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JOINT LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Held by

The Commission established under A.C.R. No. 19  
to study ways and means for improving the prevention  
detection, control, and fighting of forest fires.

State House  
Trenton, New Jersey  
July 27, 1955

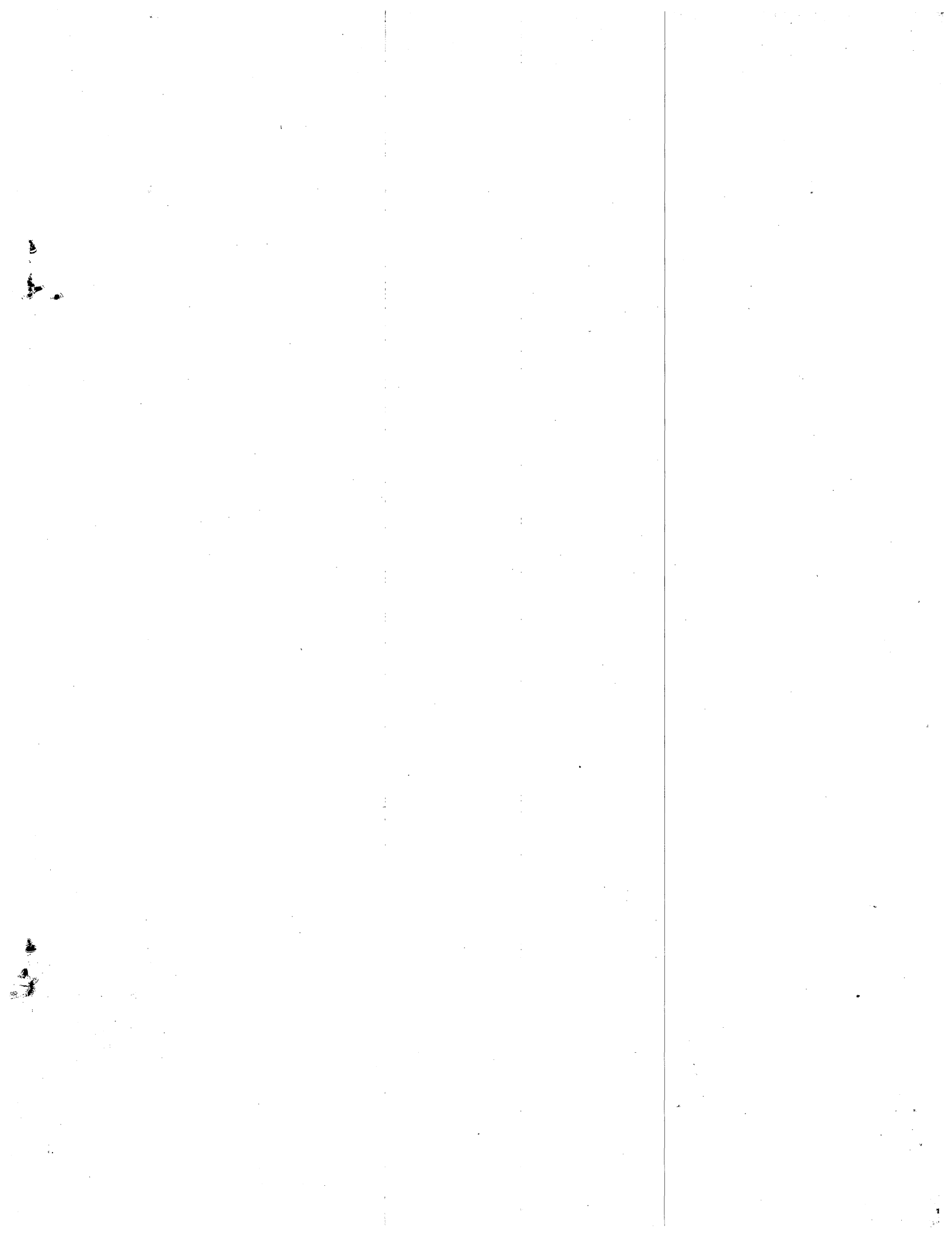
Members of Commission present:

Senator Albert R. McCay  
Assemblyman William C. Haines

Absent: Senator Harold W. Hannold  
Senator W. Howard Sharp  
Assemblyman Elden Mills  
Assemblyman John A. Waddington

Reported and transcribed by  
Dorothea Tempesto, C.S.R.

**New Jersey State Library**



P R E S E N T

N. J. Department of Conservation and Economic Development:

Maurice F. Aaron, Division Firewarden

Bernard W. Bartlett, Division Firewarden

Arthur V. Conover, Division Fire Warden

William J. Seidel, State Fire Warden

\* \* \* \* \*

William S. Haines, Chatsworth, New Jersey

J. Edward Haines, Medford, New Jersey

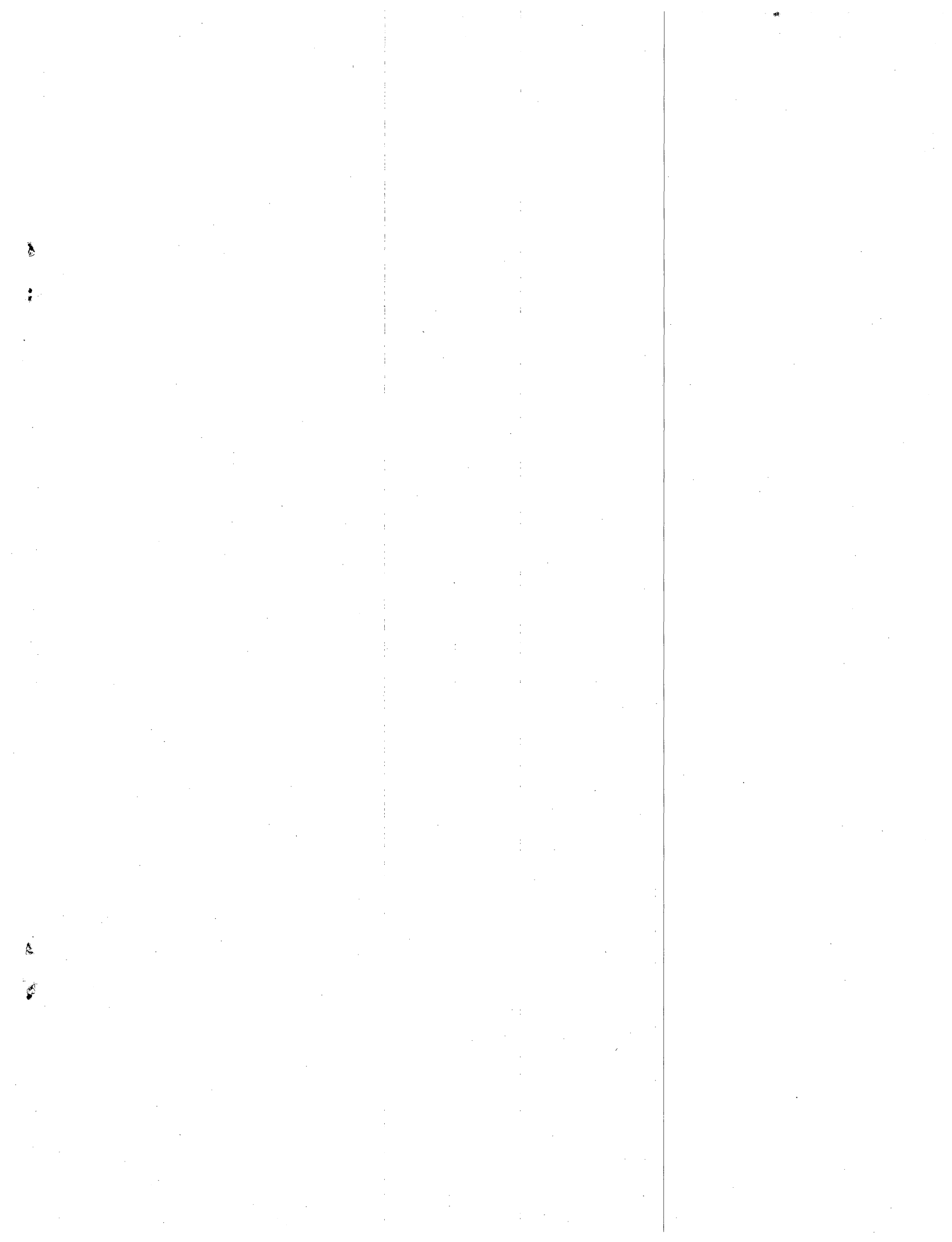
J. Rogers Brick, Medford, New Jersey

Forrest H. Jennings, Indian Mills, New Jersey

John E. Cutts, Vincentown, New Jersey

Thomas C. Applegate, Farmingdale, New Jersey

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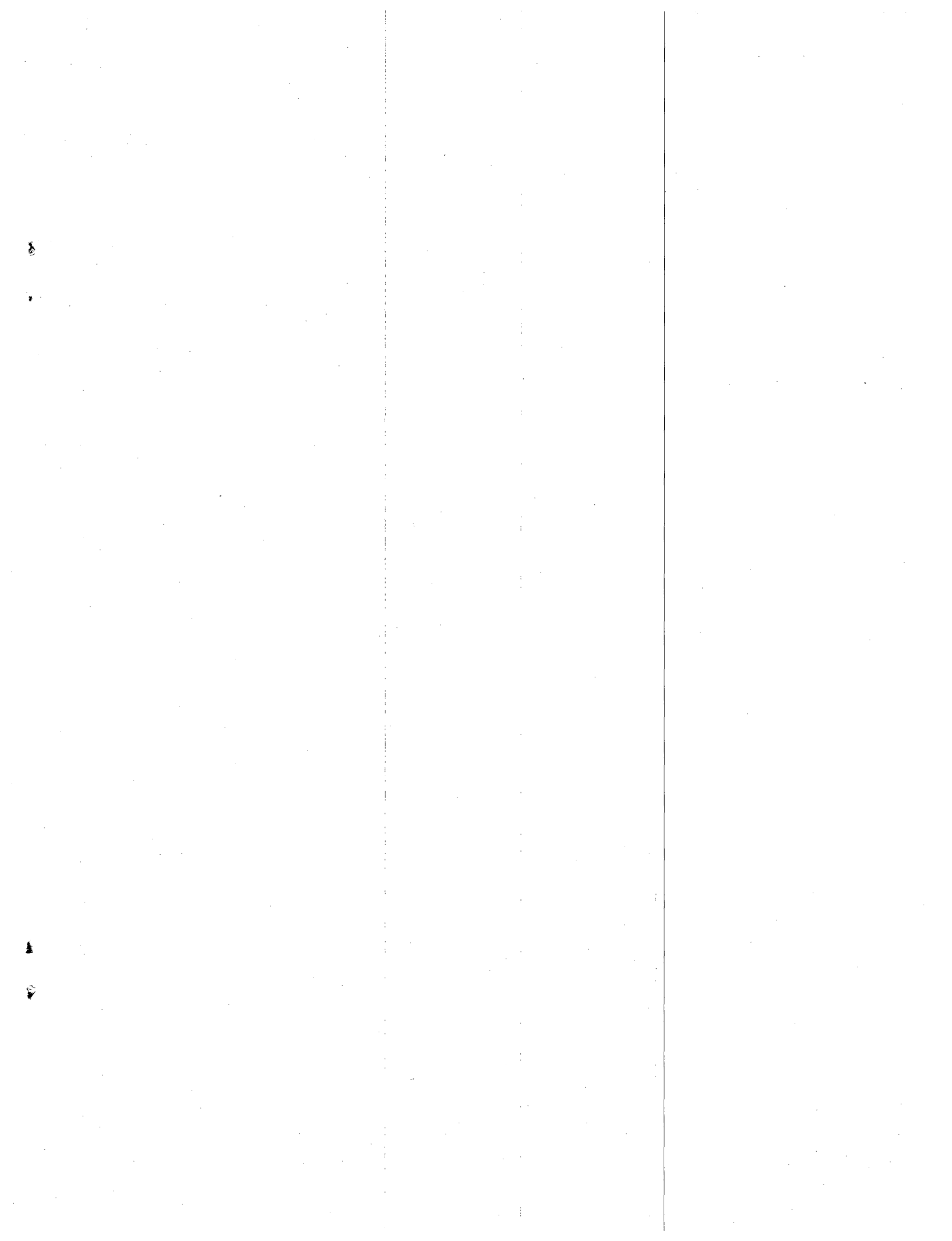


MR. McCAY: This Commission was assigned to duty by the Legislature to study ways and means of improving the prevention, detection, control and fighting of forest fires; to study types of organization, the fixing of responsibility for forest fire control and training and equipment required for forest fire control; to recommend to the Legislature ways and means for the more effective prevention, detection, control and fighting of forest fires. The meeting today is for the purpose of giving citizens, and those interested in the prevention, detection, control, and fighting of forest fires an opportunity to be heard with respect to those matters that have been referred to this Commission for investigation.

EDWARD F. GILBERT, Mt. Holly, New Jersey.

I am here representing the Burlington County Firemen's Association. I wish to state that we do not essentially have any equipment, nor are we ever called in to fight forest fires strictly. We are not called until there is private property or personal property involved. We have a setup which I think is unique in our county, in that we have a full and active office of Fire Marshal, and we have fire zones set up whereby each township, or each chief, has at his call various other companies on what we would call a mutual aid system. Unfortunately, the chiefs, or the Departments of Public Safety in the townships involved around our forest fire areas are not too active in the county associations, and as a rule they do not follow the pattern set up by the county. But for the rest of the county it is adhered to pretty closely. We have a complete listing and complete inventory of all the fire equipment and what their availabilities are, and what their equipment can do in the entire county, and either the Fire Marshall or his assistant has at his finger tips that entire listing. He knows what equipment would be available and how well it could be used at those places. I have here a list of the entire county as far as companies and chiefs are concerned. I also have here the fire zones set up for mutual aid from each company. If you would care to have the list, I would be glad to turn it over to you.

Other than that, I do not know of anything we can add except that almost the



entire county is now radio equipped, and that our means of communication are rapidly growing better. We do have better control and better connections and contact between companies. We very well demonstrated that fact in the difference between the Chatsworth fire and the Browns Mills fire of this past year.

MR. McCAY: Well, Mr. Gilbert, the fire companies did play a big part in connection with those fires, particularly the Chatsworth fire, in protecting homes and so forth, as I recall it.

MR. GILBERT: Yes, that is correct. We are called in by the chief of the community involved, and at that time he is to initiate the mutual aid system which the county has set up. If that is ineffective, then it is up to him to call in the district director of civilian defense to determine if it is an emergency, which was done in both of those cases. However, whether the calls did not come through soon enough or not, I don't know. It is problematical on that. We know that both fires got pretty well out of hand before they began to control them, as far as private property is concerned.

MR. McCAY: You feel there is some doubt then whether the mutual aid plan was made effective soon enough.

MR. GILBERT: That is correct, sir.

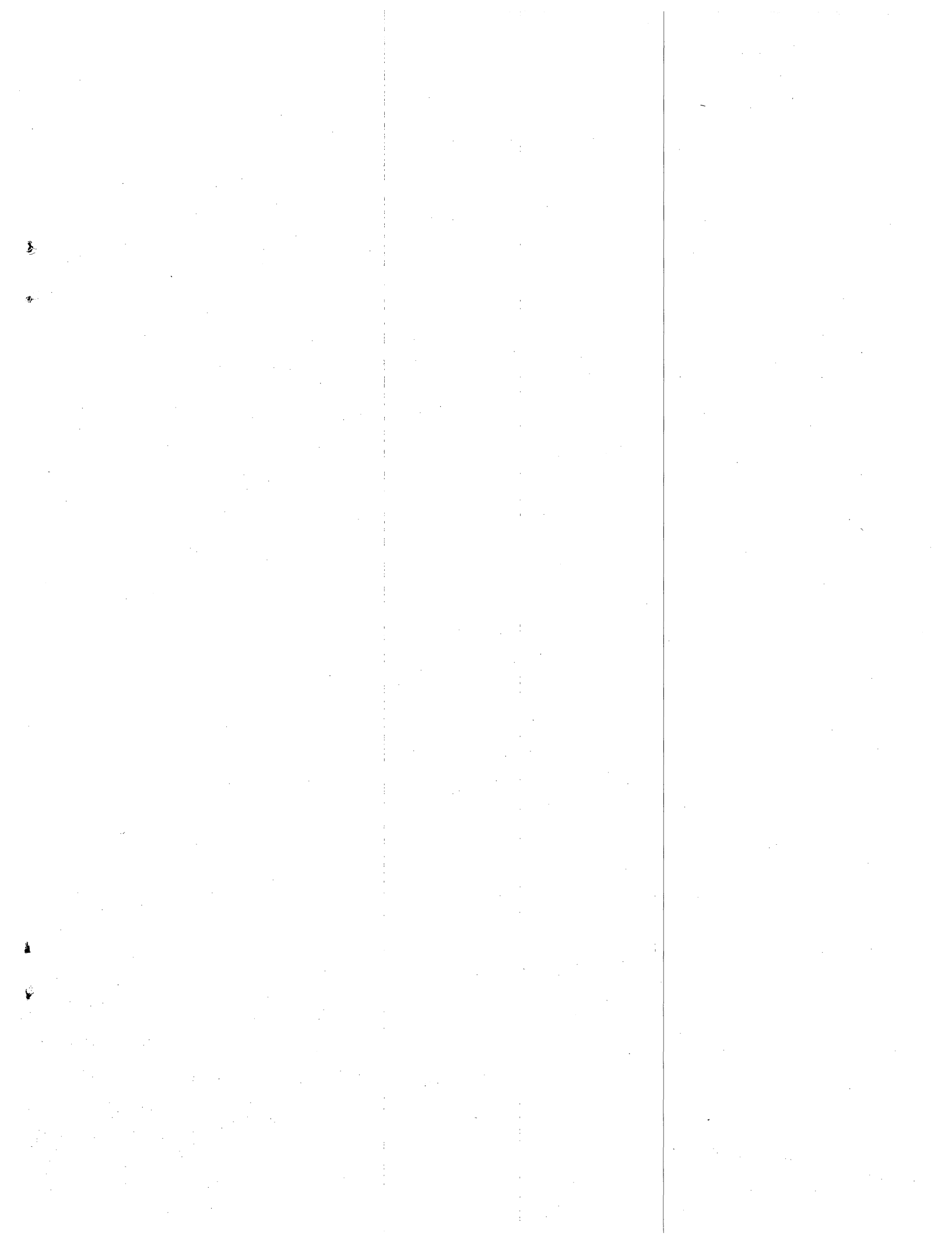
MR. McCAY: And you feel there might be something gained by a closer cooperation in that respect.

MR. GILBERT: In neither one of the cases of the recent two catastrophes have the fire marshal's office been notified until the civilian defense notified them.

MR. McCAY: Whose duty, as you see it, was it to notify the county fire marshal?

MR. GILBERT: That is the duty of the chief of that particular area or township involved.

MR. McCAY: That is the chief of the local fire department?



MR. GILBERT: That is correct.

MR. McCAY: Assemblyman Haines, do you have some questions you would like to ask?

MR. HAINES: When you go to a fire, then, you go at the direction of the local chief, and not at the direction of the Forest Fire Service?

MR. GILBERT: That is correct, sir.

MR. HAINES: And after you get to the fire, you proceed to the location as directed by the local chief?

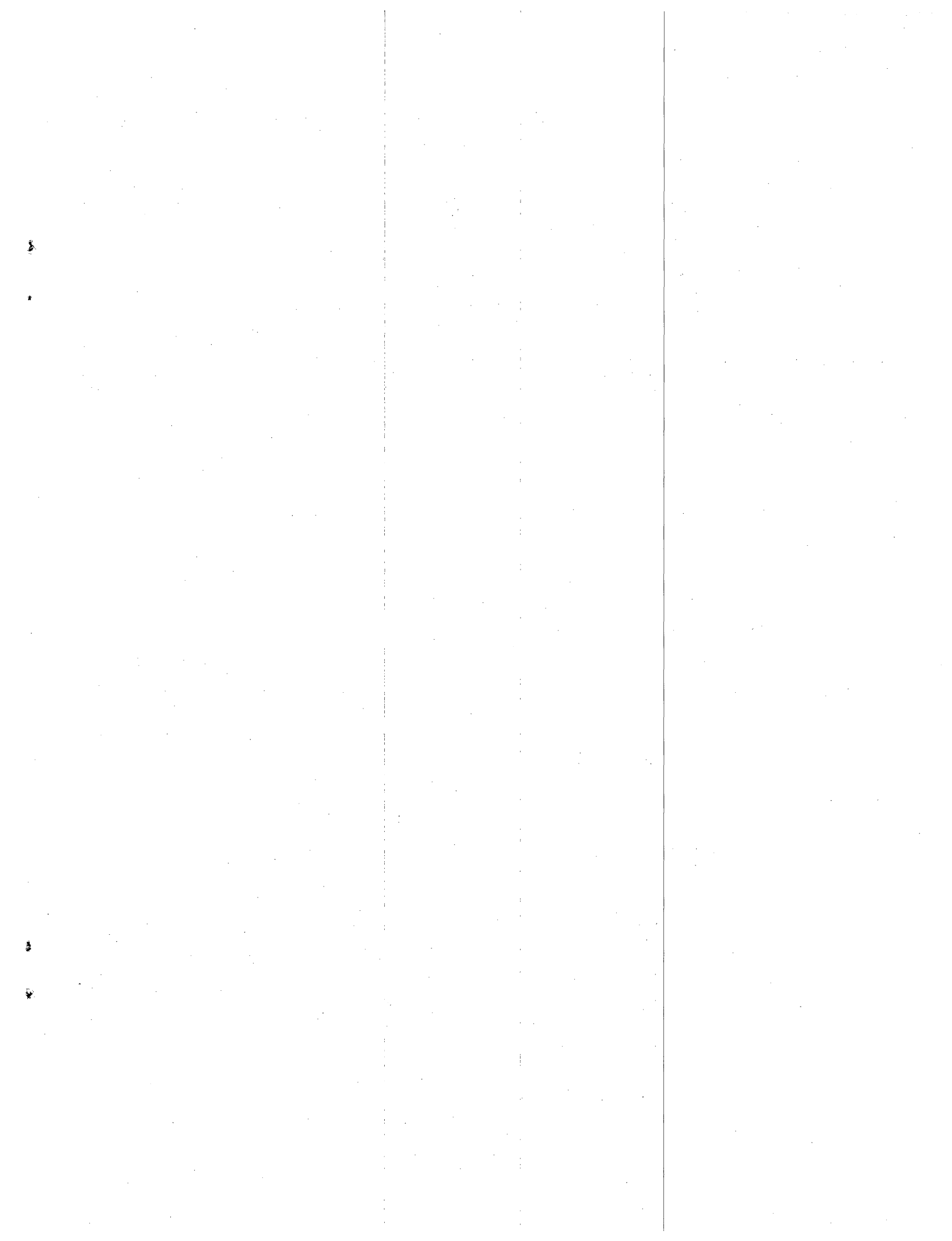
MR. GILBERT: That is correct.

