

place?—No, I do not think there was. The first dam was put in by the company at their expense. Mr. Tennent made arrangements with the company, I understand, and they voted the money for the dam.

149. But was not the dam put in under Mr. Tennent's supervision?—I do not know that it was put in under his supervision. He arranged with the company that one should be put in, and they let the contract to their carpenter.

150. Have you read his reports to the department?—Yes, I have glanced at them.

151. What do you think of this, under date of 9th February: "Sealing-down of Cardiff Mine was completed at 2 p.m. to-day, and I consider the work has been carried out vigorously, substantially, and satisfactorily"?—That was when they sealed off the air; it does not refer to the water-dam at all.

152. Take another part, under date of the 6th February: "Main intake is sealed off by 3 in. plank-clayed stopping. As no other officer here, am remaining until all outlets are sealed and everything left in safe condition." What do you gather from that?—I gather that that is the time when he is sealing off; finding that there is no officer at the mine, he is sealing off the two entrances so as to shut in the products of combustion.

153. But had you been Inspector of Mines there and that fire was reported to you, and you knew the conditions as to fires in mines in the mining regulations, would you have considered that everything was done for the safety of the mine?—Yes.

154. And if the company had declined to do as suggested, would you have taken active steps on behalf of the Government to have it done?—The Government being lessors, assuming that the company had refused to do anything, I should in a case like that have asked for instructions.

155. Supposing you had known that the mine had been burning for three months, and practically abandoned, would you have taken steps on behalf of the Government to have curtailed the extent of the fire, or to cope with it?—Yes; on the fire breaking out, I certainly should.

156. And you think Mr. Tennent should have done the same in this case?—I believe he did.

157. So that he took full charge?—I believe he took what steps he could, considering the concern was in the company's hands at the time, and what was reasonable to prevent the spread of the fire. I know he was as anxious as anybody.

158. How is it, then, that there has been no result from the steps he took to suppress the fire—can you show us what the result is?—I take it the result is—so I believe—that no active fire exists except at the absolute outcrop, and if the steps taken have confined it to that part, then I say he has done very good work, and as much as any man could be expected to do.

159. But nothing of that description was done till Alison, Shore, and Foster reported; you mean the outcrop at Chasm Creek?—Yes.

160. Do you know the length of that seam that is burning now?—About 10 or 12 chains altogether.

161. It could not possibly be 20 or 25 chains, could it?—I did not see any evidence of fire for that length.

162. How far is the Cave area from the bridge?—As near as my memory serves me, half a mile.

163. How far is the nearest fault from the fire?—About 5 or 6 chains from the bridge—probably 7 or 8.

164. Is the Committee to understand that the fire cannot pass that fault?—I do not think it possible. As far as I have seen, the fire has not passed the bridge in the direction of the Cave area more than, perhaps, 2 chains. This was when I was there last time—last June. The fire had not got in nearer than some 2 chains, and there were faults coming right out to the surface, which evidently stopped it from going any further; the furthest active fire there was in this direction was just past the bridge.

165. Did you get any reports about it since?—Only that the outside conditions were unchanged. Generally speaking, I understand that the fire is somewhat subdued as compared with what it was when I was there. Mr. Tennent telegraphed to the department fairly often. I have been away for some five or six weeks and do not know what has gone on in my absence, but I understand the fire is not so active as it was.

166. What is the width of the first fault between the Cave area and the Hector block?—If you mean the extent of area between the Hector block and the Cave area, about half a mile.

167. Now, that is bush-country, is not it?—Yes.

168. Is not all the bush liable to take fire?—I asked that question, and they said that, owing to the extreme dampness of the climate, it is not.

169. And is that all you are depending on?—Yes, the general wetness of the country. They say there are no bush-fires there at all.

170. You know Reefton?—Yes.

171. Do you think it is any more moist at Mokihinui than it is at Reefton?—I should fancy so.

172. Why?—From my own experience of the weather there.

173. You think it is more moist at Mokihinui than at Reefton?—Yes, I should think so.

174. Yet the whole Town of Reefton was nearly destroyed by fire a few years ago, and it took the whole population several days to save it?—I will again quote what Mr. Broome says: "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 little marketable coal left in where the fire is raging."

175. About these 13 acres that you mentioned, you said that Mr. Broome stated that the coal was no good?—He described it as a soft-coal area, which is practically not marketable. I think a very good answer is the very fact of their having left it unworked. He was hard-up for