

165. You propose to do nothing for the present?—I should not waste a sixpence, but simply see that damage is not done elsewhere in the lease. There is property there which it is necessary to have under the charge of the caretaker.

166. Whose property is it?—It belongs to the Government.

167. *Mr. Millar.*] Are you in charge of the inspection of the coal-mines?—I am not an Inspector of Mines now. I am an engineer to the department, but I have no statutory power.

168. Then, the Inspectors are responsible to Ministers direct?—Yes. I confer with them.

169. To your own knowledge, there are fires in other mines besides Cardiff?—Any amount.

170. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] You stated distinctly that Mr. Bayfield asked Mr. Dixon to go there on behalf of the company with Mr. Tennent. This is a copy of a letter sent by Mr. Bayfield to the Minister on the question?—I was only quoting Mr. Dixon's own statement. There is one little matter I would like to mention to the Committee, with respect to the possibility of the fire spreading to the bush. I wrote to Mr. Broome as follows after I was here last week: "A question has cropped up in respect to the possibility of the outcrop fire at the Cardiff Mine setting fire to the bush. The last time I was there the same idea occurred to me, but I found local opinion was somewhat to the effect that the bush never got dry enough to burn. As you have perhaps as good an experience of the conditions there as anybody, and are not likely to speak at random, I should be glad to have your views on the point." As there was not time to receive a written answer, I wired him to telegraph his reply. Mr. Broome replies: "Knowing from experience how difficult it is to get bush about Seddonville to burn, even after felling, and also how the fire refuses to spread into the standing bush surrounding a clearing, my opinion is that there is no danger of the bush taking fire."

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