MR. HAINES: You mentioned on the 'phone the other day something about liability of equipment, and the welfare of the men at those fires. Have you anything more to say about that?

MR. GILBERT: Well, it has been our understanding from the Forest Fire Service that when we are called as firemen that we respond to that call at our own discretion. In other words, we are responsible for our own equipment and our own manpower. It is for that reason that we respond to the calls of the chief, because under the insurance act as it is set up, that is an official fire call, and we are then protected, you might say, by insurance. Although the primary reason, I believe, why we are not called by the Forest Fire Service is the fact that we are not told to handle any forest fires in themselves. The majority of our companies have rather expensive pieces of equipment in the line of pumpers, and ladders, and so on, and they are not equipped with front wheel drives, or auxiliary drives, to handle the various back roads in the woods. Therefore, we are primarily equipped for primary or secondary roads. We cannot take our equipment back into the forest and fight those fires.

MR. HAINES: Where does Civil Defense enter the picture?

MR. GILBERT: They enter the picture when the local director, or the area



director terms it a holocaust, or a national defense emergency, and at that time they set up the civilian defense operations, which in those cases down there they were set up.

MR. HAINES: I thought when Civil Defense was called, they were the last word in directing fire equipment.

MR. GILBERT: Yes, that is their prime responsibility.

MR. McCAY: When you say "area director", you mean the area director of Civil Defense?

MR. GILBERT: Whoever the local director happens to be in that particular township.

MR. McCAY: You mean representing Civil Defense?

MR. GILBERT: Yes, that's it. I might add that most of those are either fire chiefs or police chiefs, or department of public safety officials in the township, and they have, you might say, their fingers on both the fire services and civil defense matters of protection to the people.

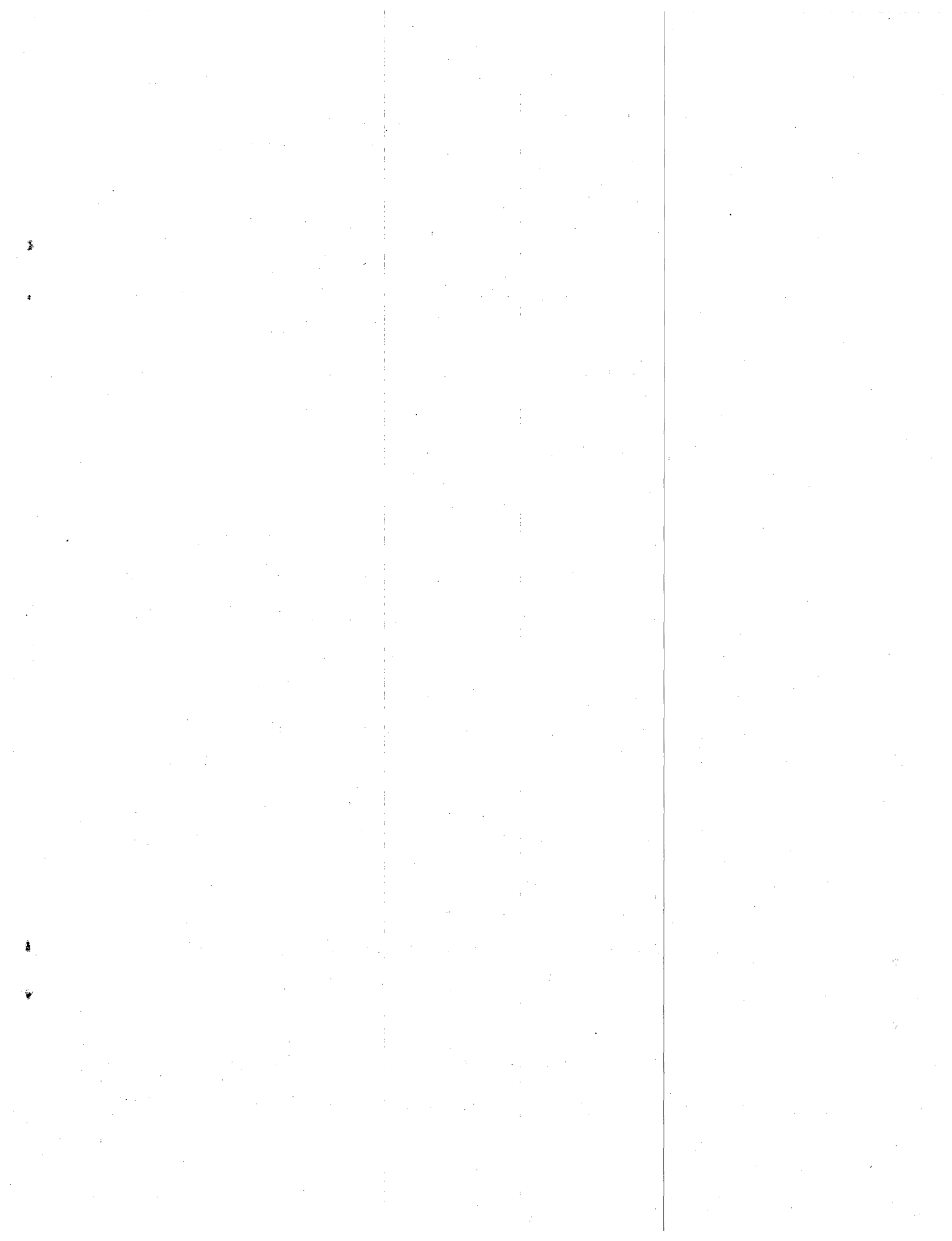
MR. HAINES: Mr. Seidel, do you have anything to say along that line?

MR. WILLIAM J. SEIDEL, State Fire Warden.

On both the Chatsworth fire and the Browns Mills fire, I proceeded according to the plan set up by Civil Defense, as has been outlined by Mr. Gilbert.

MR. HAINES: In other words, you fall in line with them.

MR. SEIDEL: We fall in line, yes. On the Chatsworth fire, we had a car within calling distance of the Civil Defense Director, and there was perfect cooperation on that fire. On the Browns Mills fire, our section warden called right away to the fire chief, and told him the situation. It was bad. There were a lot of houses there, and the fire chief was told that he better get more fire companies on it, and I don't think there was too much delay in getting civil defense activated. I would like to add that I think it is a good arrangement. The fire



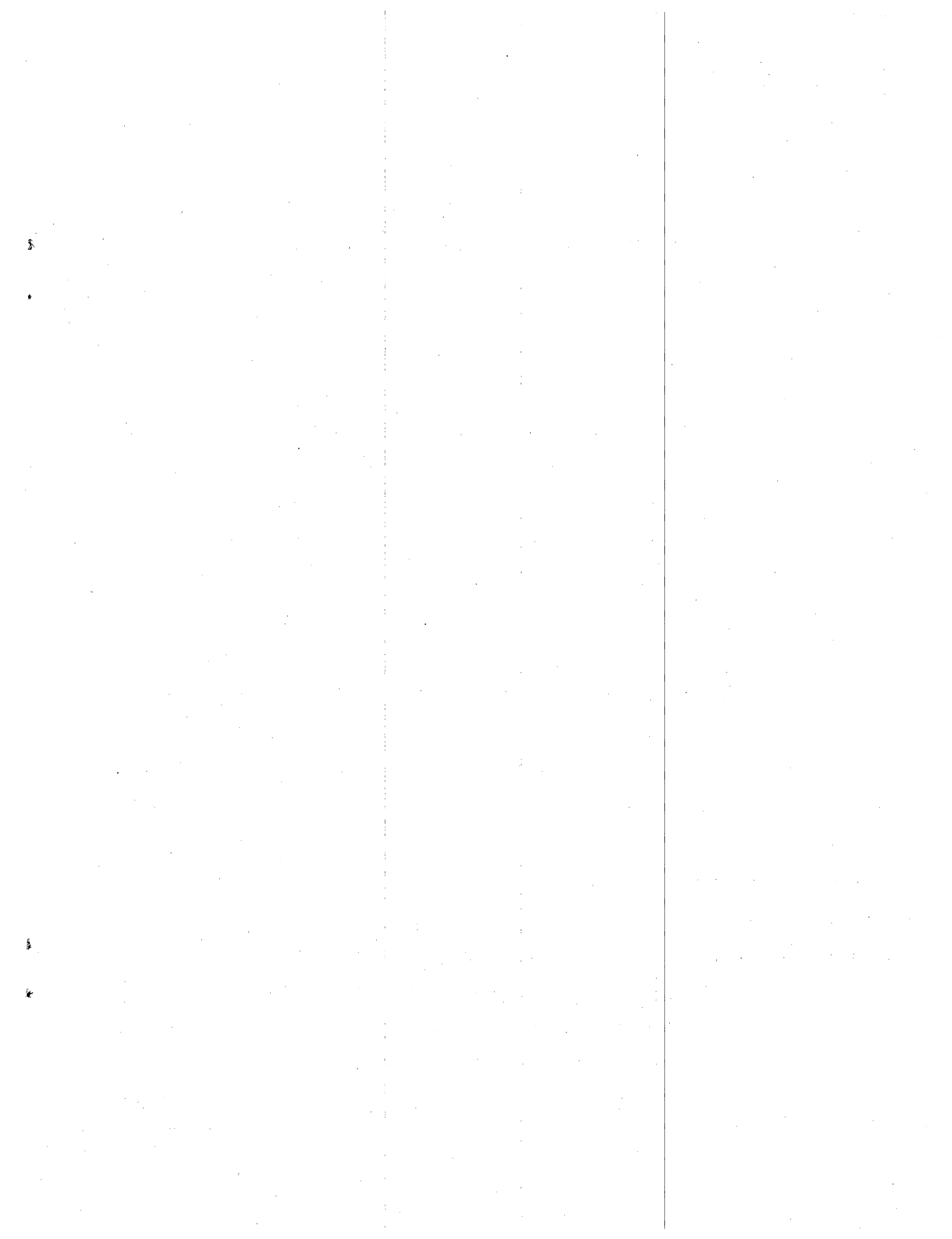
service is not equipped to protect houses like Chatsworth or Browns Mills, and in many other places in New Jersey. We don't have the equipment, in the first place. This cooperation has been working very fine, and if it hadn't been for Civil Defense in Chatsworth, there would be a lot more damage than there was, and also the same thing in Browns Mills. The way it works out is that whenever a house is in danger, or one or more buildings, they will call a fire company and immediately dispatch a fire truck into the building with men, and in most cases they will save the property.

MR. McCAY: Mr. Gilbert, would you mind clarifying for me the extent to which the fire companies are used to protect forest fires themselves, as distinguished from protecting homes and other buildings? I understood you to say, of course, that your equipment isn't the kind that you could use in the woods; you would have to limit it to use on certain roads. Would you mind amplifying that a little bit for us?

MR. GILBERT: Our crews assigned to those companies work with the piece of equipment on the truck that is involved, and therefore they are never very far away from private property. As far as the woods are concerned, there might be little clearings or such that they try to clean up in order to protect the surrounding buildings themselves. We can do nothing in the woods at all unless it involves personal property. For instance, if we happen to have a pumper at a little stream of water somewhere in the woods, then that particular section of woods is covered by that particular pump. But that again is merely to protect the equipment; not to put out the forest fire.

Mr. McCAY: Mr. Seidel, would you mind supplementing that for us along the lines of the use now being made of fire companies in actually fighting fires, and the possibility, in your opinion, of the use of them?

MR. SEIDEL: Let me pass that over to Mr. Bartlett who is the Division Firewarden in Burlington County.

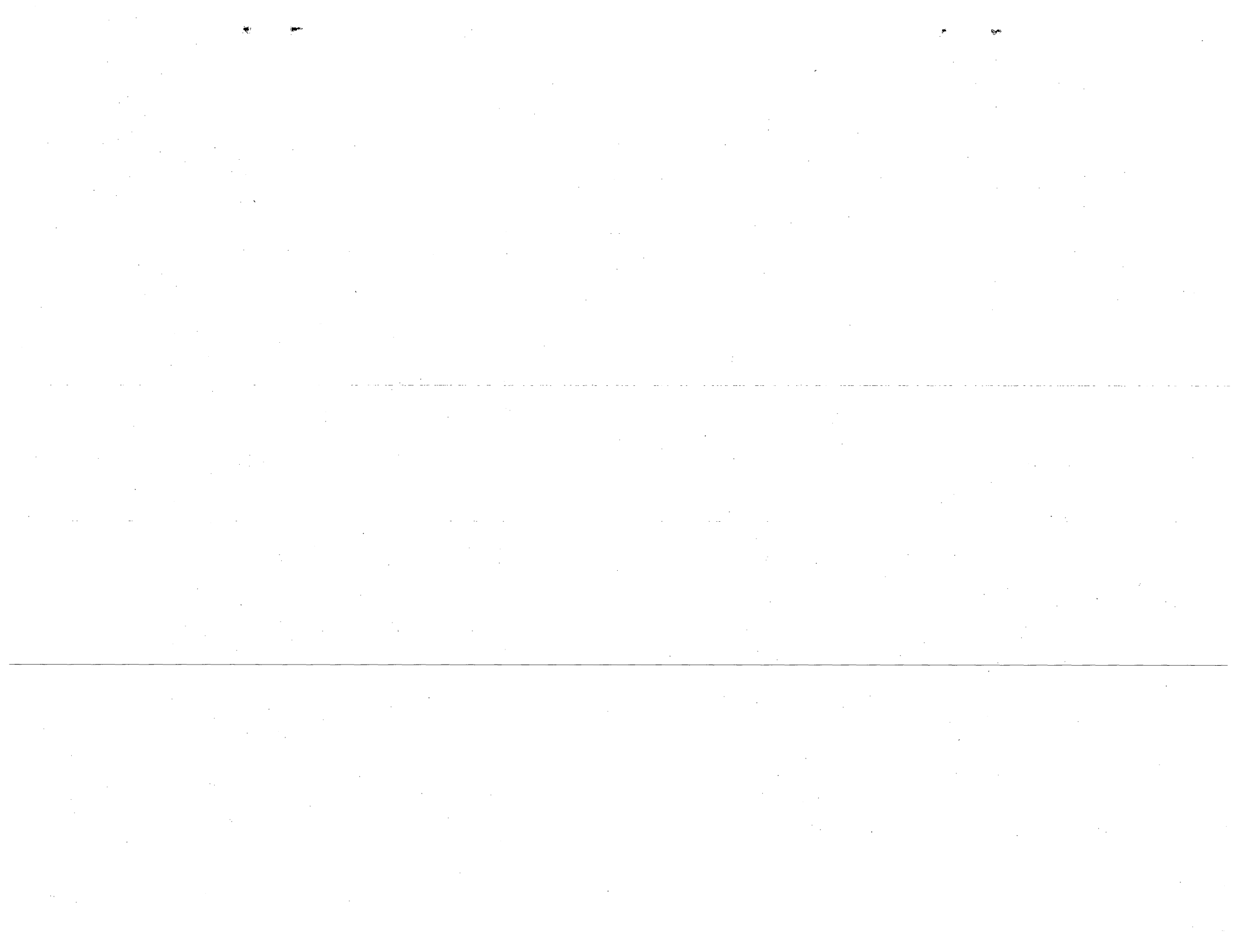


MR. BERNARD W. BARTLETT, Division Firewarden

We find that most of the companies, when they come out, congregate around their truck which is, of course, correct procedure, and we are the ones that have to go in the woods and put the fire out, which is also correct. We do use them in some highly populous areas when we have a fire and a general alarm is given, not necessarily by us, but an alarm that is turned in by property holders. The fire companies come out, and if they have enough men and we can use them within reason, we assign them. But as a general rule, and it is the policy of the service as set forth in our regulations, we are not to use fire companies as the main source of manpower. However, in some areas - and again in the highly populous areas - we find that most of the available men, particularly in the daytime, are members of the fire company, and they are also members of our organization, so that they are doing a dual job. Therefore, we must use those men as individuals, and not as firemen or fire company men. I believe the question of liability was brought up by Mr. Haines, and we do not use their trucks, because if they are damaged we have no means of repairing them. There is no money available to repair them.

MR. SEIDEL: I would like to add this, if I may. We have been through a good many years of fire company cooperation. About twelve years ago, after a meeting in Ocean County, I came to the conclusion that although the law gives the forest fire warden the right to commandeer equipment, that being in a position where we couldn't pay for damage, that the only fair and safe thing to do was to put it up to the fire company men who are responsible for the safety of their company's fire apparatus. At that time I stated that if a warden ordered a fire company truck into an area, and they went, it was entirely the responsibility of the fire company, and they had the right, and I would back it up, of refusing to go in where they thought it was unsafe.

MR. McCAY: I raised that question because I thought we ought to have, for the information of the Commission, a statement in the record as to the extent



to which fire companies are used in fighting the actual forest fires and the feasibility of that practice.

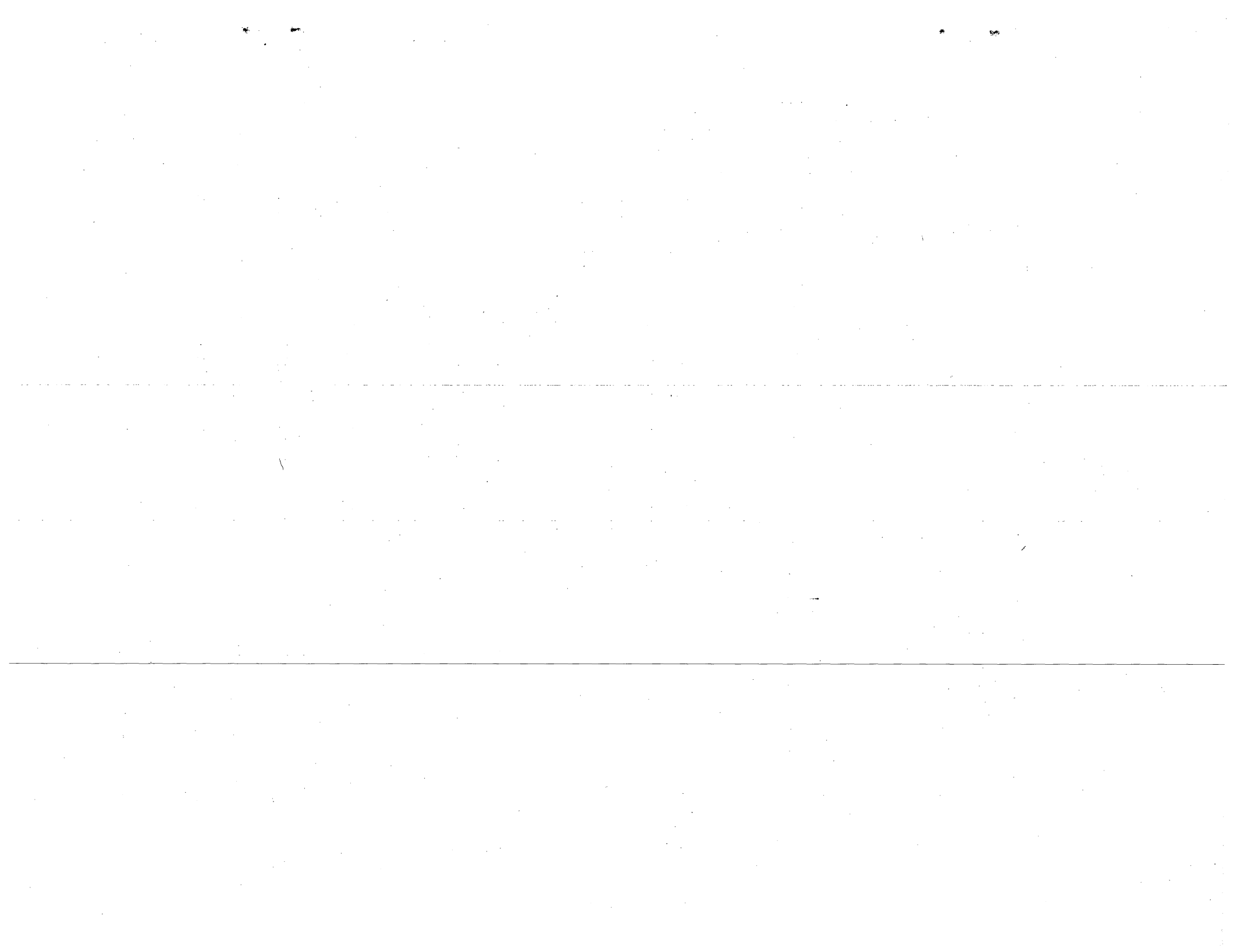
MR. SEIDEL: There is one more point that could be added. In some companies throughout the State they have a setup where they have an old truck, or an older truck, or a separate truck, that could be used for fighting forest fires, and in some cases they are manned by a deputy fire warden who is also a member of the fire company. So when they get a forest fire call, they may go out with that piece of apparatus and assist the fire wardens. That is a good working arrangement. We have that down in Williamstown, and three or four other places, and it shows a cooperation in those particular areas.

MR. McCAY: All right. We will now hear from Mr. William S. Haines of Chatsworth.

MR. WILLIAM S. HAINES, Chatsworth, New Jersey

I don't represent any particular organization. I am a local fire warden, and I guess one of my main interests, you might say, is personal. But one of the things that I think could be done to improve the forest fire condition would be better preventive measures. We do a lot of it ourselves, that is in the way of building fire lines. And I think that the State could certainly do a whole lot more than they do do with the personnel that they now have available. I think one trouble lies, maybe, in some of the personnel that have two jobs; that is, they are on the forest fire service, and they also have maybe a little business of their own, and they don't make quite enough money for the forest fire service to have them really put in their full time on it. It should be a full time job, and then there would be a lot more done. Certainly when it burns, it is a very expensive thing.

As far as the detection of forest fires, I think, as far as my personal experience has been, that has been very excellent, but action is sometimes slow in coming. I think that is what happened in the Chatsworth fire, as I have heard it; I wasn't actually there. They say that the main part of the fire could have been



prevented if there had been more immediate action on it. As I understand it, the fire developed the night before, and the action of the fire fighting was delayed until the following day. Mr. Cutts could probably tell you more about that. He was there. One of my main interests has been the prevention of fire, and I think we can do a whole lot more work on that.

MR. McCAY: Mr. Haines, what do you feel is the principal cause of forest fires?

MR. HAINES: Well, I suppose cigarettes and carelessness in burning. That is my personal opinion. And it may be burning without permits. On our own property, which is about 6000 acres, most of the fires are caused by carelessness with cigarettes, I would say, and I have had two in the last month which I think were started by cigarettes.

