

the mine was in the company's hands. We did not really take charge of it when I first saw it after the fire.

22. Did you find that there was any antagonistic feeling amongst the residents there who had been working in the mine in regard to the Inspector, or was there confidence in the Inspector in respect to his management of the operations in extinguishing the fire?—I think there is a certain amount of antagonistic feeling, and has been for a considerable time, but I do not know the reason for it.

23. Then, do you think that, with the information that we had, all reasonable means were taken for the extinguishment of the fire and the preservation of any marketable coal there?—I certainly think so under the circumstances as detailed to me.

24. You had a knowledge of the report of Messrs. Shore, Alison, and Foster when you were at the mine the last time?—Yes, I had seen it.

25. Do you remember what your instructions were in regard to that report?—Generally to see if things were being done in a way conducive to the saving of any valuable coal in the mine, and to give effect to what was necessary, being guided, of course, by circumstances as I found them.

26. But, apart from other circumstances, had you any instructions from the department to carry out the recommendations of these three gentlemen?—No, not definitely.

27. Had you no telegram to that effect?—I do not think so; I have no recollection of any telegram.

28. As far as I remember, I got Mr. Elliott to send you a wire to the effect that in putting out the fire you were to carry out as far as possible the recommendations of Messrs. Shore, Alison, and Foster.—I have no recollection of such a wire. I do not remember receiving anything of the sort.

29. *Mr. Colvin.*] Have you examined the mine since you got the report of Messrs. Shore, Alison, and Foster?—Only so far as I could get in.

30. But you have been on the property since?—Yes.

31. And have you taken any steps to carry out the recommendations of those three gentlemen?—Yes, as far as possible and as far as the circumstances permitted.

32. They recommend that a 4 in., or larger size, water-supply pipe should be laid?—Yes.

33. Did you get this?—No, for the simple reason that a  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. pipe would carry all the water that was running.

34. I have known times when a 6 in. pipe would not carry all the water.—Sometimes a  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. pipe would carry it; but in any case there was nothing to be gained by laying a larger-sized pipe.

35. You say there is no marketable coal in the Hector block?—The only marketable coal in this block is here [indicating place on plan].

36. Do you think Mr. Broome knows the extent of the coal area as well as any one who has ever been there?—Yes.

37. And if he says there are 12 acres of marketable coal that the fire is likely to affect, would you think that statement reliable?—Yes. I had a letter from Mr. Broome yesterday, and he ended up by saying, "As far as the Cardiff fire is concerned, my opinion is that it is best left alone. I do not see what further damage it can do. It certainly will not cross the big faults into the Cave area, and there is really very little marketable coal left in where the fire is raging."

38. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Did you ask him about this?—No; his letter was quite unexpected, and he was writing to me about other matters totally foreign to mining.

39. *Mr. Colvin.*] What is the distance between the Hector block, where the fire is burning, and the Cave area?—From memory, I should say it is getting on for half a mile, if not more.

40. What separates them?—Some large faults.

41. Who wrote the letter that you complain of—the one that you quoted from?—Mr. Charles Stewart. I quoted from *Hansard*, but he wrote the original letter.

42. When you went to Mokihinui, did you consult any of the miners who had been working in the mine as to their opinion of the best way of putting out the fire?—No, I did not. I made some inquiries as to where the miners were, and I found they were about Granity, or working on some road. There were very few of them about.

43. Are you aware of the fact that I had an offer from a man—and I told the department—that he would undertake to put out the fire for £500, and if he did not succeed he would charge nothing?—I did not know that.

44. *Mr. Smith.*] When you were sent down to inspect this mine, was it in the hands of the company?—No, not the last time I was down; the first time it was, but not the second time.

45. And while it was in the hands of a private company you could not deal with it the same as you could if it were Government property?—Not exactly. At the time of my first visit I was in the district, and, having heard incidentally of the fire, I went to see how matters stood, and found that the air was stopped off at each entrance, and I did not see what more could be done at the time.

46. Then, you wish to state to the Committee that you took every rational and feasible means—scientific means—of extinguishing the fire?—Mr. Tennent had been for some time in consultation with Mr. Dixon, and the last time I was there I found they had given full consideration to the report of Messrs. Shore, Alison, and Foster. I think they would know what should be done better than the three gentlemen named, because they were able to get into the mine before the stoppings were put in, while Messrs. Shore, Alison, and Foster were not able to get in at all. More has been suggested to put the fire out than was actually done, but, considering the very small area of coal, to have done more would simply have been to throw money away.