannot say whether I did or not.

Q. What is your best impression as to whether you did or not? A. Well, sir, he is here, and if he says so——

Q. What is your best impression as to whether you did or did not tell Governor Shepherd? A. I think it is likely that I might have told him.

By Mr. Jewett: Q. That is your best impression now? A. Yes, sir; but he never told me to go there, or to have anything to do with him.

By Mr. Mattingly: Q. When was that interview with Alexander? A. That I cannot tell you.

By Mr. Harrington: Q. You say you are in litigation with the Board of Public Works? A. Yes, sir.

Q. What amount is involved? A. My attorney knows better than I do.

Q. What do you claim? A. I have offered to leave it to arbitration two or three times. General Totten has written to the board about it; I do not know the amount.

Q. I am not asking you about that; I want to know the amount you claim in that suit; something near $100,000, isn't it? A. Yes, sir.

By Mr. Bass: Q. How many years have you lived in Washington? A. Ever since I put the foundations under the Capitol building, which was in 1851.

Q. What business have you been in since this District government went into effect? A. Builder.

Q. Building what? A. Building bridges and houses.

Q. You are now engaged in the business? What was your business when contracts were awarded to you by the District government? A. Had some contracts under Mr. Bowen's administration. I have had a contract for a number of years for furnishing these cast-iron letter-boxes in different parts of the United States—in all cities that have 20,000 inhabitants. You will see my name on the letter-boxes.

Q. What was your business at the time you obtained that contract from the District government; were you at that time in any active business here? A. I do not know that I was. I was getting up these letter-boxes all over the United States.

Q. Did you own any property here? A. Yes, sir.

Q. To any substantial amount? I do not care about the details. A. Yes, sir; I have some property here. I own a farm in Virginia of some seven or eight hundred acres. I have got 42,000 feet of ground within four blocks of the Capitol, corner of New Jersey avenue.

Q. When did you acquire that? A. I traded a farm for that.

Q. When? A. About four or five months ago.

Q. Whereabouts in the city is that located? A. On the corner of New Jersey avenue and First street, in square 737. In square 726 I have about 5,000 feet.

Q. Where is that? A. That is here, in this first block; at the Capitol and Maryland avenue and B street. I have two houses on that. That property is 5,000 feet there.

Q. When did you acquire that property? A. Well, about ten years ago, or eight years, say. The records will tell. That property is worth about $10,000. I have 5,316 feet of ground in square 726. That is down here, just below General Chipman's, on First street. That property I consider is worth about $20,000.

Q. When did you acquire that? A. I purchased that a year ago, I think. I have in square 660 6,600 feet that I bought from Mr. Gulick. That is worth, I should judge, about $10,000.

Q. When did you acquire that? A. About the same time.

Q. So that you have acquired all this property within the last two or three years, except those two houses over in this vicinity? A. When I went in with the Board of Public Works I had money in my pocket.

By Mr. Wilson: Q. Did you get a contract from the Board of Public Works about the time you acquired this property from Mr. Gulick? A. I did not give Mr. Gulick anything. [Laughter.]

Q. I did not ask you if you did. I do not know why you should be so suspicious? A. There has been something of that nature up. That was a legitimate business.

Mr. Wilson. I do not say that it was not.

The Witness. I owe $2,200 on it yet.

Mr. Merrick. Did you or not tell Mr. Alexander, at your own house, very recently, that you and Governor Shepherd were interested in certain contracts? A. Not a word of it. If he says so he tells what is false.

Q. Did you tell him that Governor Shepherd and others were interested? A. Never, to my knowledge.

Q. Did you tell him that you had a written agreement with William S. Huntington and others and his associates? A. I said I had an agreement with Mr. Huntington, under Mr. Emery's administration, for the use of a wooden block to pave the avenues with.

Q. Did you not tell him you were interested with Mr. Huntington, and had a written agreement touching contracts under this Board of Public Works? A. I do not see how I could. I have got the papers. They will tell for themselves.

Mr. Merrick. I would be glad if you would produce these papers, if they will tell for themselves! Mr. Burrows and me had a wooden pavement, and as I opposed Mr. Emery's election there was not much of a chance of getting any contracts from him, and so I assigned this pavement to Mr. Huntington.

Q. Who were these associates of Mr. Huntington of whom you speak as named in that paper that you mentioned to Mr. Alexander? A. There was no names [illegible] tioned. Didn were the associates to whom you referred? A. That I could not say.

Q. Did you not say to Alexander that you could tell who they were? A. No, sir.

Q. Did you not say something to this effect, that you could blow them all up if you wanted to? A. I might have said a great many things. I wanted Alexander to talk, and he did a good deal of talking. He said that he was going to break up the whole Board of Public Works.

Q. Did you not say you could do it, too, if you had a mind to? A. I have no recollection of saying any such thing. He had them all broken up, he said to me.

By Mr. Mattingly: Q. You said something about a check of $500 to Mr. Shepherd, what was it? A. I found a check here; it was required that I should put up a check—$500.

Q. A check for $500 deposited with the Board of Public Works when you made the bond? A. Yes, sir; that was it; that was on the 4th of June, 1872. There it is, sir.

By the Chairman: Q. Have you got your bank books with you? A. Yes, sir; I have them all.

Mr. Merrick. If the committee would like that note——

The Witness. I will see that you have it, sir.

Mr. Wilson. I would like to have that other paper that you referred to.

The Witness. You can have every paper that I have, sir.

Mr. Christy. I would like to get the date of that deposit. We have here a list of all the deposits with the collectors of the city of Washington.

The Witness. June 13, it was. I got the check back from the collector; Captain Slater gave it back to me.

By Mr. Christy: Q. What year? A. It was 1873 when I started the B street intercepting sewer.

Governor Shepherd. Slash Run?

The Witness. Well, it might have been; my memory is not good.

By the Chairman: Q. Is that the memorandum about the check? A. Yes, sir. I remember distinctly getting that check back.

Q. The stub you hand me is "A. K. Brown?" A. No, sir. What I mean is down below; here, (indicating on the book.)

Mr. Christy. The only deposit I am able to find made by Mr. Strong was on the 2d day of September, 1871.

By Mr. Stewart: Q. What were the objects of your meeting with Mr. Alexander; how did it come about? A. Well, sir, I have known him for a great many years. Last winter I was a witness, and I wanted to know who those men were. I heard there were different men there, and wanted to see who they were.

Q. Did you go voluntarily to his place, or were you invited? You said you had several interviews. A. I think that he invited me there. I think I met him in front of the post office, and he invited me to come to his house. I disappointed him. I was to be there one evening, and I didn't go, and I think he reprimanded me, the next day when he saw me