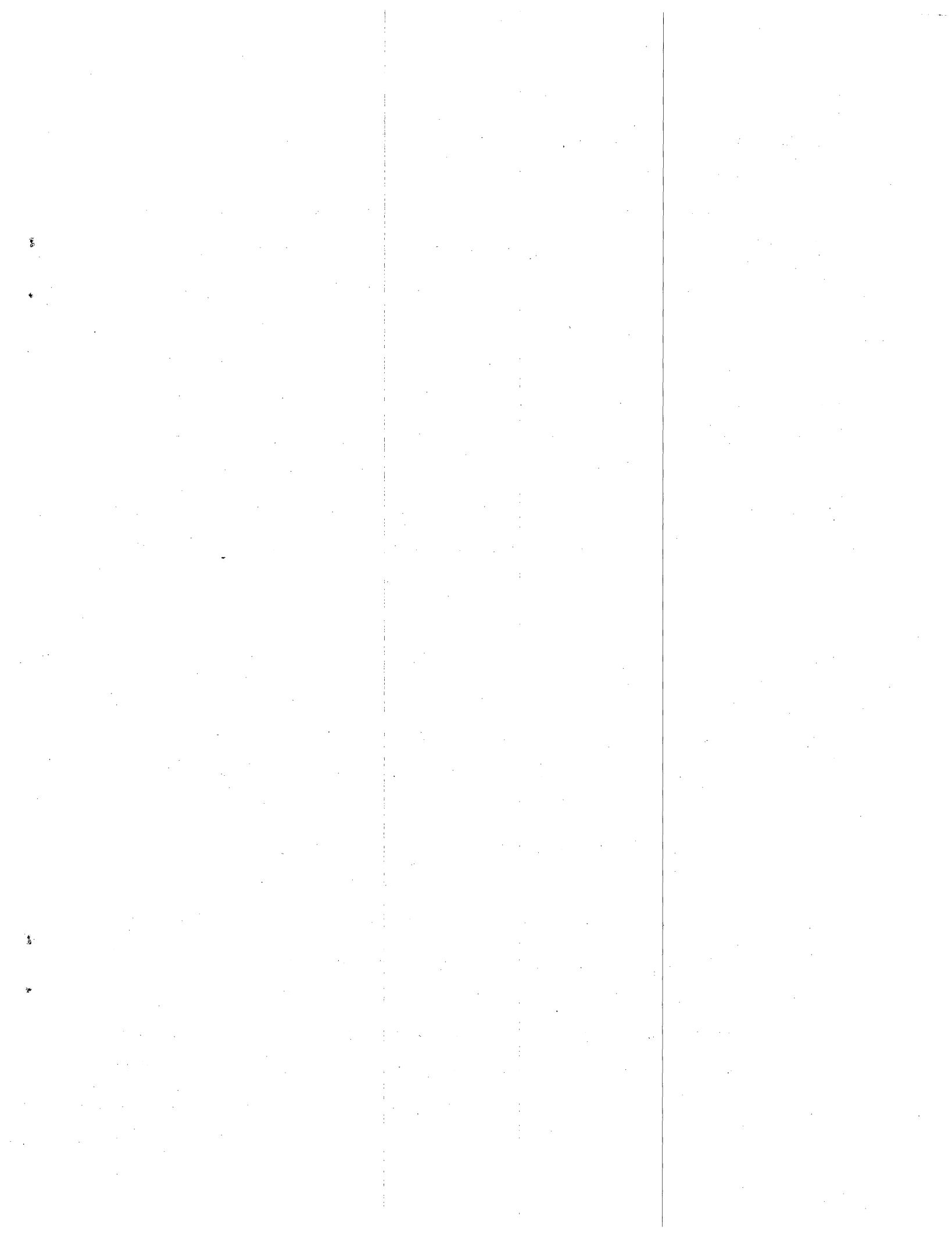
MR. McCAY: You feel most fires are caused by smokers?

MR. HAINES: Yes.

MR. McCAY: Still on the question of prevention, do you feel that road signs such as used in other States, like "Keep Vermont Green", "Use your Ash Tray", and signs like that along the road would help impress the citizens generally with the necessity of being careful with their cigarettes?

MR. HAINES: Well, to some extent, although I think most of the fires that are caused by cigarettes are by the people who are not on the main roads. There may be small groups of people gathering huckleberries; fishermen riding around the woods. As a matter of fact, I don't think it is usually people from outside of the State. I have noticed those signs in a couple of States. It has made some impression on me, but it is hard to say how much good it would do. Now, we adjoin Penn State Forest and there, that I know of, they never do any winter burning, and there are plenty of hot spots in there.

MR. McCAY: You have emphasized, Mr. Haines, the winter burning and



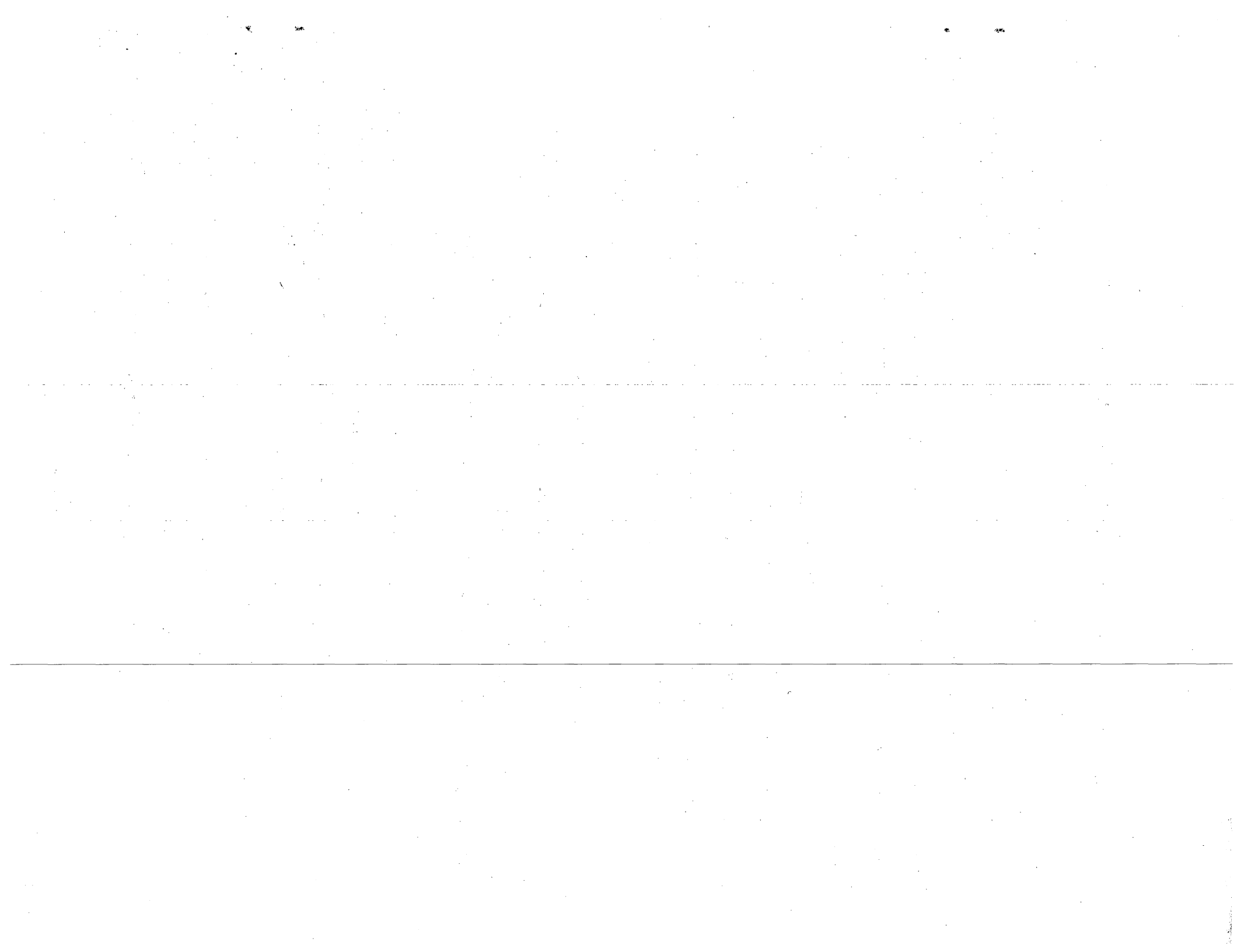
prevention methods of that kind. In your opinion, are there other things that the forest fire service might not be doing now because of lack of men or lack of equipment that should be done, or because of lack of full-time employees instead of part-time?

MR. HAINES: We have a good fellow up there, Mr. Sloan, who is very cooperative and does a good job. But I know a lot of fellows who, while they are not full-time employees, they spend some time on the work. I think it is possibly a matter of economics - they don't make quite enough to get by on with the amount of time that is involved.

MR. McCAY: I think, Mr. Seidel, that is one of the things the Commission is going to be interested in, whether full-time employees in certain spots, instead of part-time employees, might help with respect to both prevention and fighting of fires. Would you care to make some comment on that, and also on the question of winter burning?

MR. SEIDEL: The full-time and part-time manproposition is an interesting subject. Mr. Herling of Civil Service recently made a survey of and visited every section fire warden. I don't know whether he has reported this to the committee or not, but certainly his report should be considered by the committee. Without speaking for him, I think I can say that he feels the same way that most of us do, that the section fire warden's job, where he is allowed to do any other work on the side, as long as he is available for fire fighting and for other fire duties, should be kept that way. I don't feel that there is enough work to warrant full-time men. The feeling in the department is that if these men were made full-time, their number probably would be reduced. The value in keeping the number the same as it is, or increasing it, is to have more men available for peak-time loads.

Now, forest fire work is a job of peak-time loads, generally in the spring of the year and again in the fall, and as we have witnessed it, during the last



three summers, counting this one, we are having peaks in the summer. By getting men that can devote their spare time to other occupations, we are getting a better grade of man for less money. The top range of pay now for section fire warden is from \$2520. a year to \$3120. a year which, of course, is not enough pay to support the type of men that we have. Many of these men make three or four times that amount on other occupations, along with this job. I think we get a better class of men this way, and I certainly want to say that we have a lot of good men as section fire wardens.

Now, the other question is the winter burning. I do not think there is any question about winter burning being an aid to fire protection. It has been going on in New Jersey since time immemorial, which must account for the permit laws that are on the statute books since back in the early days, and again rewritten in 1906 when the forest fire service was finally established. Winter burning has no doubt saved a lot of areas in the State. Now the economic question comes in of who should do the winter burning. Should the fire service do it, or should the property owner accept that as his responsibility, or his insurance that he has to pay on his own land. I am glad you called that winter burning in contrast to the prescribed burning that is part of the departmental program. The two things are different. Winter burning is entirely for protection. Prescribed burning is where a definite plan is set up by a forester. It would reduce the fuels on the forest floor, which means that it prepares a seed bed for pine to come in, and pine is the best commercial species for that area in contrast to the natural oak. Generally on the prescribed burning plan, they burn one year or two years. In some cases where the concentration of litter is heavy, where the area has not been burned over in thirty or forty years, probably they will burn it three winters in a row. Then the pine starts to come up, and then there is no burning for a number of years. The hazard then becomes greater than it was before the fuels were removed. Also on the



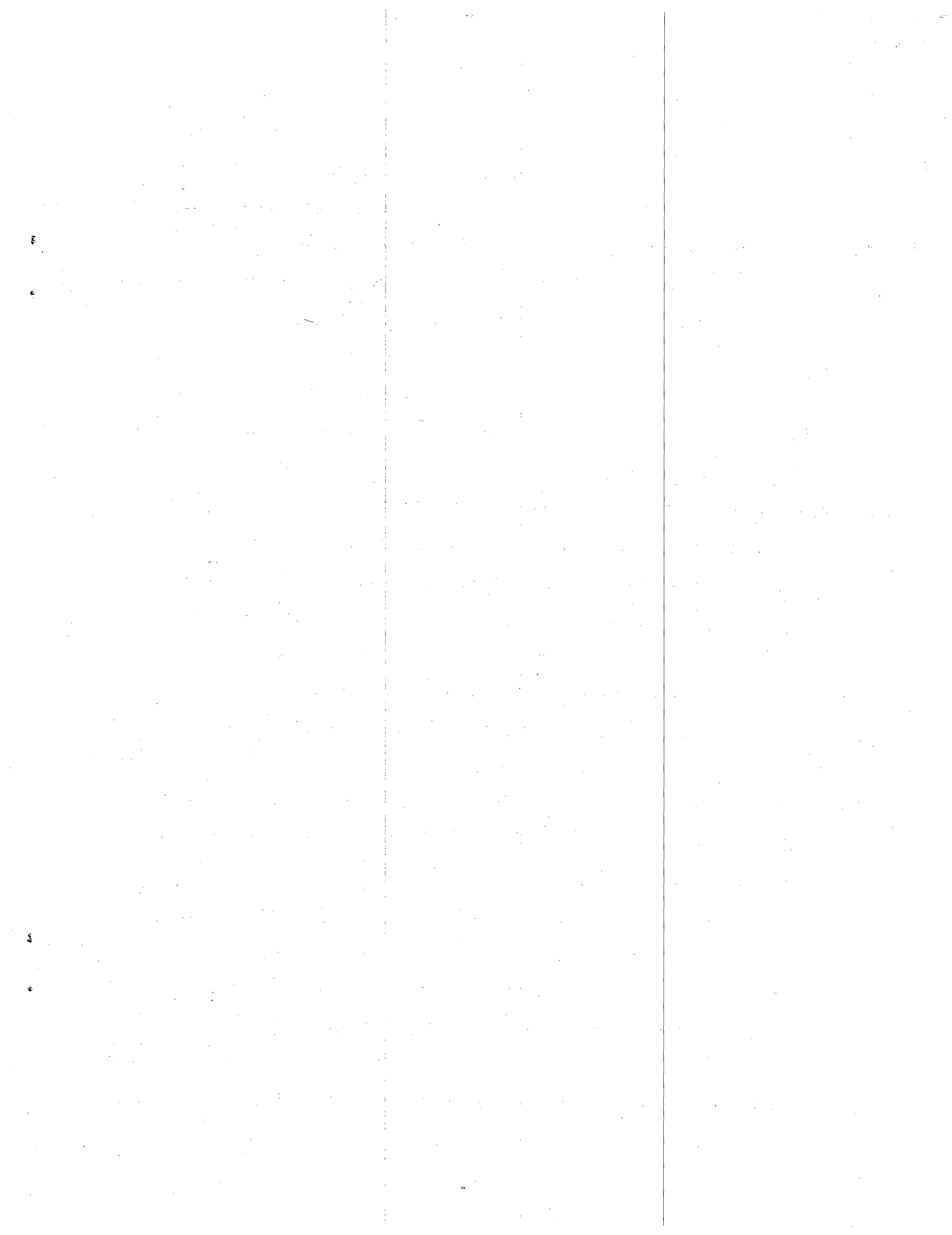
prescribed burning, it is burned when the fuel moisture is low, and the chance of burning very hard or very deep is low.

I think the Chatsworth fire is a good example of areas that have been prescribed burned, particularly where a backfire was set from White Horse to the railroad tracks, a distance of some two and a half miles. In most cases, the backfire held. The only place it went across was across the property that had been prescribed burned the winter before. They couldn't burn it with the backfire, but it had to ride out sufficiently, and a fire across the prescribed burn went on to Chatsworth. I feel that if a backfire could have been put in at that point - and there were plenty of men there - if it had not been burned the winter before, I feel that the fire would not have crossed the line and could have been held there. On that particular fire there were three heads that went over, and that was one, and that was the one that went right through the middle of the town.

I would like to add also, that with winter burning, we have reduced the number of fires considerably, particularly along our railroad tracks. And, of course, I know the railroad situation. There are other factors that contribute to the reduction of the number of fires, but Mr. Aaron, who has been active in working with the railroads, particularly from Camden to Atlantic City, has reduced the number of fires. Where we used to have five and six hundred fires, they are down to a mere fifty or sixty, or a hundred fires. They cut them way down by getting the railroads to burn in hot spots.

I feel that if we are going to spend money on winter burning for the State, you have got a vast job ahead. On the other hand, if hot spots are burned out, and burned out every year, we have the example of the railroads as to the value of it. I think that answers both of your questions.

MR. McCAY: Do you have any difficulty collecting from the railroads the cost of putting out fires?



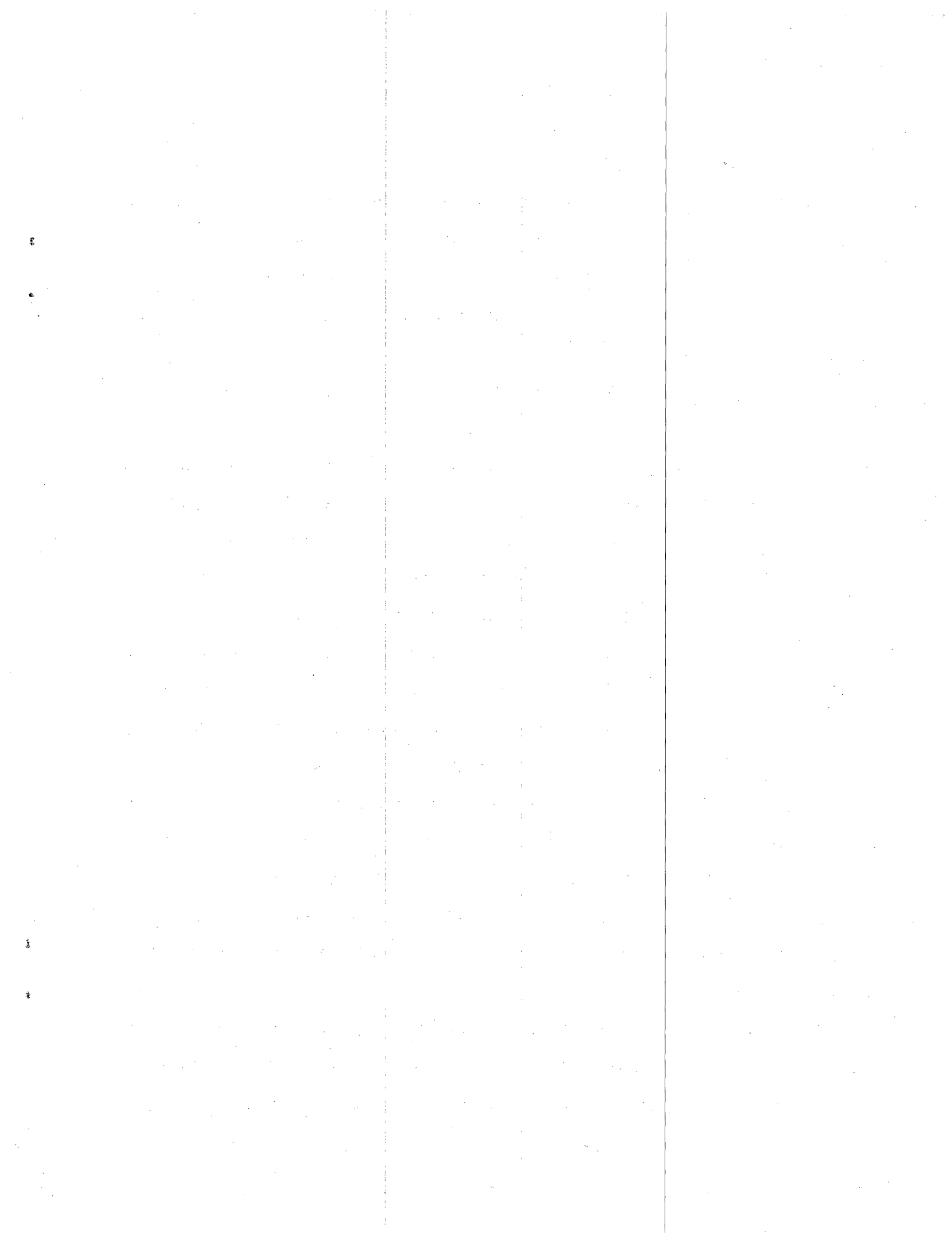
MR. SEIDEL: Yes we do; we have had quite a bit of trouble in the past in collecting. They do pay for some of them; some of them they won't pay for. When you get a particularly large fire, then they use every means of getting out of paying.

MR. McCAY: In your opinion, do the number of fires caused by railroads rate high in the percentage of fires?

MR. SEIDEL: Right now it is getting lower each year because of the activity. For instance, in 1954 we had 192 railroad fires out of 1820, and that is about 12 percent roughly. I can pick out times when, for instance, in 1942 and 1941, we had over 500 fires each year, and to go back further, in 1926 they were 35 percent of the fires. Railroad fires are on the percentage decrease. Of course, our total number of fires have been on the decrease up until the last two years.

MR. McCAY: Someone suggested in this part of the room that it is probably due, to some extent, to the replacement of steam locomotives with deisel engines.

MR. SEIDEL: That is right. And their hauling loads have been cut down because of the use of the automobile. There are hardly any passenger trains at all in comparison to what there used to be. The Tuckerton railroad has been eliminated completely, and that used to be a source of many fires. But even before that, back fifteen years ago when we started working with the railroads, Mr. Aaron had them burn the rice away between Camden and Atlantic City one or two winters, and it made a big difference. But I am quite in accord with reducing fuels as a means of reducing the number of fires. However, you can burn a good many places without it having any effect on the number of fires. That is my guess. But I am sure that if you were to burn all or part of the million five hundred thousand acres south of the Raritan River each year, or every three years, it would be a gigantic task, and I think the cost would be out of proportion to the benefit derived.



MR. McCAY: You feel then that with respect to prevention, the situation is about the same as with respect to fighting fires, as far as full-time men are concerned? I understood Mr. Haines to say that if you had full-time men instead of part-time men, a greater amount of this winter burning could be done, and therefore fires would be prevented. I think you spoke more particularly with respect to fighting fires when you discussed the subject of full-time men as contrasted with part-time men.

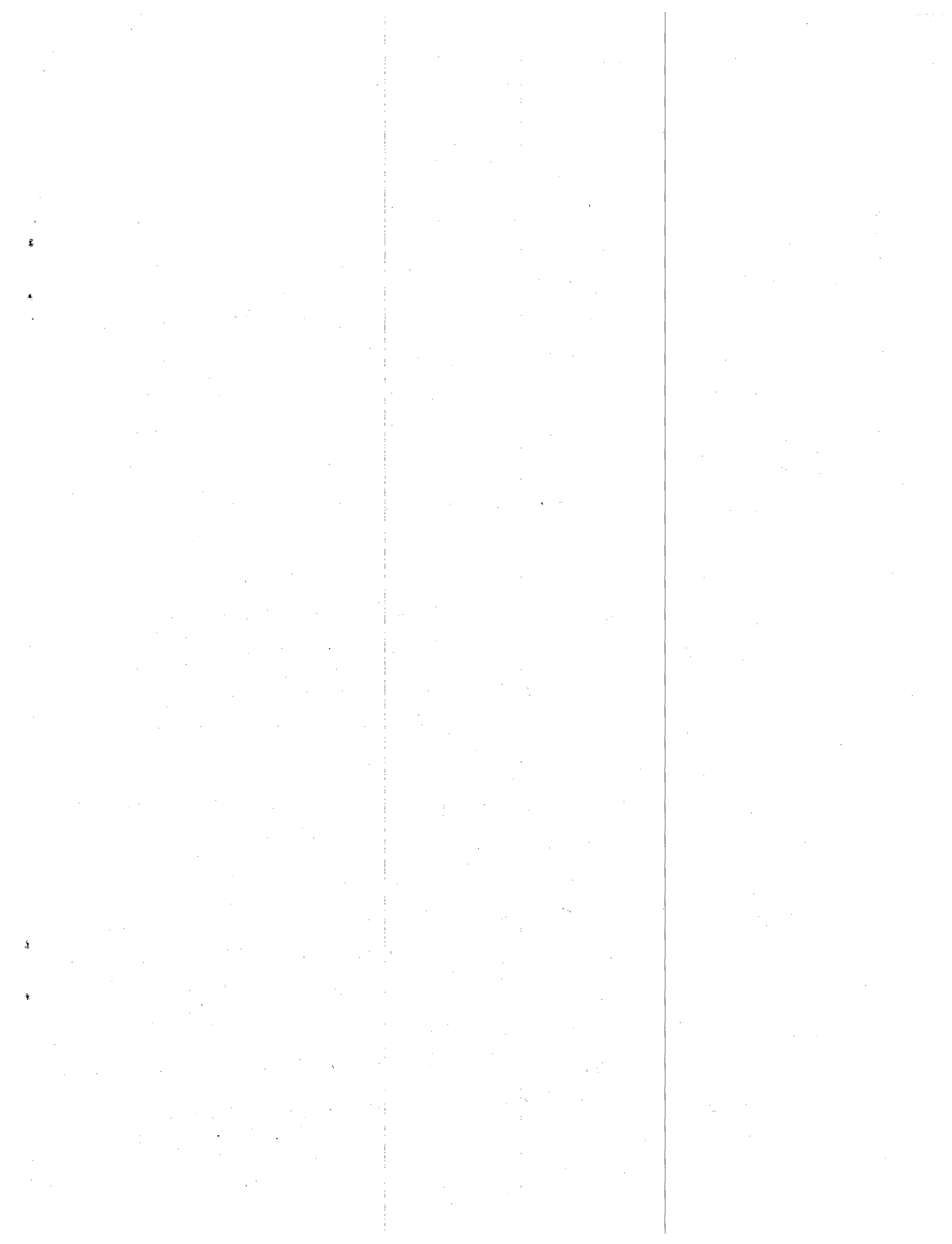
MR. SEIDEL: Of course they are used on fire prevention work in other phases, like having exhibits at county fairs, or speaking in schools and before various organizations. There is quite a bit of that done which all plays a part in fire prevention. If we increase the load, we are going to increase the pay. If you get it up too much higher, then it is going to be a full-time job, and then the men that we want, we won't be able to get.

MR. McCAY: Mr. Haines, do you have any further comments you would like to make at this time?

MR. WM. HAINES: Yes. I disagree with Mr. Seidel. I am in favor of prescribed burning. I think you get a more permanent reduction of fuel from prescribed burning, and that is what we are trying to do through the forest fire service. If you don't have any prevention, we might as well have a bad forest fire, and just let it go. We should work toward protection of the forest, and I think that is one thing prescribed burning certainly does. We do have a prescribed burning program.

MR. SEIDEL: I know you are in a prescribed burning program. How many years have you burned?

MR. WM. HAINES: We have been burning long before we were in the program; before my time we have been burning certain sections.



MR. SEIDEL: But as to the areas set out for prescribed burning, how many years has that been?

MR. WM. HAINES: We just started actually under the program in the past two years.

MR. SEIDEL: Now then, what do you do next year?

MR. WM. HAINES: We have burned every area. I won't say we won't get fire in there, but what we try to do is have one block protect another. If we get a fire in a block, we have either fire lines, or an area that has been burned the preceding year to protect that area. I don't know if the other gentlemen are familiar with the idea of prescribed burning or not, but you know yourself, if you burn an area, particularly pine woods, hard you are going to get mostly no cover up, due to the lack of shade. And the pine does get up thick, and after pine gets twelve or fifteen feet high, you can run a fairly hard fire through and you will really get control of your under-cover. We have spots where there is hardly anything as far as litter is concerned.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: What type of fire lines do you mean?

MR. WM. HAINES: We take bulldozers where we have big blocks of four or five hundred acres, and we try to split it down.

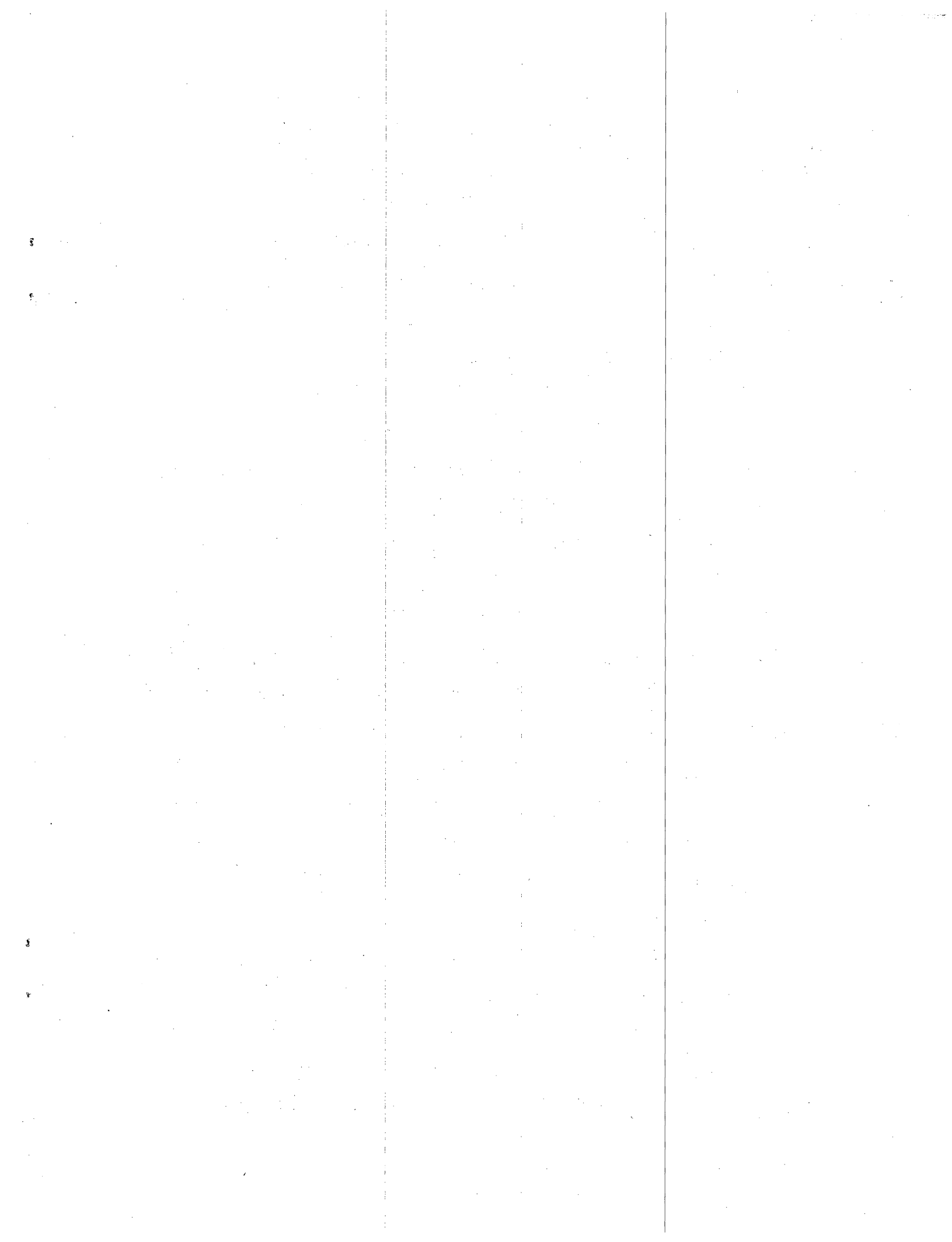
ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: How wide are those lanes?

MR. WM. HAINES: Big enough to run down.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: Do you think a roto-tiller, like they have in the department, is effective?

MR. WM. HAINES: Anything will do that will make a lane you can drive down. It gives you a place to backfire from, and it also gives you access to a fire that has started in certain areas.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: You came up to a certain point on the question of immediate action. Can you tell us a little more about why we haven't had immediate action?



MR. WM. HAINES: As I said, I am talking on hearsay somewhat, but I have been on fires where the local forest fire crews were actually afraid to get off the fire truck, or were too lazy to get off. I had several of my men who were working like dogs, and the other fellows would stand there and turn on the faucet if you wanted to get a bucket of water, but they don't seem anxious to go in and put the fire out.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: Do you think that is on account of leadership or the pay?

MR. WM. HAINES: Both I guess.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: What is the hourly pay for the men?

MR. WM. HAINES: One dollar the first hour, and 75 cents an hour thereafter. It is really a miserable job to go in and fight a forest fire. Anybody that does it is not doing it for the money; they are doing it to help get the fire out.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: Is it any worse now than it was 20 or 25 years ago?

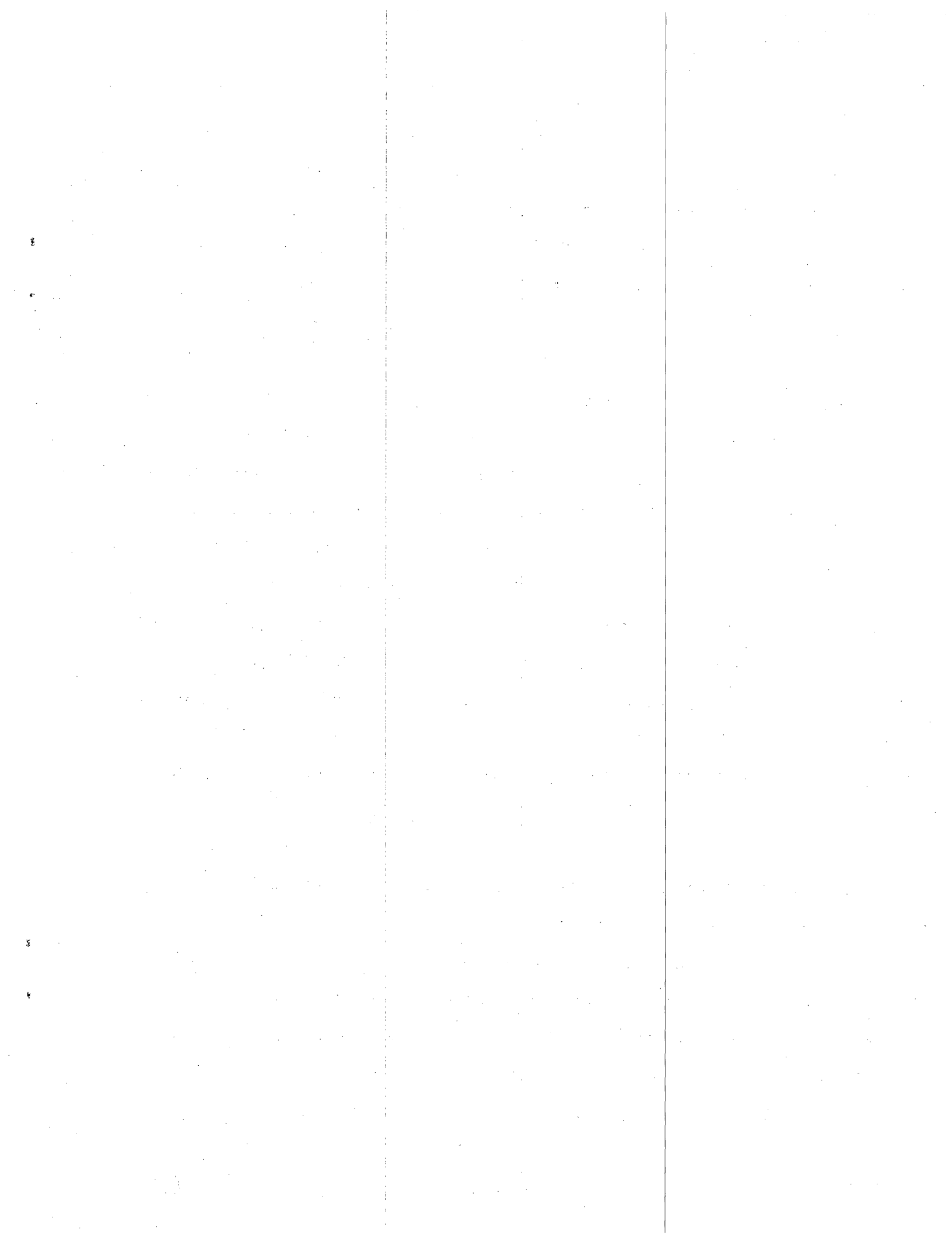
MR. WM. HAINES: I don't really remember 25 years ago.

MR. SEIDEL: Twenty-five years ago you got one dollar for the first two hours, and forty cents an hour after that.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: I mean is it harder to get people today than it was then?

MR. SEIDEL: Yes, very much harder. People are not available. They are working today whereas they were not working 25 years ago. People who were working then were not working in other places; they were working in the areas. Today people are getting out to the centers where they can get higher pay.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: Well, Mr. Haines said that even though the men are available, you can't get them to do anything. They won't go in and join them and help fight the fire in its early stages.



MR. BARTLETT: That is correct. I think Bill is very correct in that. The young fellows you get today - well, in the first place, you can't get a man out of the town today. You know what it is in Chatsworth in the middle of the day. We had a truck go out there the other day to go up on the plains, and he couldn't find a man in Chatsworth to take with him. He finally stopped a car on the highway and put those men on there. That is the type of man you get. They don't even know how to turn on the water. When we have long jobs such as we have now in Middlesex County where we are pumping on a fire - we have been pumping on it since Friday - it is hard to get men at 75 cents an hour and put them to work. They just won't do it. Their bread and butter is concerned. It isn't economically sound for them to do it. They have a wife and children, and they have to feed them. Furthermore, the modern youth today has been raised on mechanized equipment. He was raised on mechanized equipment in the Army, and he comes out and he wants to have a truck to work with, and you cannot get him to take the shovel. Unless it is one of the old-timers in the area, it is very, very difficult to get the men to do that kind of work. You can put a man, or a half-dozen men on the fire line, and unless you stay right there and watch them, they are going to drop their tools and go somewhere else.

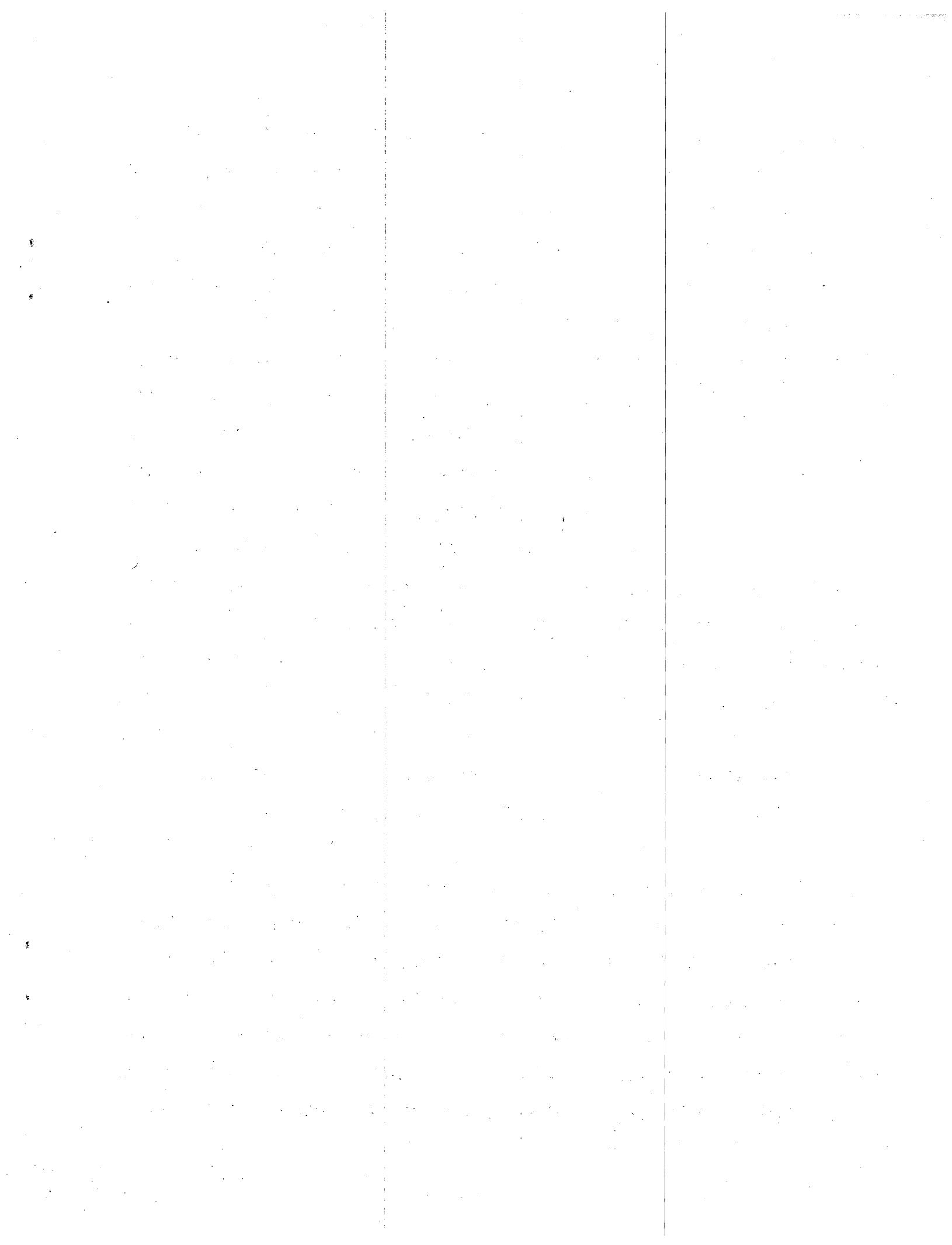
ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: When a man is called on a fire like that, he has to stay there until the fire is out, around the clock, doesn't he? He doesn't get any relief, does he?

MR. BARTLETT: We try to relieve him.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: And you feed them?

MR. BARTLETT: We feed them, yes. As a matter of fact, the regulation requires they be relieved every eight hours, but with the manpower shortage, it is impossible.

MR. GILBERT: And in the fire departments, we don't have the equipment



or the manpower available to go into the forest to fight the fire, and for that simple reason, it is almost 100 percent volunteer in the county. Volunteers will give up their time, and often their lives, in an attempt to save someone else or their property. He doesn't feel that the forest itself is important enough for him to give up his job of two or three dollars an hour, or whatever he may be making, to go up there for 75 cents an hour and fight forest fires. Therefore, we have no equipment or manpower available to take in there, for the simple reason that we can't get the manpower to come with us.

MR. McCAY: Mr. Haines, do you have any further comments?

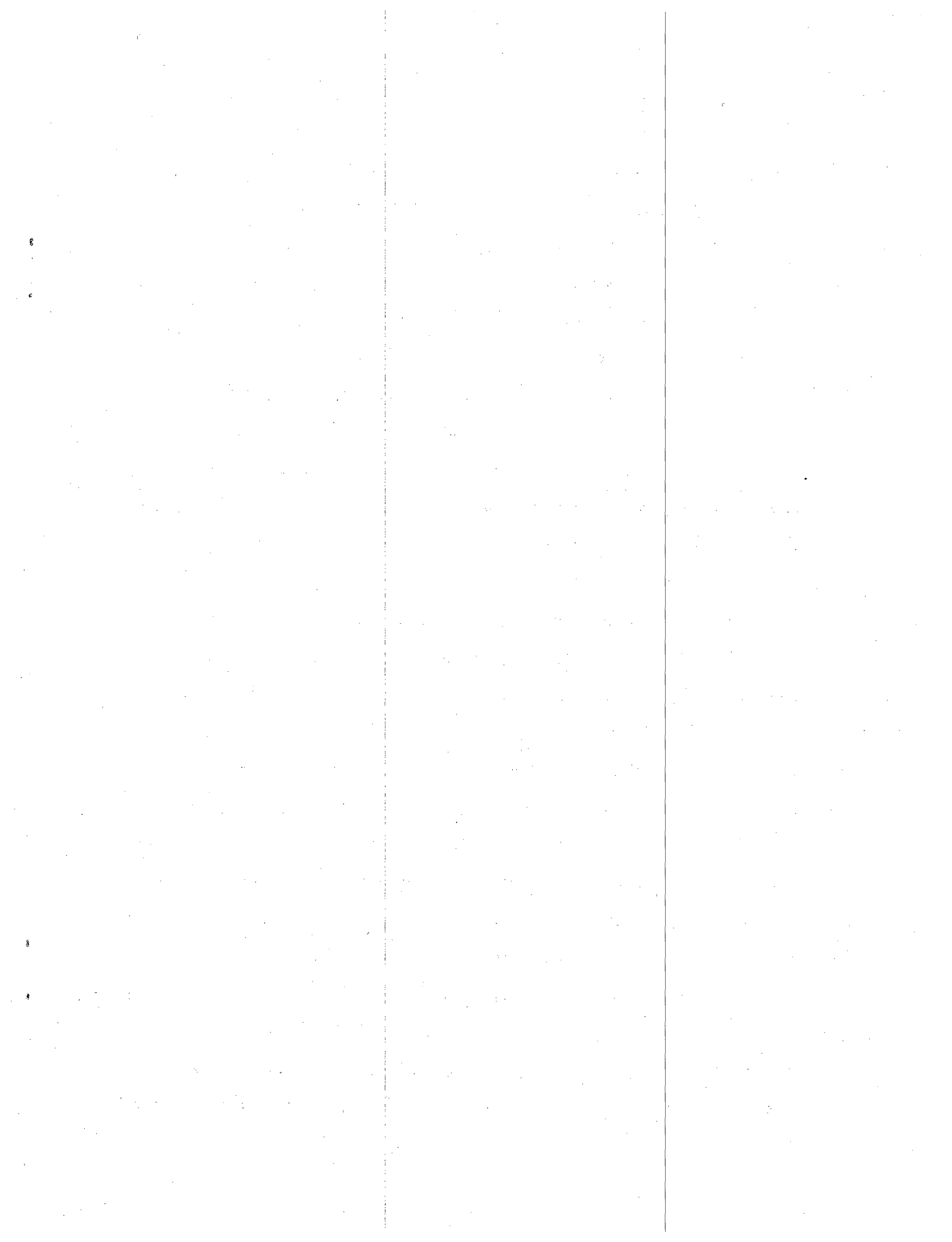
MR. WM. HAINES: I will agree with Mr. Bartlett that it is hard to get men.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: I still come back to my original question. Is there any way we can improve that situation, either by more money, or equipment? I think that is one of the leading issues in this whole matter, the question of available manpower. Now, can that be improved? That is my question.

MR. WM. HAINES: This thought just entered my mind when you mentioned that. At Hainesport we had the idea one time of keeping all the sprayers that different property owners had in shape to go all the time, and when there was a fire in a certain area, you could ring up somebody on the 'phone, the same as this mutual agreement that the fire companies have, and you could probably get a lot of citizens that way. I know, at least, we would be cooperative in that respect. And I think you will find there is quite a large amount of equipment that could be kept in shape to go all the time. That may be one thing - it is just an idea.

MR. SEIDEL: You say there is a large amount of equipment ready to go?

MR. WM. HAINES: Yes. We have a sprayer which would be better than even the smaller fire trucks. I think you will find several of them with those sprayers. That is something that might be worked out.



MR. SEIDEL: Of course, there is a lot of cooperation among local people with their equipment, tractors, and sprayers, and the like, and their manpower. There has been a lot of that. It is a dual proposition, of course, for their own protection, and the protection of the lands around them. But it has been a big help as far as we are concerned. Do you have any of those agreements where people would go out for fires, if they aren't fire wardens, that Mr. Haines speaks about?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes we have. On the Browns Mills fire we had a small truck that did a wonderful job.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: In other words, that is all organized?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes, the section warden organizes that.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: And that service is recognized?

MR. SEIDEL: Mr. Aaron points out to me that down in Division C, in South Jersey, they have a lot of that equipment that is working. I know in North Jersey they have some.

MR. AARON: In every section we have groups of that kind to be used for emergencies. We also have 10,000 gallon trucks that also could be used. They are reserve equipment used only in case of a large fire. We endeavor not to bother them at any other time, but I believe we have a very good setup in that respect, and very good cooperation from all the people.

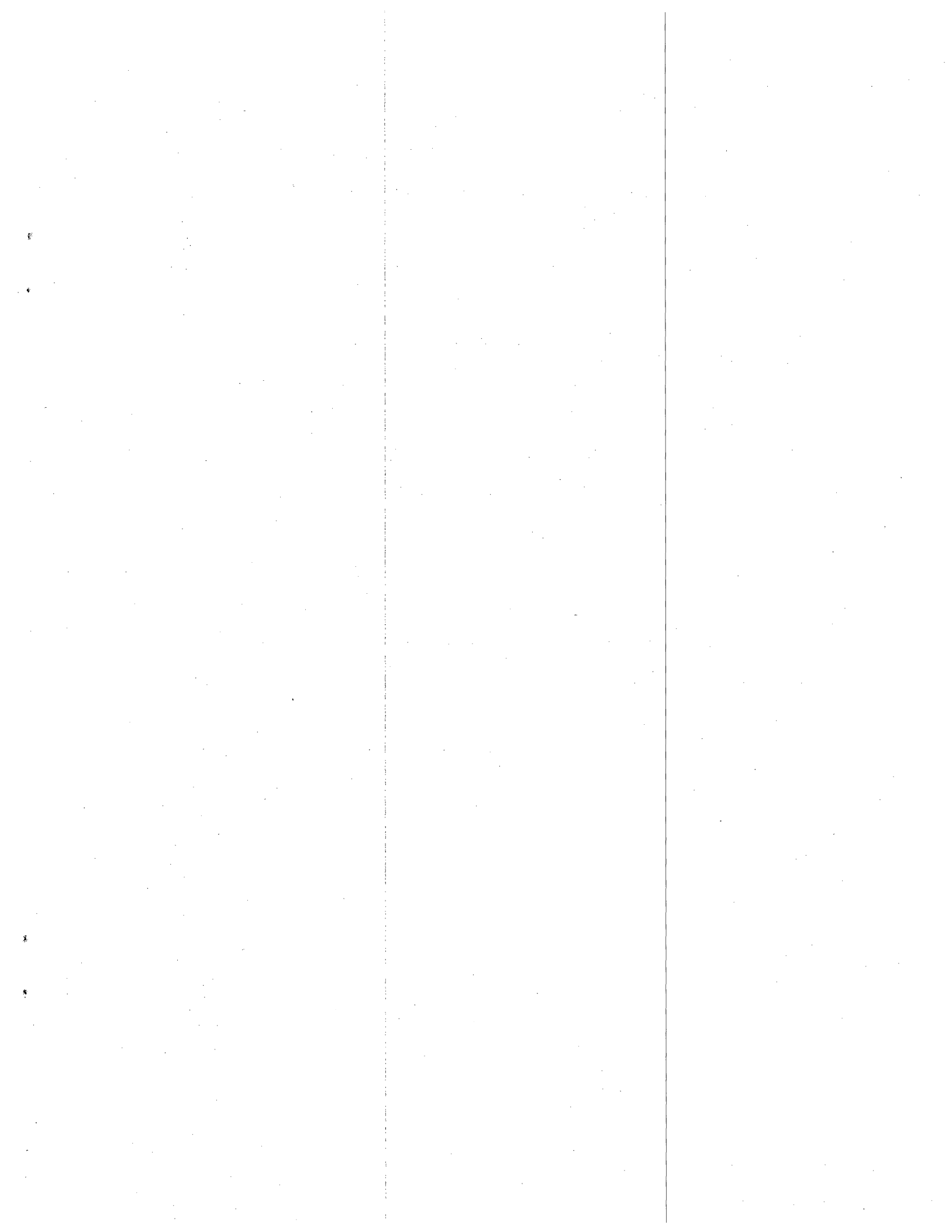
MR. McCAY: To the extent that the private property owners who have this equipment are willing to go out of their own area to help fight fires?

MR. AARON: That is right, within a reasonable distance. I have them throughout the whole division.

MR. SEIDEL: From one county to another, you mean?

MR. AARON: Yes.

MR. SEIDEL: I would like to point out also that Mr. Bartlett has used,

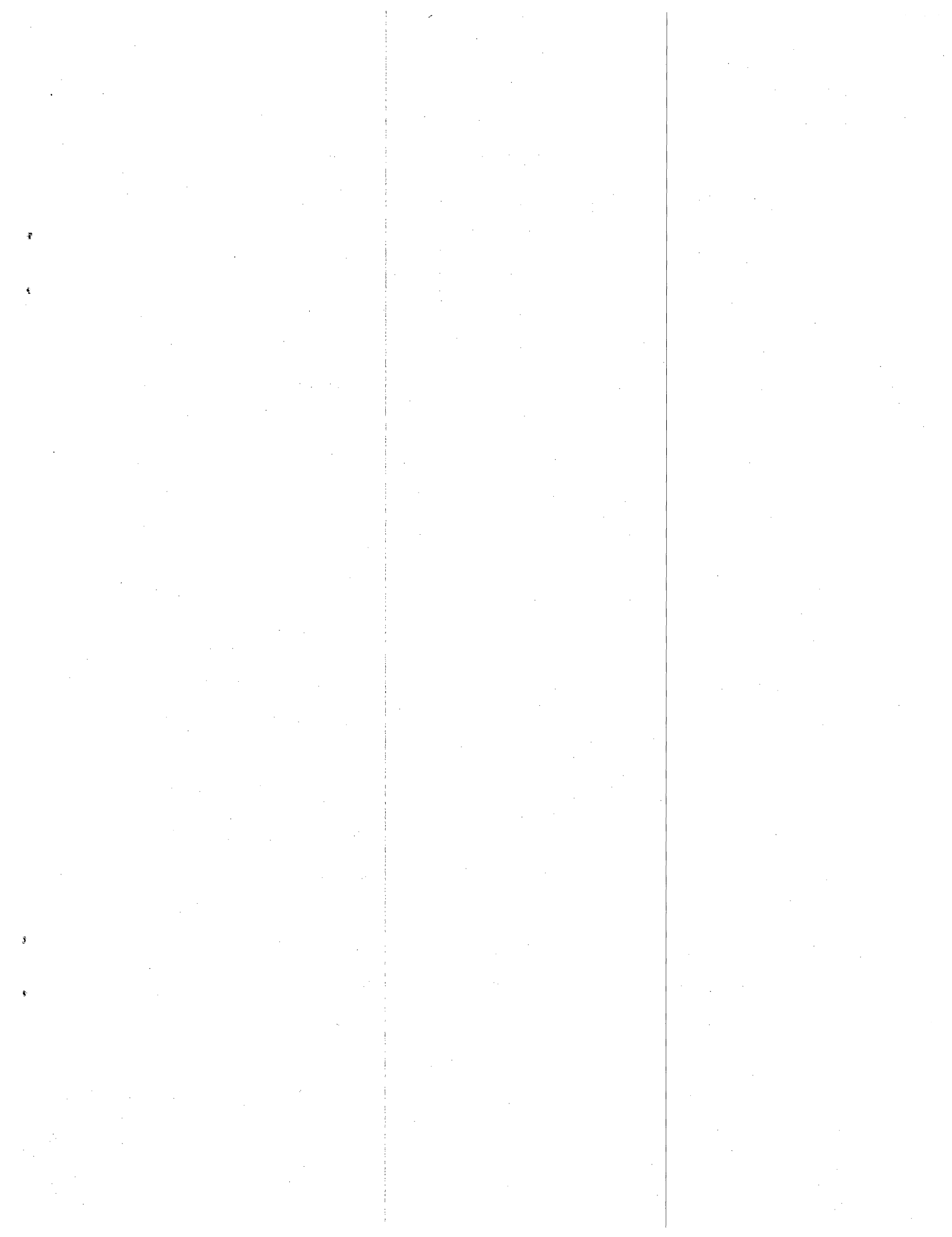


just this weekend, a heavy caterpillar tractor for cutting a line through a swamp on a fire up in Middlesex County. We have several tractors available, and tractor operators, that are listed that we can hire which, of course, is the only way you are going to get them. It is much better than having that equipment on inventory and using it once every so often, and let obsolescence or rust take it away from you.

MR. McCAY: All right. We will now hear from Mr. Forrest H. Jennings of Indian Mills, New Jersey.

MR. FORREST H. JENNINGS, Indian Mills, New Jersey

I want to say first that I did not come up here to condemn or criticize any member of the forest fire service. My only reason for coming up here was to give suggestions to this committee as a result of some of the things that I have heard following these large fires that we had last year. I could also go back about 25 years when I was still in my twenties, when we had some very serious fires, and the volunteers that we had came out and fought the forest fires in those times, and they were experienced. They were property owners who were interested in protecting the peoples' property in that area in which they lived. Everybody was interested in getting the fire out as fast as possible and to protect everybody's property that they could. I know we went on the job with just a handful of men and worked right through the day and possibly all through the night with very little equipment, possibly nothing more than a tank stuck to our backs; or we would dig trenches through the woods at night with lights, and backfire all night long. I can go back to the time when the boys in Chatsworth Township would work all night long, and they had some pretty big fires up there. That area is a little larger than ours, but they would spend most of the night backfiring and trying to get that fire under control. Of course, that situation is entirely different today. A lot of the boys work out of their area, and it makes it

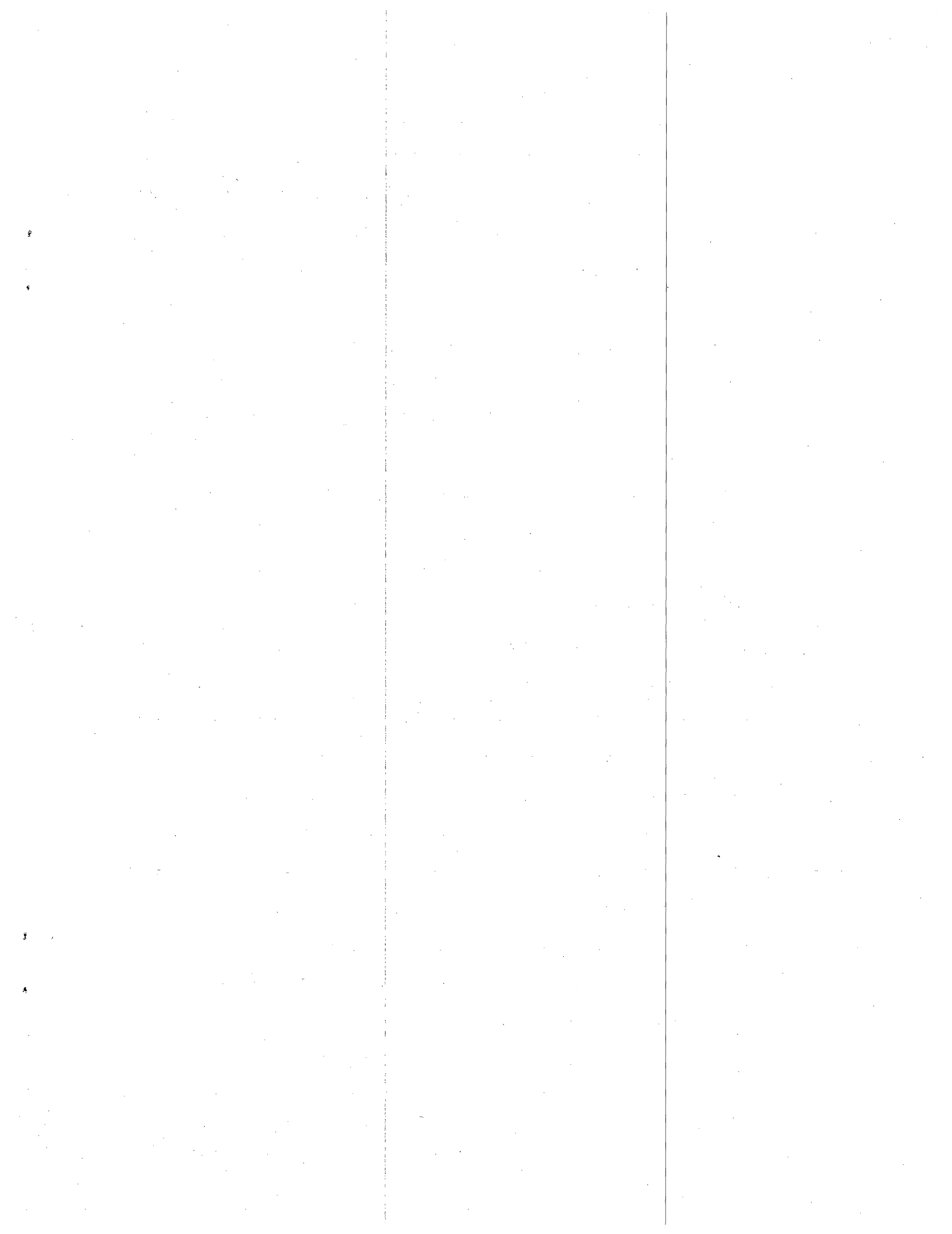


difficult to get them. I, myself, have over two hundred employees working for me, and naturally, I can't leave, and I don't want any of my supervisors to go out on a fire today - and that is true with almost every other person - unless the fire is actually on our own property, or adjoining it. Naturally, with the seriousness of the fire that we had last year, we did all get together and put as many men as we possibly could on the job. I sent in equipment which I never charged for - I didn't expect anything - because we wanted to protect as much property as was available to protect.

Now, lots of times you will look up, and you will see a fire. Well, you feel that your divisional warden, who has the truck available, and who is paid by the forest fire service, should take care of it because that is his job - let him put it out. When Mr. Evans was in the service, he had available three and four men at all times, and he could always pick up the rest of us. I feel that sometimes they could put out a small fire if the atmospheric conditions are such that it doesn't spread too fast. But many of the people in my area feel that in certain seasons of the year there should be men paid to be on the job full time to spot these fires, and the minute they are spotted, to go on the job and put them out. They should have sufficient paid men to go along with them during that time of the year. That is one of the suggestions that I have received from a number of people.

Now the State is contemplating buying a great deal of the land there, and unless you have State employees there to protect it, I don't think the people in the community are going to go out to put out fires on State property, when you should have State employees to do the job. They should also be there to inform the people to be care; maybe set up a forest fire ranger station, or keep them on patrol duty during the time when it is necessary for them to be on the lookout for fires.

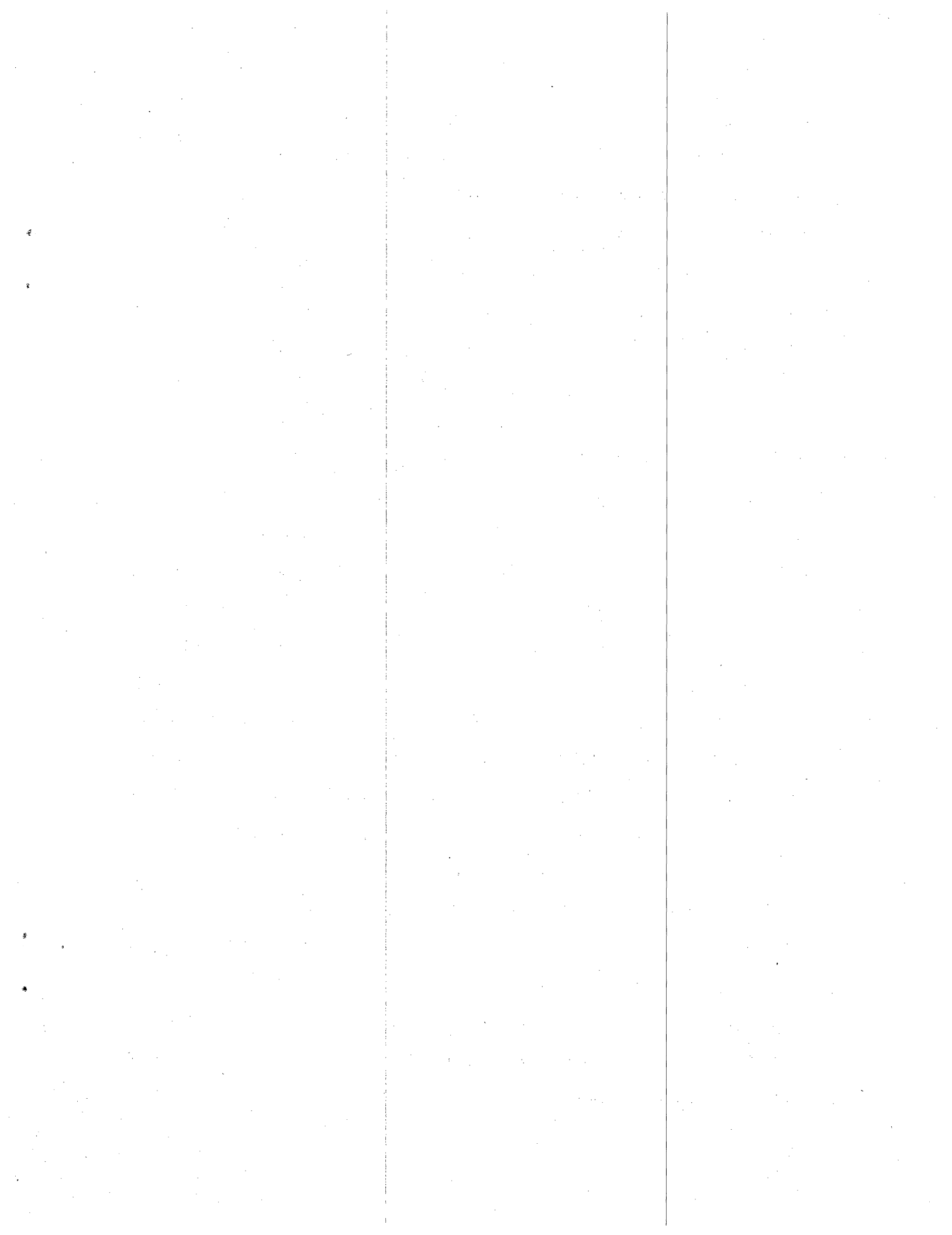
Last year I recall meeting Mr. Bartlett down where a fire started on a



Sunday, and I think he will agree with me as to the amount of confusion that exists around a fire when it gets in the condition that one was. A Sunday afternoon is the worst time of the week for a fire to start. It is awfully hard to get any kind of working cooperation with the people who are present. I noticed that just recently again. Several times so many people come in from the outside who have no intention of fighting that fire, who are only spectators, and they hamper the mobility of the equipment. Also the men who do come in and want to fight the fire are so confused that you can't get any organization. I feel there should be some method of segregating the onlooker, or keeping him out entirely, because it is rather dangerous. So many people block the roads, and we need proper policing. I know I myself went out and asked the township officials to go out and block off the roads so we could get back and forth with the tank trucks without any interference.

I also feel that in any particular operation when we bring in outside help, there should be some means of identification of those fellows. Now, a man who is handling particularly a backfire, is handling something very dangerous, and that is not a job for every person who might come in and volunteer. Anybody can handle a sprayer or a shovel; they can't do too much damage. But I think in the future a great deal of emphasis should be put on the fact that the person who is handling the backfires should be a man capable of doing so, who knows how fast he can go. There should be a capable man assigned to that job, to do that particular job alone. That is one of the suggestions that came from a couple of the men in our area.

Now, I am not criticizing the State for not making available more money for additional equipment for these district wardens. I know there is a certain amount available, but it is very easily used up. But I know there is additional equipment needed very badly in our area, and I question very much whether too many

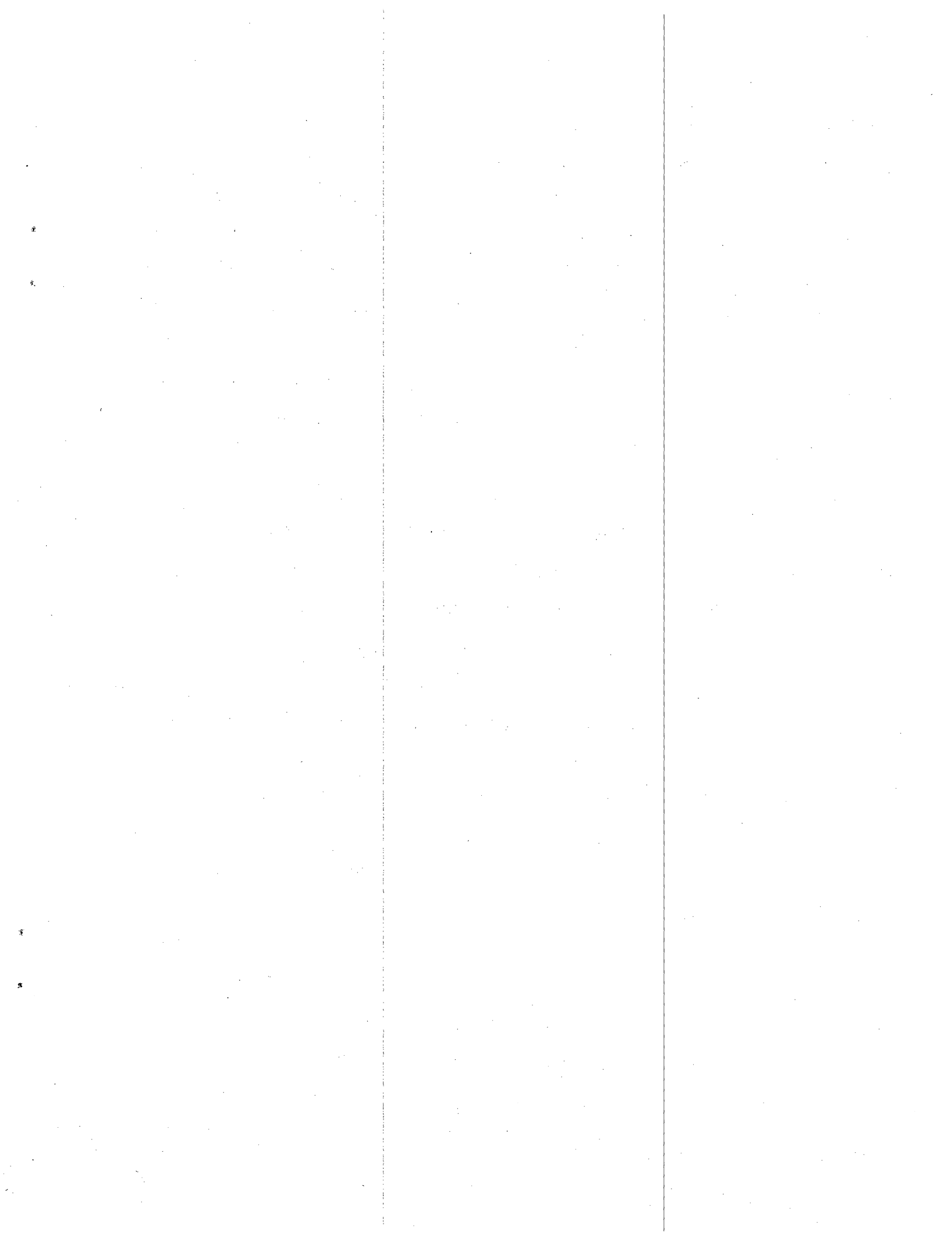


of us can afford to send equipment on a forest fire because the responsibility that exists, the liability that exists. If we should run into somebody, or bump into someone, I doubt whether my insurance will take care of it, because I would be on a job that is actually not farming. I think that refers to a lot of us. You have to be so careful, because if you put a man on there, and he gets excited - and some people will during a fire - and drives too fast, or runs into somebody, it will cause you an untold lot of trouble.

I did touch on this before, and that is the availability of the men in the area. Here again, I do not want to criticize the service, but many of the property owners feel that the district warden should have more authority, because a lot of these boys feel sometimes that their orders are superseded. In other words, they have to wait for orders to backfire sometimes when it should have been done sooner. And if they do go in an backfire, and the fire does get away from them, they are afraid they will be criticized. They should have more flexibility to allow them to make more decisions.

MR. McCAY: You mean the district warden?

MR. JENNINGS: Yes, the district warden, because lots of times there may be two fires at the same time, and the section warden may be on another fire. That has happened several times. There have been sometimes two or three fires starting at the same time, and in that case they are reluctant about going in and putting out a fire. I have talked to some of these boys, and they don't want to commit themselves too much. They won't talk too much in front of a group of people. But some of these things I have mentioned are the underlying causes of why some of these fires are not put out more quickly. I feel that it is the job of the local warden to put out that fire, rather than wait for word from his section warden, or division warden. I haven't any ax to grind with any of these boys, because they are good fire fighters, but they will wait until the section

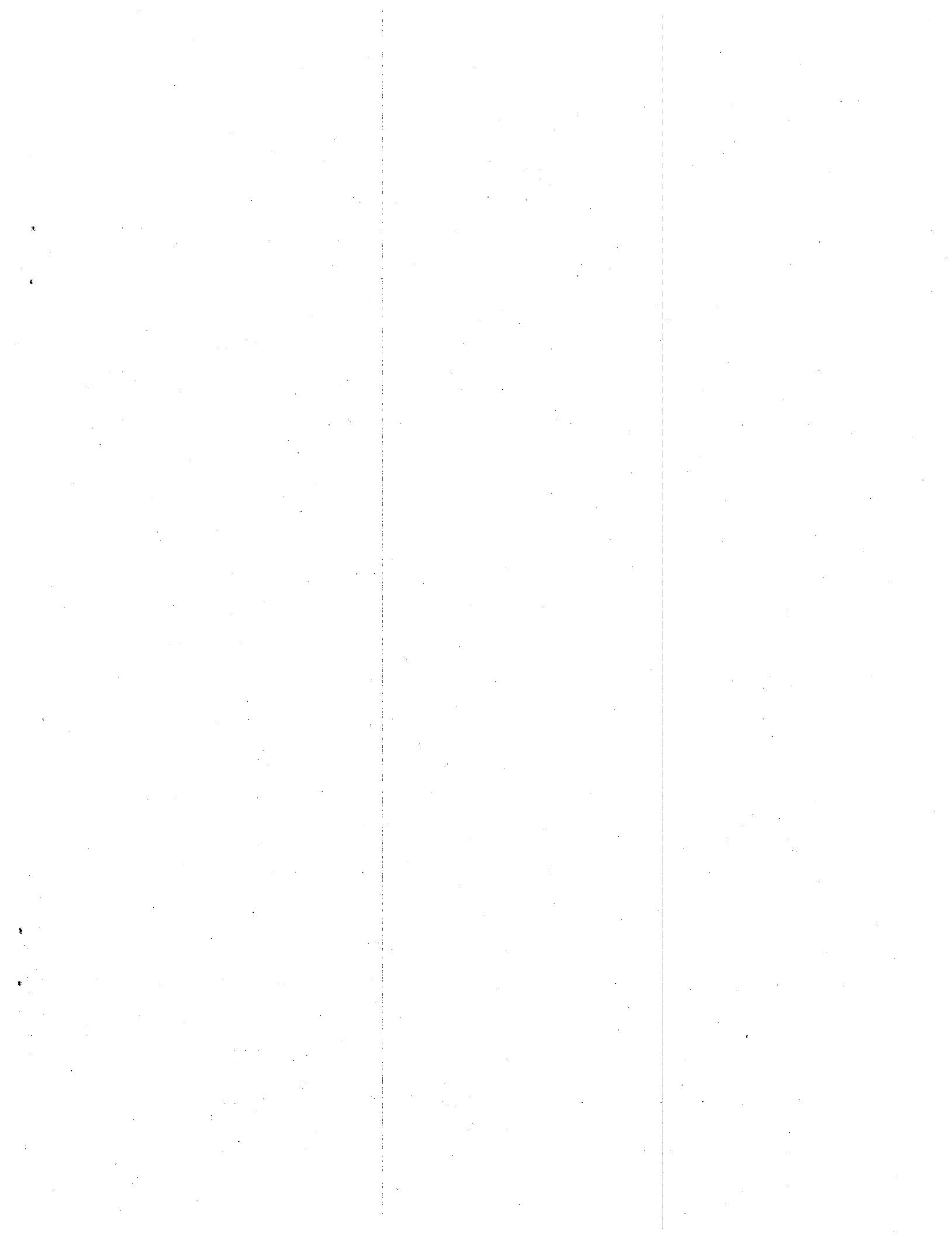


warden gets on the job. And when he gets there, sometimes he can't locate any help. He only has one man with him, and sometimes none at all. I saw Mr. Gerber come on the job when he had nobody with him at all. He couldn't get anybody, and there was nobody there to help him. Fortunately, I happened to have some help available, and we put the fire out. It wasn't on my property, but the fire was practically out when he got there. In other words, they should have more responsibility. We may have to pay them more money. I don't think they are being paid enough. In fact, I don't think any of the people in the department are being paid enough to actually do the job that we are now asking them to do. There is a lot of responsibility entailed, and a lot of detailed work. We have to do a lot of other things - write permits, make a lot of decisions. They do get paid while they are on duty, but I would just as leave have them go out and work for nothing as to get paid such a small salary when they are doing the job.

Also, they have to use their own equipment. I heard one fellow gripe that he ruined two tires last year, and bent up his fenders, and the State did not pay for it. He had to take it out of his pocket. That happened to me. That is why I quit the job a good many years ago. I lost three tires in one day. So you can understand why people quit that job.

A lot could be said on the incentive of the people in the area to go out and kill that fire so it doesn't get going too far. I feel we should probably get Mr. Bartlett down, or Mr. Seidel, at the division meetings, if possible, to build up good will in the areas where these fires are. I think that has to be done somehow or other. In other words, make them feel you are not just a bureaucrat, and come down and make better public relations. Maybe we can't pay them in money, but we can make them feel as if they are one of the group.

Last year there was quite a lot of criticism. Probably a lot of unorthodox things were done, which could happen in the case of an emergency. There

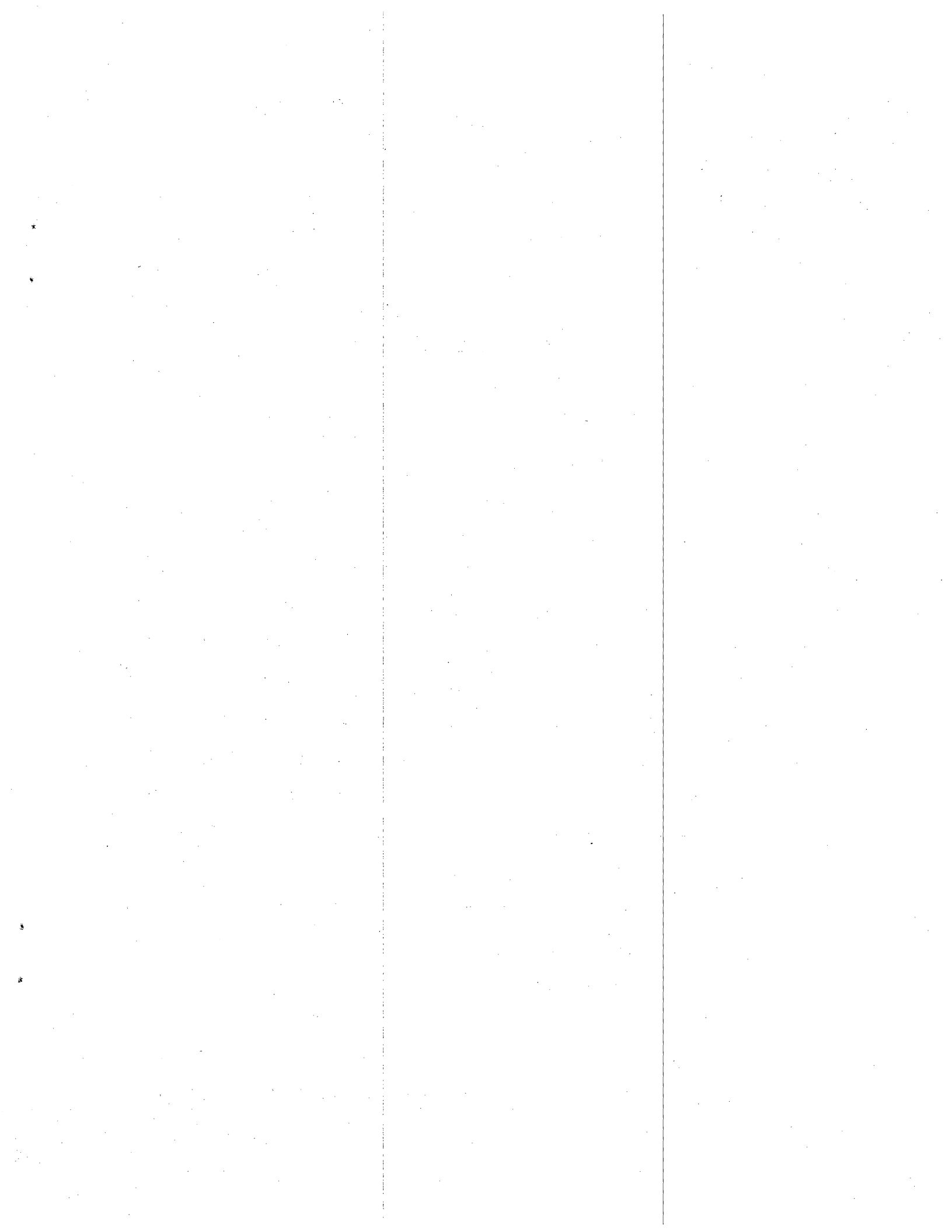


should be some type of identification put on the men who are actually fighting the fire, so that the warden would know that the men are working on the job, and he would know when someone was not working when they should be. I had a lot of fellows who got paid that didn't do anything. I think also that some who did work did not get paid. I may be wrong about that. That is one of the suggestions that came from one of the fellows who was fighting the fire last year.

Now, I have another complaint that was told to me. Three of the boys who live in our area, who own property in Atlantic County, when they had a fire down there a year ago this past spring, they were on the job for approximately over two weeks, protecting their cranberry bogs. They were there day and night. Every afternoon they had to quit work and go down there. And those boys told me they had no compensation at all for the time they put in. At the same time, there were a lot of others down there that were being paid to stand by. I do not think that is quite fair, because a man who does what those boys did is not only protecting his own property, he is protecting somebody else's also. Going off the job for a day or so isn't so bad, but these boys went down there every day for two weeks, and lost time. One of the boys is a carpenter, and one of the others is a farmer, and he had to neglect a lot of his crops. I wanted to bring that out. Of course, that will entail more money probably, but we need more money for this job.

At the time of the Chatsworth fire, we were wondering how to get the Army in, and they did come in, and a lot of people commended the Army for the work they did. I think that possibly some working arrangement should be made with them to bring them in again if it should be necessary.

One of the things I would like to emphasize is the fact that the people in our area believe that in these areas that are now being taken over by the State, there should be something in the way of a patrol system, even if it is only one or



two men. There should be somebody on the job to make the people be aware that they must be careful, because more people are getting off the main highways every Sunday, and every weekend, traveling through these back roads. Only recently we stopped a man from using a camp fire without a permit right in our area. He had started a camp fire right on the side of the road. A lot of people need this called to their attention, whether it be through signs or uniformed patrolman. I believe there are a lot of retired men around who could probably fill that position in the summertime. We are able to get plenty of part-time policemen to go out and do certain jobs sometimes, and I would assume that possibly you could get some people to do it for almost nothing, just to keep occupied.

I think I will conclude with that. I have probably said too much already.

MR. McCAY: Assemblyman Haines, do you have any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: I would like to ask Mr. Bartlett or Mr. Seidel whether the fire permit law is enforced fully.

MR. SEIDEL: Oh yes. In 1954 we found 308 violations of the permit law MR. EDWARD HAINES, Medford, New Jersey.

I didn't want to interrupt here, but I think you need to be more severe with your permits. In the first place, Senator McCay, they are not thoroughly written up; not all the information is filled in on them.

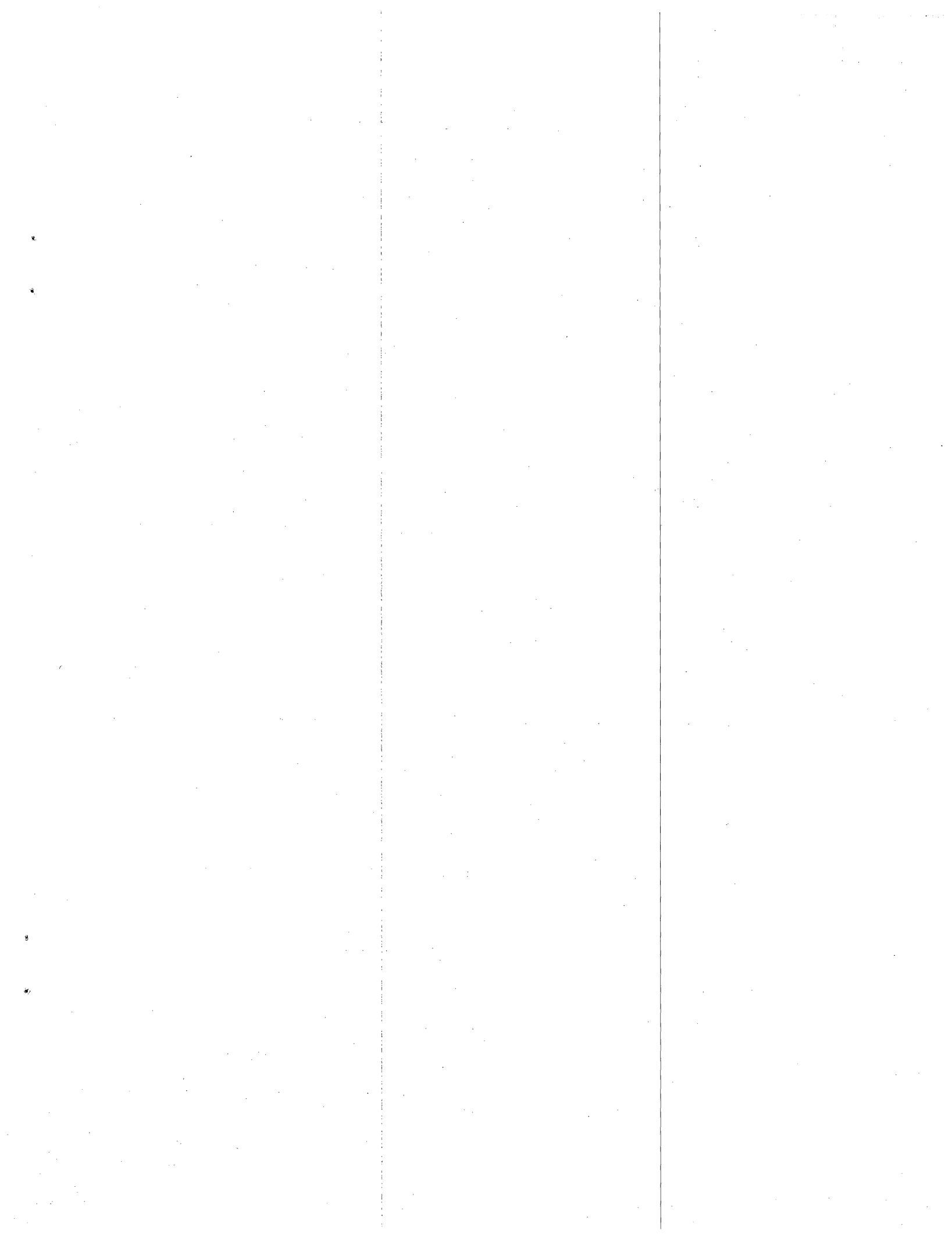
MR. McCAY: Who issues them?

MR. E. HAINES: The district wardens.

MR. SEIDEL: Or the section warden.

MR. E. HAINES: I feel the district wardens are too lax, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: When you issue a summons, isn't there a long form that has to be filled out, and often times if the section fire warden found such a person, he won't issue a summons on account of the trouble it takes to write that whole form out? Couldn't that summons be simplified?



MR. SEIDEL: I know what you are getting at. The proposition of giving on-the-spot warning has some merit to it. It is being tried out in some other States. It is one of the things that has been suggested that we haven't gotten into yet. I don't know whether it is a good thing or not. It has some merit to it, but I don't think that is going to do too much toward stricter enforcement of the permit law. I think the fault there is with the section warden, and that is something, of course, we will have to take care of.

MR. McCAY: Is it the district warden who issues the permit?

MR. SEIDEL: Yes.

MR. McCAY: Now, are they required when a person sets a fire on his own property, or just in what instances are they required?

MR. SEIDEL: They are issued for a fire permit only, and it gives no right to trespass. As a general rule the district warden will find out where the fire is going to be, and if the person has enough help to take care of the fire he is going to have.

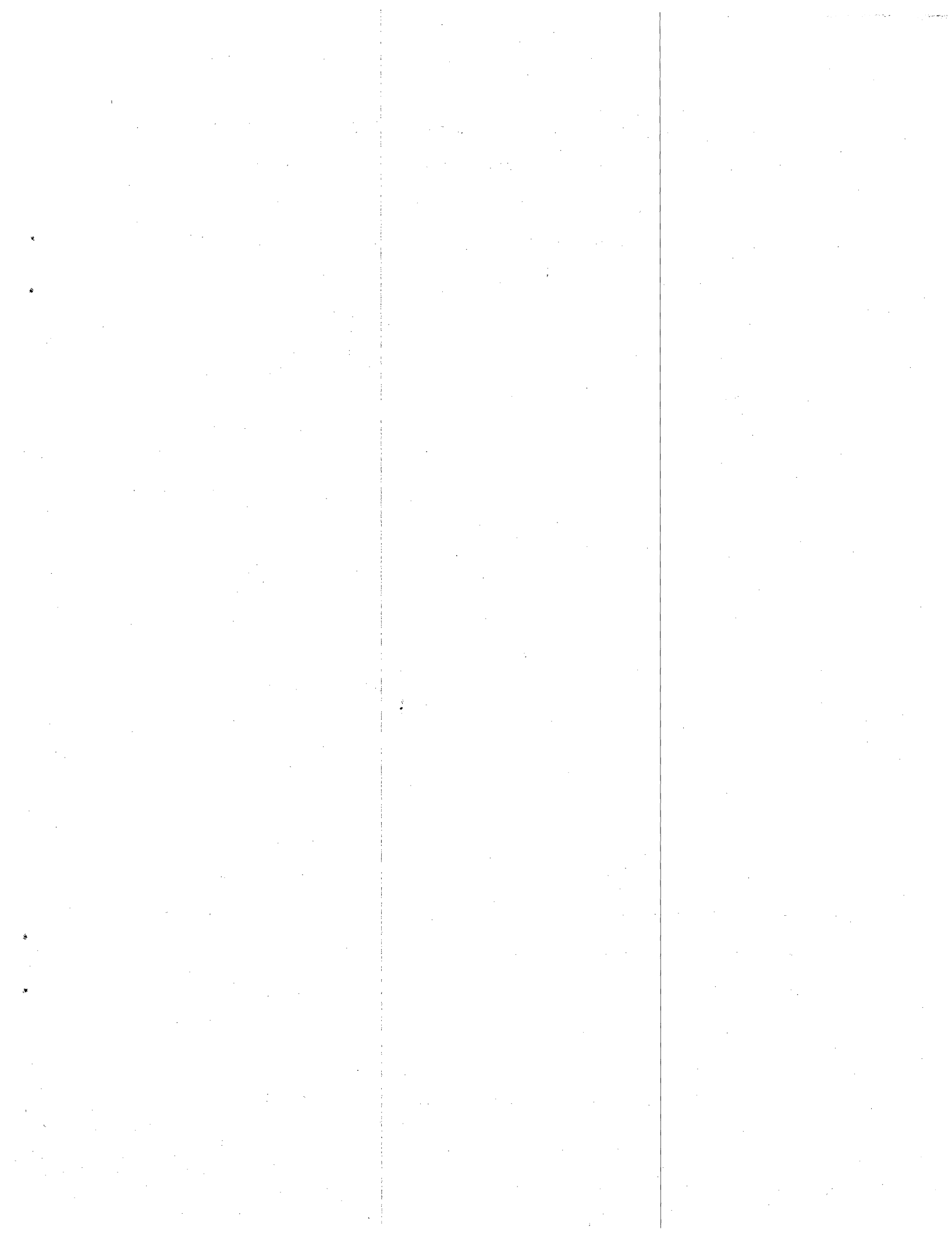
MR. BARTLETT: May I answer your question specifically, Senator. They have to be issued for any burning within 200 feet of any woodland, brush land, salt marsh, or any growth that might carry fire to the woodland.

MR. McCAY: The owner of the property on which the fire is to be set must get a permit?

MR. BARTLETT: Or the man that is doing the burning; he may not be the owner of the property. Whoever is going to be responsible, when he signs that he accepts responsibility for that fire, and we can hold him.

MR. McCAY: Whose responsibility is it to enforce the permit law?

MR. BARTLESS: The law, as it is written, says a fire warden shall enforce the forest fire laws of the State. A district warden is a fire warden, and he is required under the law, and under our rules and regulations, to enforce



the law. Unfortunately, he doesn't want to do that to his neighbor. If he finds someone other than his neighbor burning, he may report him, but if it is his neighbor he will call up the section warden and tell him about it. So then it becomes something for the section warden to handle. As a matter of fact, I don't know how many violations I pick up a year, but I pick up a lot of them, and the men from my office pick them up. Any warden that sees any burning at all should stop, and many of them do, to ask if the people have a permit.

MR. SEIDEL: The State Police, by the law that established the State Police, are ex officio fire wardens. They do not issue permits, but they do enforce the permit law.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: Do you need a permit for these charcoal burners?

MR. SEIDEL: Any open fire necessitates the obtaining of a permit.

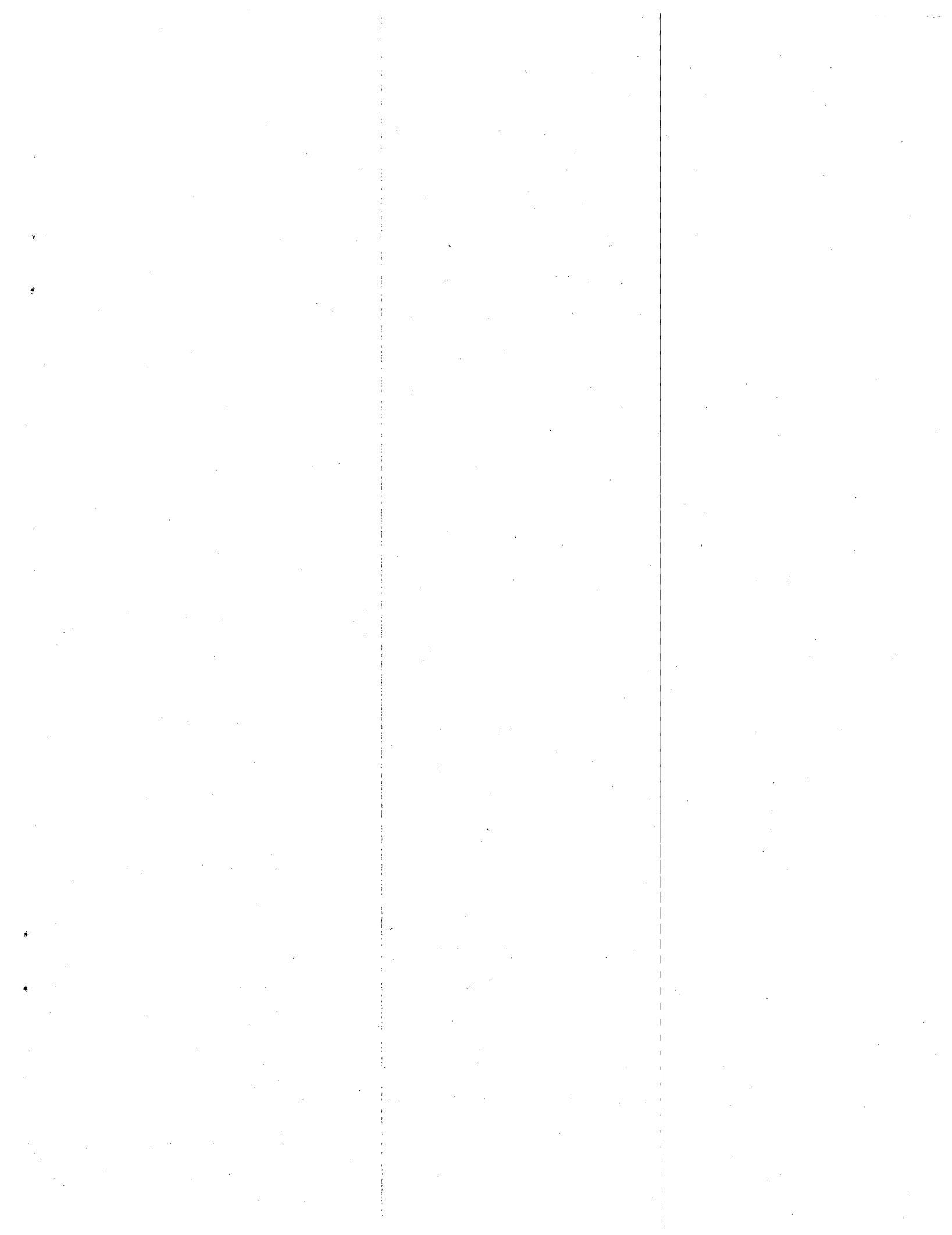
MR. E. HAINES: Even if they are in containers, the top isn't solid, and the wind comes along and carries sparks out of that.

MR. BARTLETT: If it is an open grill on the top from which fire may escape, we make them put it out or get a permit. We have a very great deal of that.

MR. JOHN E. CUTTS, Vincentown, New Jersey

I am not a warden, as you fellows know, but I run into lots of that, and I talk to them. I think education is a much better policy than persecution. I think persecution in forest fire work is the saddest thing we have ever done, or could hope to do. I will take myself, or any one of you gentlemen sitting here, and you are in the woods with your family, and unknowingly you build a little fire, and somebody comes along and jumps on you. All right, you are a smoker. I can start twenty fires before the sun sets tonight, and you know it, and you can't catch me either. And that is the thing that I don't like.

Last year I ran into two couples from North Jersey, and they had a fire back in the woods, probably a hundred yards back in a little old road, and I saw it.



I went back and talked with them. I was no warden, and they didn't know what I was there for. They were residents of the State, touring the State to see what they could see in New Jersey. They said they had been all over the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and they lived in New Jersey all their lives, and wanted to see it. I talked to them a while, and I said, "My friends, that fire is a little dangerous." I said, "I'll stay here with you until we get that fire out." They just had a little fire; it wasn't out of control. I said, "I will stay here with you and make sure that fire is out, and I will show you some things in New Jersey that perhaps you don't see very often." So we put the fire out. I covered it myself, and I took them down in the woods, and I showed them the bogs and blueberries in there, and they were the most pleased people you ever saw. I cautioned them carefully about those fires, and showed them what those fires could do. I think I left them in a good frame of mind.

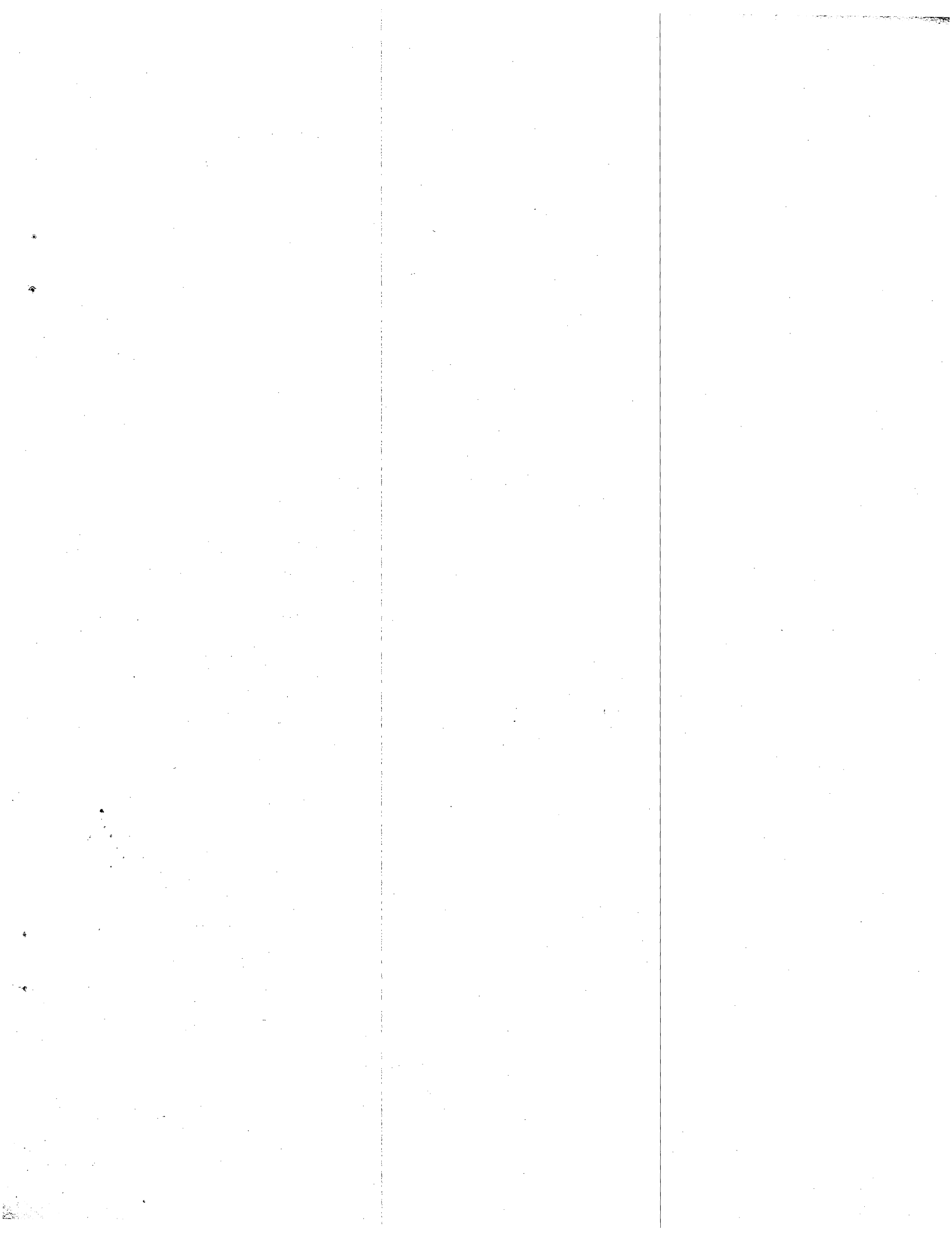
I am against fining everybody who doesn't have a permit. I am against it one hundred percent. I know there are cases where they become obstinate and rebellious, and you have to resort to law. I am a game warden, and we run into lots of cases, and we say, "Look here, that isn't legal. You know it isn't fair to the other fellow, and you should stop it." I don't turn them in.

MR. SEIDEL: I would like to straighten one thing out here. The department has never persecuted people for burning without a permit, or prosecuted them, except in rare cases.

MR. CUTTS: There have been some cases that I haven't been in agreement with.

MR. SEIDEL: I think you will find the department's policy has been one of cooperation and leniency, and not one of grinding them down under your heel like you are suggesting.

MR. CUTTS: I will say this much - it could be improved.



MR. SEIDEL: Of course, anything can be improved. If we can't improve what we are doing, we better stop what we are doing. And I think that would probably go for your business too. I agree with you that education is the thing, and I think there is a whole lot of it being done by the forest fire service.

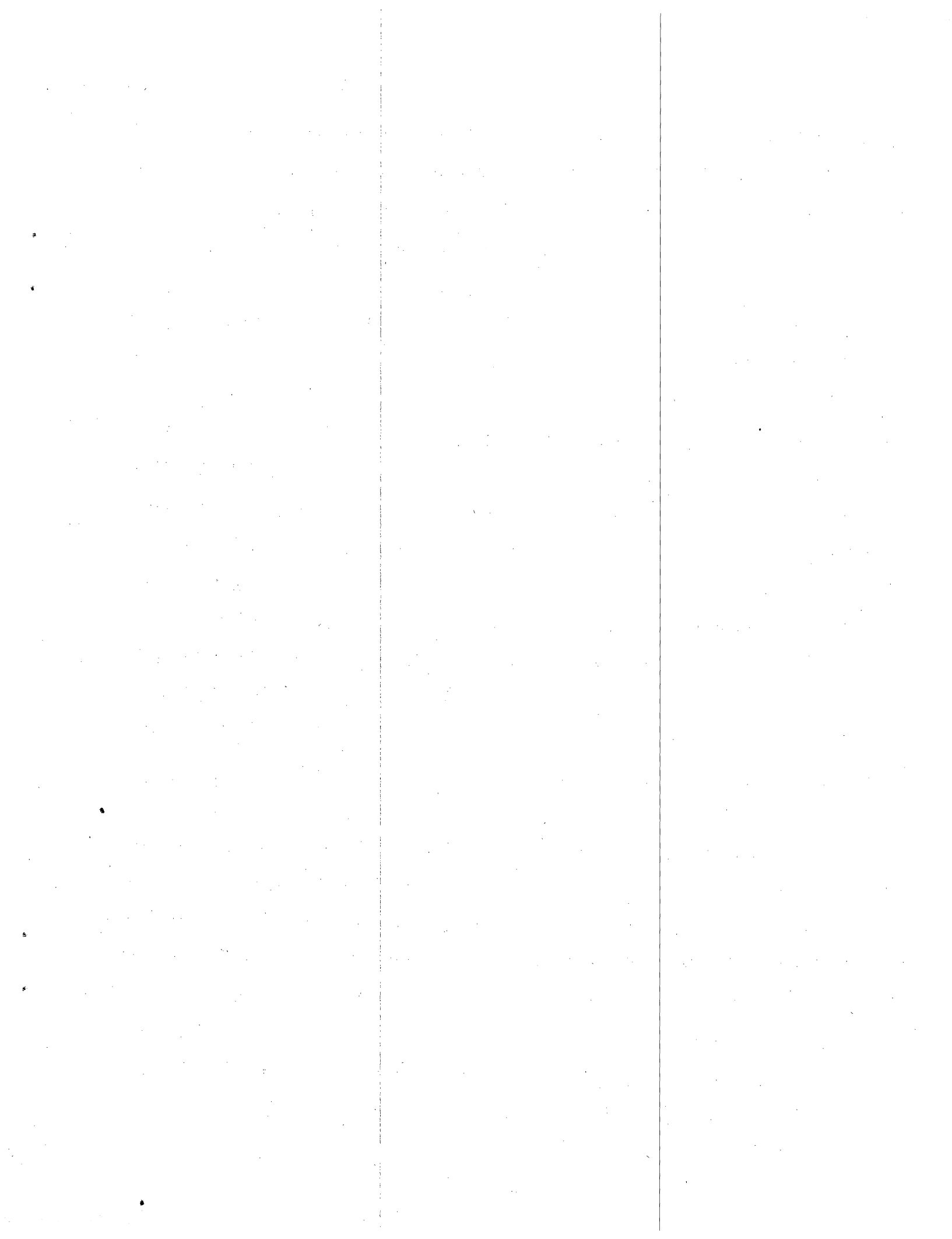
MR. CUTTS: I run into a lot of boy scouts as I come by in the evening. They have a fire, and I go talk with them, and I have yet to find the same group the second time. Many times they don't know. This thing isn't publicized. We don't have signs on the road, of anything of that kind. Our forest fire service is not known too well. The paper gets a little in it once in a while, but that is all. A lot of these people are justly ignorant. They just do not know.

MR. SEIDEL: Of course, the approach on public relations has been through the schools, and through the conservation work shops that the State Teachers Colleges at Trenton, and Glassboro, and Lake Wapalanne in North Jersey run each year. In addition we run a fire prevention campaign with the American Red Cross, and the Commissioner of Education, each spring. It is a combined proposition. The National Red Cross sends out circulars to their different chapters in the State, and I think there has been a marked improvement in the schools in the last five or six years. I think we are getting to 75 percent of the school children.

MR. CUTTS: I talked to a little boy scout the other day, and he told me how dangerous it was to play with matches in the woods.

MR. SEIDEL: There is good work being done by the United States Forest Fire Service, and the National Advertising Council in putting cards in buses and trolley cars, and subways, and the pictures that are put on television. I think we have gone a long way in the last five or six years.

I would like to make it clear that when a man is picked up for a permit, a report is made by the district warden, or the section warden, and it goes to division headquarters, and a letter is sent out to the man with his recommendation.



Generally the recommendation is a case of no cause, but the case is on file. We have very few second offenders, and if we do, we have the former incident to refer to.

Now, I would like to go back to Mr. Jennings. One of the things Mr. Jennings mentioned was additional equipment for district wardens is needed. Did you mean district or section wardens?

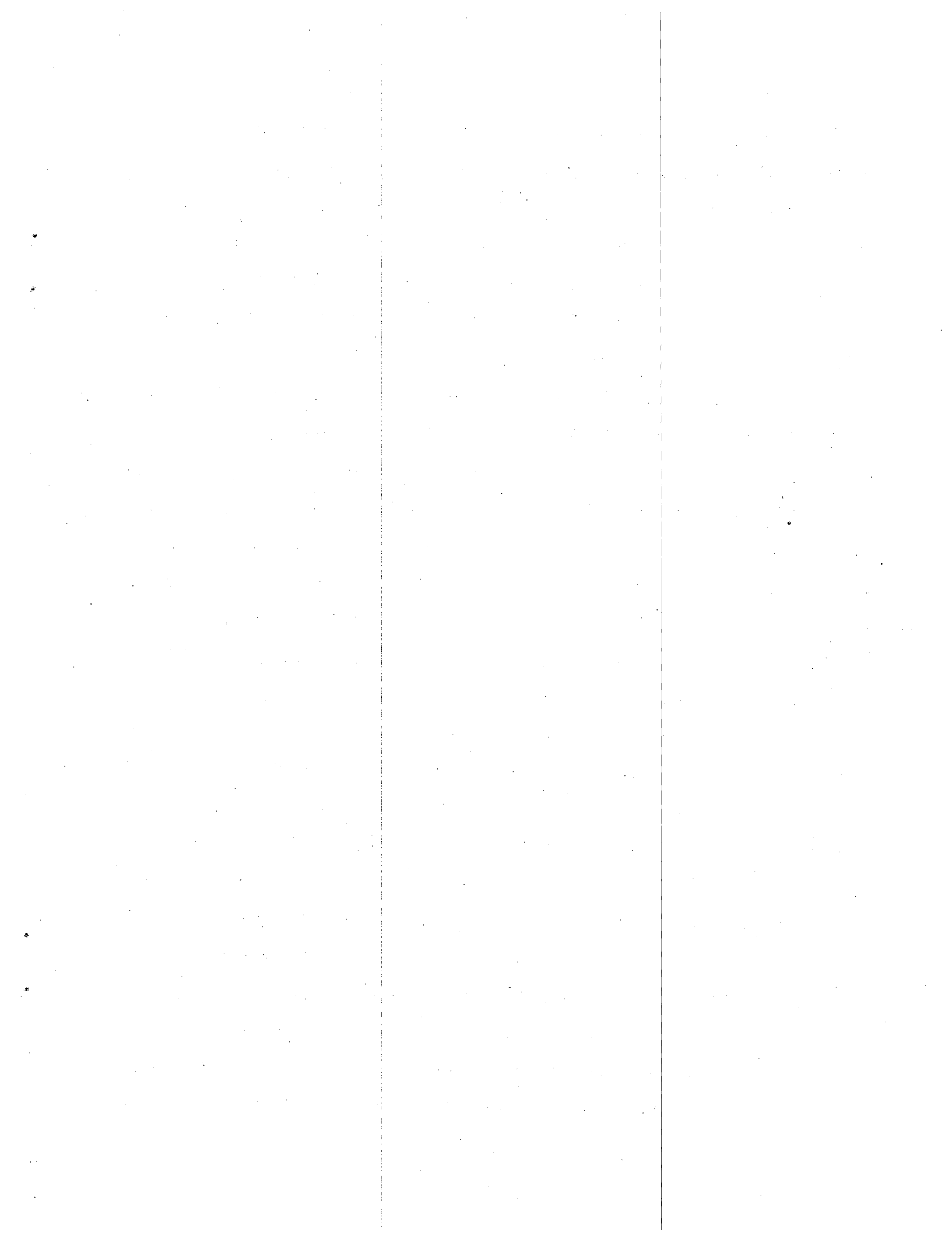
MR. JENNINGS: Our own local warden.

MR. SEIDEL: We have increased that considerably in the last ten years.

MR. JENNINGS: I was checking with the boys in my area, and they don't feel that they have sufficient equipment to meet a large fire. I think there are four tanks in possession of one man, and a torch; that is not too good a torch either, and I don't think he has over three or four shovels. Maybe he is lax, I don't know, but I feel they should have sufficient water carrying capacity. Sometimes three or four Indian tanks will put a fire out; sometimes you need more right quickly. That is what I was referring to.

MR. SEIDEL: Of course, the Indian tank developed about 1930, and for about ten years we were putting out one to a district warden, and we increased that to two and three, and now we are up to four. Generally when a district warden is at a fire, and it gets very large, he is given some help, either by the section fire warden, as you mentioned, and a man coming on with a tank truck of 225 gallons of water and a pump. And then we have six or eight big trucks, and we have about one to each two sections. When we run into trouble, generally the lookout watcher knows what is happening, and he is sent right in.

Now, as to this subject about having a tractor and plow. We have ten in the State - five in Central Jersey, which should be increased, and five in South Jersey. But when you consider that we have a total of 325 local wardens throughout the State, I couldn't conceive of carrying that many on inventory, or



even giving any district wardens a tractor and plow, because those units cost around four or five thousand dollars. That is one point.

MR. McCAY: Before you leave that point, Mr. Seidel, is there a regular periodic inspection or checkup on the equipment in the possession of each district warden's section?

MR. SEIDEL: We did make a check on every district warden, but in the last two years we haven't done too much checking. Then, we cut down one man in the division office, and frankly, with the fires we have been having, and since this 40 hour week went into being, and with these extended vacations, we have so much compensatory time that we just don't have the manpower to do too much checking. I think that is one thing I would suggest. I think we need more periodic checking.

MR. McCAY: After our inspection tour the other day, a man stopped me on the street in Mt. Holly and asked me if we had stopped at Browns Mills and looked at the equipment. I said that we didn't get to Browns Mills, but we saw the equipment in a number of other spots. And he said, "Well, I wish you had seen the truck at Browns Mills. It is in bad shape, and what the fire service needs worse than anything else is some good mechanics to help repair their equipment." Of course, that is hearsay.

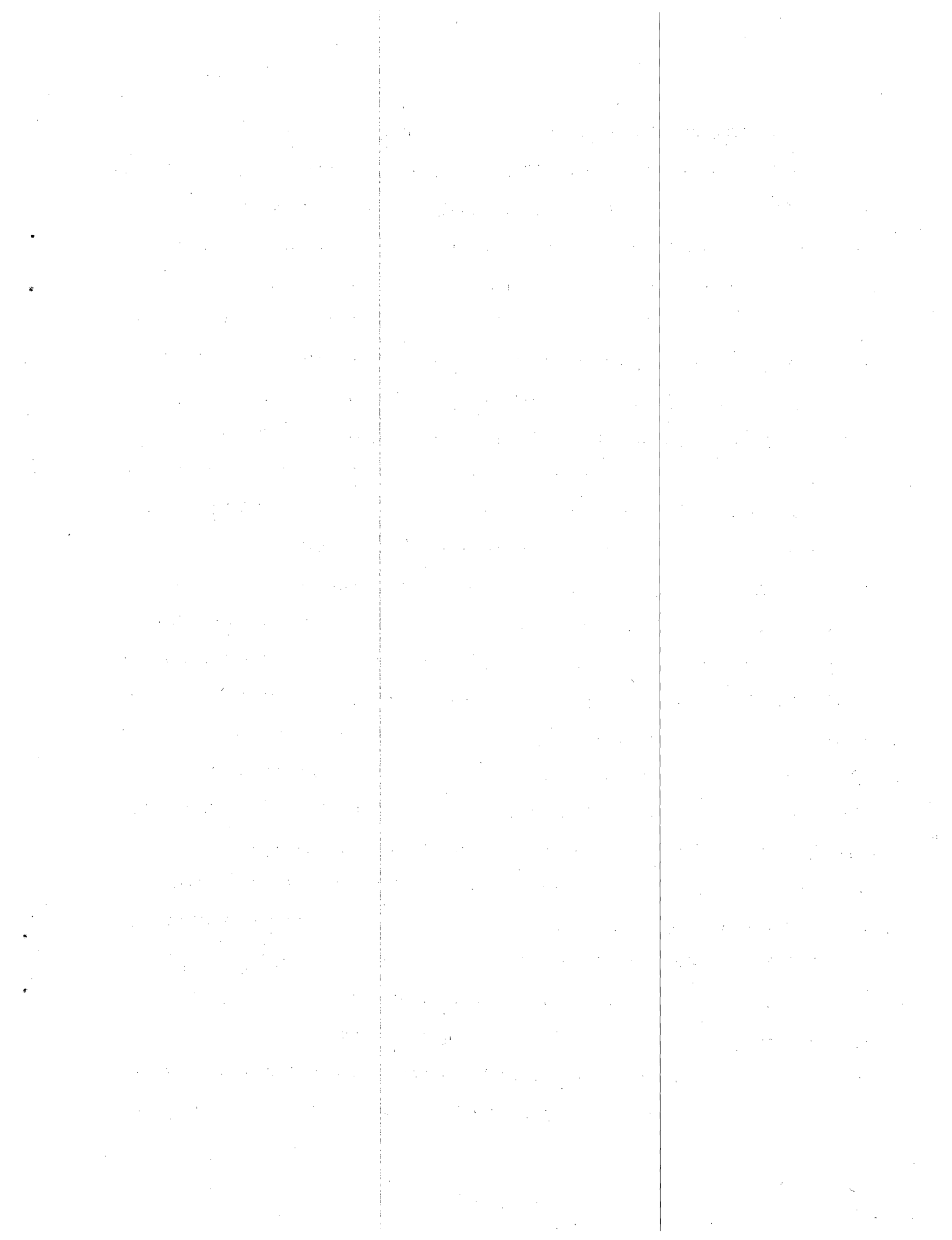
MR. SEIDEL: That particular truck has been a lot of trouble. It is not the fault of the fire service mechanics, because that has been back to the dealer, and to other mechanics, and I don't know if we have gotten the trouble ironed out on that truck yet.

MR. JENNINGS: One went by me the other day running on six cylinders; it was an eight cylinder truck. I don't know how he could do a job.

MR. SEIDEL: Is it a fire truck?

MR. JENNINGS: Yes, it is a fire truck. It was missing and smoking.

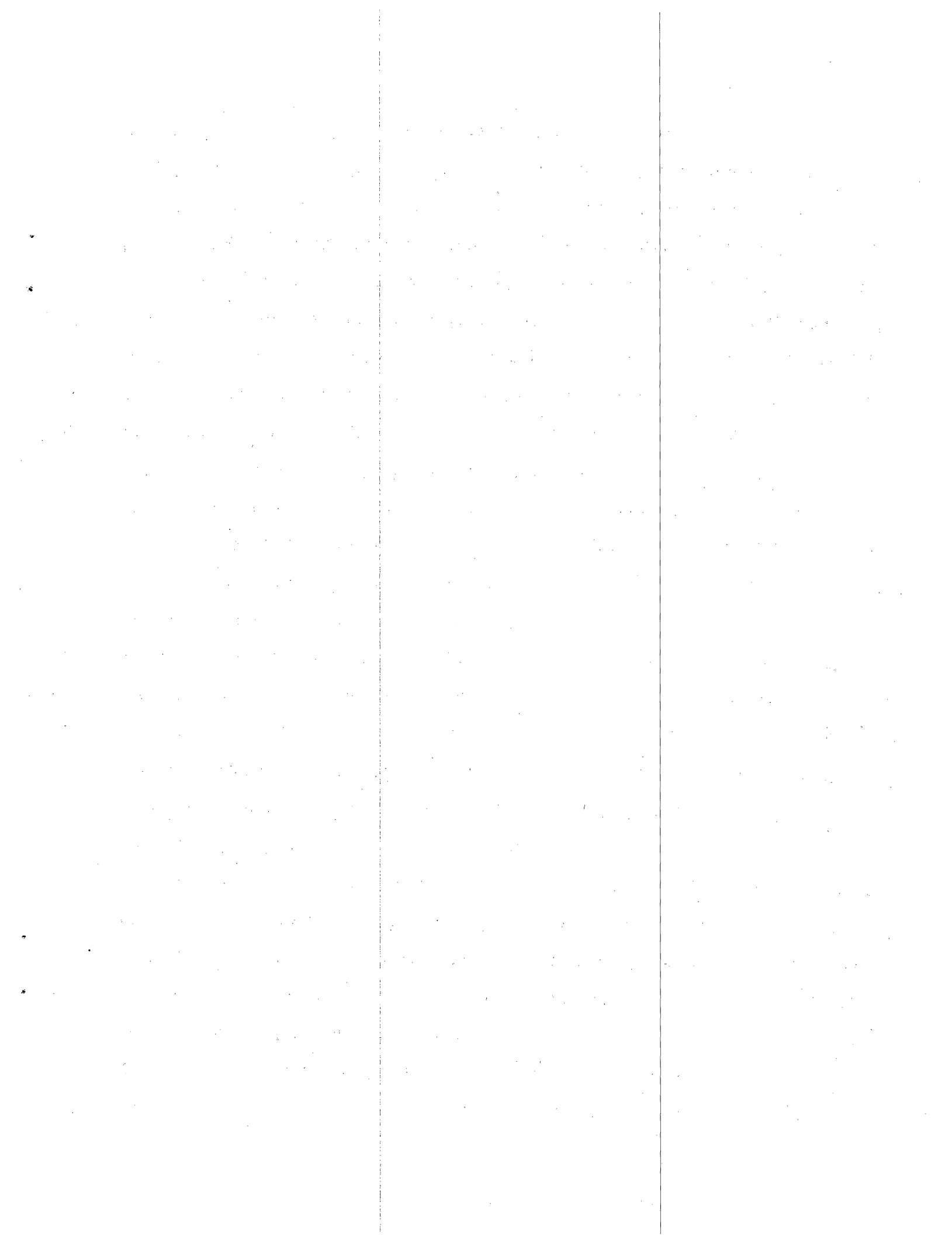
MR. SEIDEL: One more point, Mr. Jennings. You said you would like



to see more authority delegated to the local district warden. I think you are referring to setting backfires.

MR. McCAY: Let's clear that up, because that is one of the things that we hear most about, and that is the exact precise authority of the local district warden, and we have heard a great deal of comment to the effect that some of the difficulties are due to the fact that he doesn't have enough authority, or does not exercise enough authority.

MR. JENNINGS: Maybe I better bring it out a little clearer. Before the Chatsworth fire, there was a fire that was back in Camden County, and came across into Burlington County, and at that time I believe there was also another fire. Lots of times they haven't one fire, but there are two or three fires, and the section warden will be out on another job, and he is not available right away. On this particular day they were waiting, and waiting, and waiting for him. It is possible that he could have been back in the woods, but these boys were wondering what to do. They didn't want to go in there and set the fire, because they thought they would be criticized. Now, if his superior is not at hand, and it looks as if a backfire is needed, the man should do it. Sometimes minutes count. Now I do want to commend John Cutts and his brothers for the way all of them have been on the fires. There is always a group of five or six. It doesn't take a very big group to fight a big fire if they go in there and know what they are doing. Now, there were at least 25 people standing around, and everybody waiting for leadership, and nobody wanted to assume the responsibility for setting this backfire, because it would be in somebody's very valuable pine. So there you are. Nobody wants to take the responsibility, yet that fire was coming out. Nobody knows where it is going to go, because the winds could have changed and gone in the opposite direction, which happened the next day a couple of times. There was some criticism on it. Those boys worked hard. They did stop the fire. I don't know whether it was an act of God

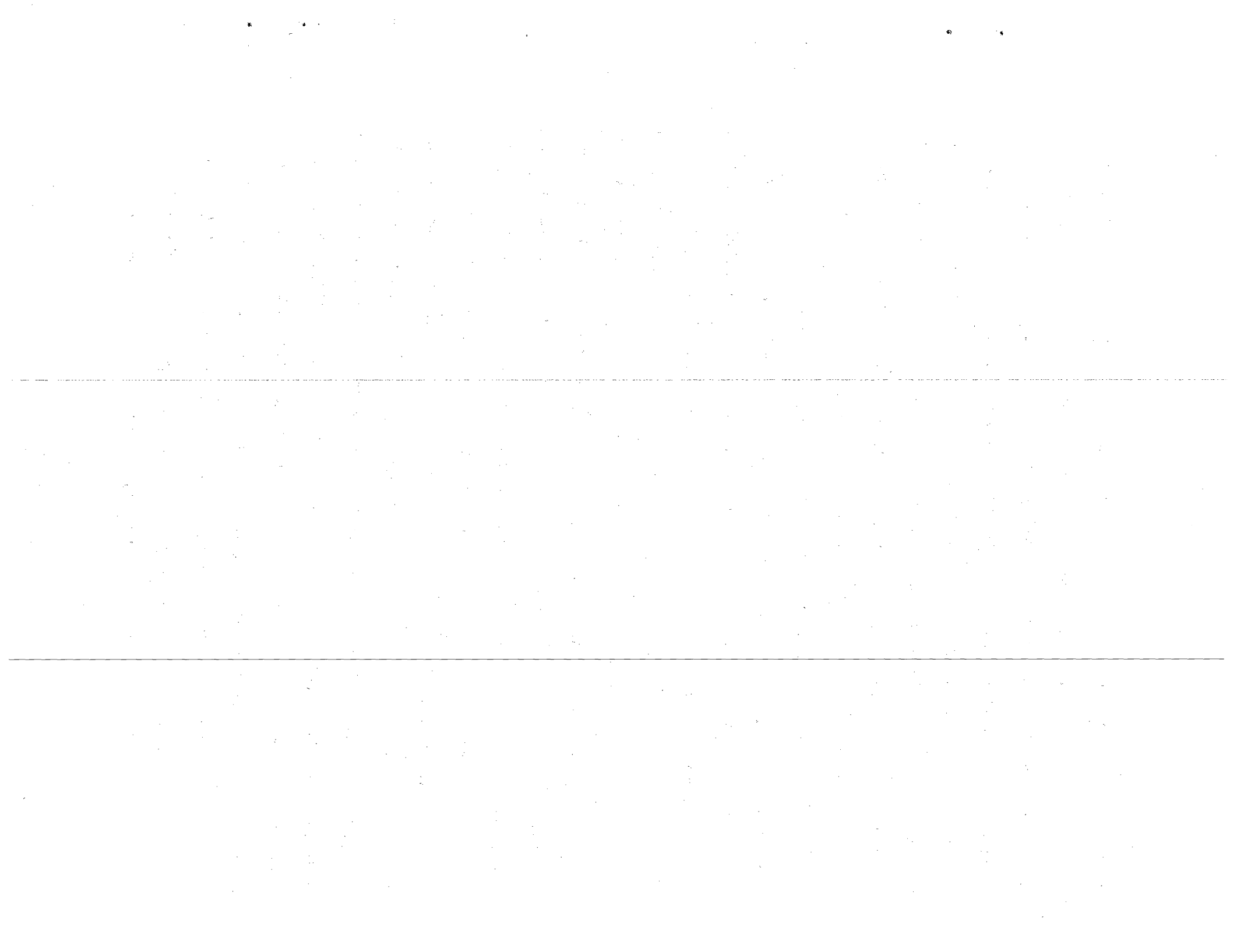


or whether it was hard work. The backfire didn't do any damage. In fact, the damage from that fire hasn't been near as much as what people expected. You see a lot of timber still living.

MR. BARTLETT: In that particular case, there seemed to be some argument as to whether to burn that pine or not. At the time they were arguing, I was down by the other bridge. I didn't know what was going on. But that is a specific instance, and it is one of the things I think is basic. Very often that district warden doesn't want to take that responsibility.

MR. JENNINGS: Yes, that is a great deal of the trouble. We do have a good man down there. He may be wrong sometimes, but he isn't afraid to take the responsibility. Some of these boys are afraid to take that responsibility. They wait too long sometimes. In the case I was referring to before - and it has happened many times before - they just don't want to burn up their neighbor's property. That is what it amounts to. But I myself would rather have a man backfire on my property than let it burn up from a head fire.

MR. SEIDEL: Of course, this is a specific case, but generally the backfiring argument involves a considerable area; it involves many more than one crew of men, and there should be a definite plan, with somebody calling the shots, so those in between don't get burned up. That is involved in this case, and that is why the law specifically states that a fire warden is the only one that has the authority to set a backfire, except the person who has a right to set it on his own property. It is a dangerous piece of business. A man has to know exactly what he is doing, and even then there are mistakes made. A shift of wind, which cannot be foreseen, can raise havoc with the backfire. I have been in the fire service for thirty years, and back twenty years ago, some of my predecessors got to the point where they didn't want any backfire set unless there was a call from Trenton. Of course, that is ridiculous. You have to give authority to the local man to act



in the face of an emergency. It must be that way.

MR. CUTTS: I think that fear holds over even today, Mr. Seidel.

MR. SEIDEL: By using these tractors and plows, I think we have done a lot to eliminate a lot of the burning in that we used to do.

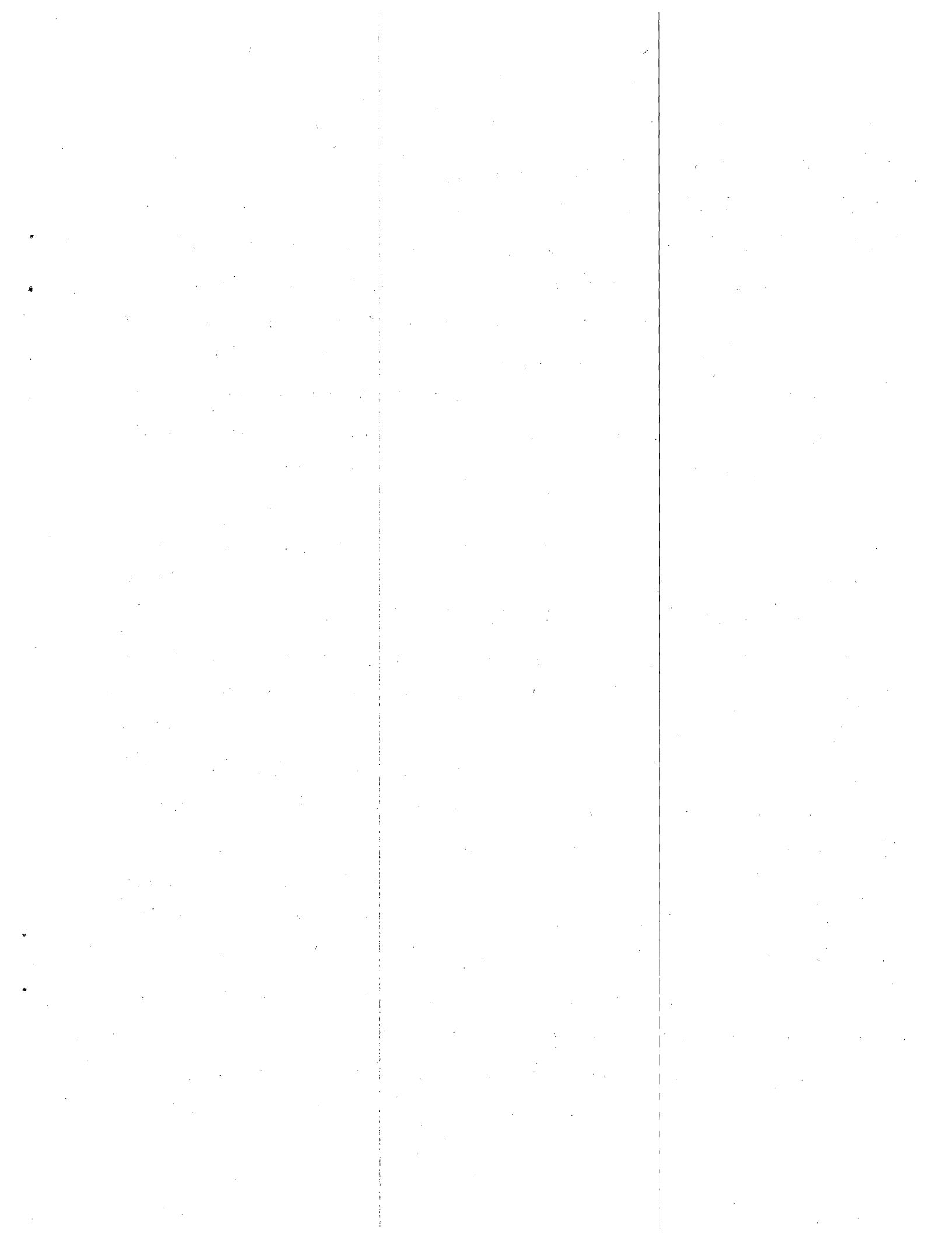
MR. CUTTS: Not in some cases.

MR. SEIDEL: That is right. A tractor and a plow, like any other piece of equipment, have their limitations.

MR. CUTTS: I think what Forrest means, and I agree with him one hundred percent, is that back when we were wardens, when we saw a fire, we went, and when we went to that fire, we went to work. If it called for backfire, we put in that backfire. Those boys backed up us one hundred percent. I know I have seen some cases where some boys have been highly criticised - it never happened with us, but I have seen them highly criticised. I will agree that there are some localmen that are not qualified for the job. I think in the fire service, they should be weeded out.

MR. SEIDEL: I agree with you on that. You won't have any argument with me on that score.

MR. CUTTS: And men should be put in their place that have initiative, because he is no more responsible than a policeman is when he is out trying to catch somebody, whether he gets shot or shoots. If you give him that authority, and he does it, that goes in with his line of duty. And in the case of the local warden, he should be made aware that he has the same privilege and the same right. I have been in situations where the fire is coming along, and there is only one thing to do, and that is to go ahead and do it. But a lot of the boys now say - well, we better call the next one, and they keep calling the next one, all the way up to Trenton. That is not the way to handle fires.

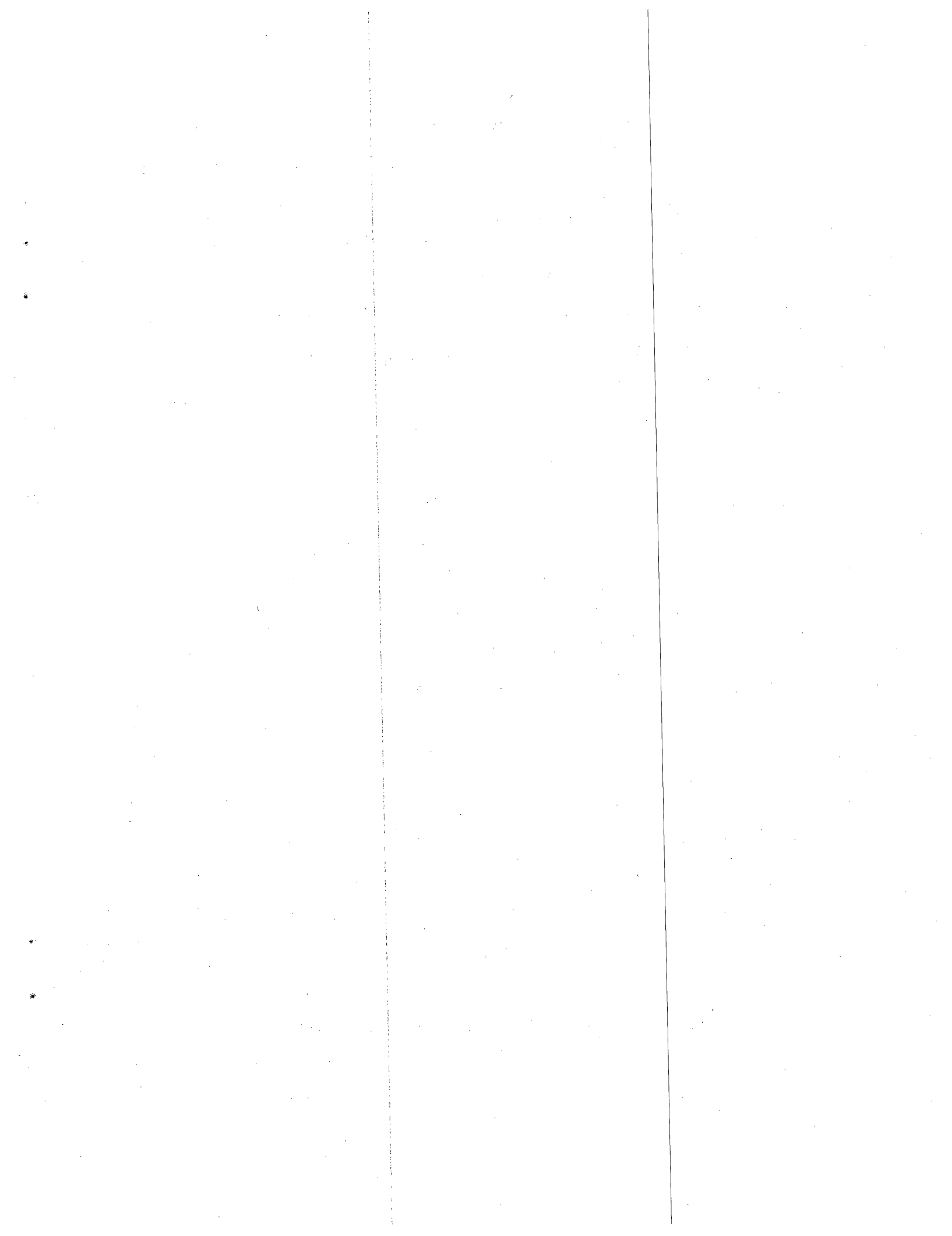


MR. SEIDEL: That is right. As far as I am concerned, there is no calling the shots from Trenton on backfires. And as far as Mr. Bartlett is concerned, or any other division warden, they don't call the shots from their division office either.

MR. JENNINGS: If a district fire warden goes on the job, and he is the first one there, and if that fire is in his district, he is in control, isn't he? He is the authority, isn't he?

MR. SEIDEL: That is right. When the section warden comes, he may relieve him, or leave him at the fire and go to another fire. After all, it is a team where the district warden is one man, and the section warden plays on the same team, but is the captain of the team.

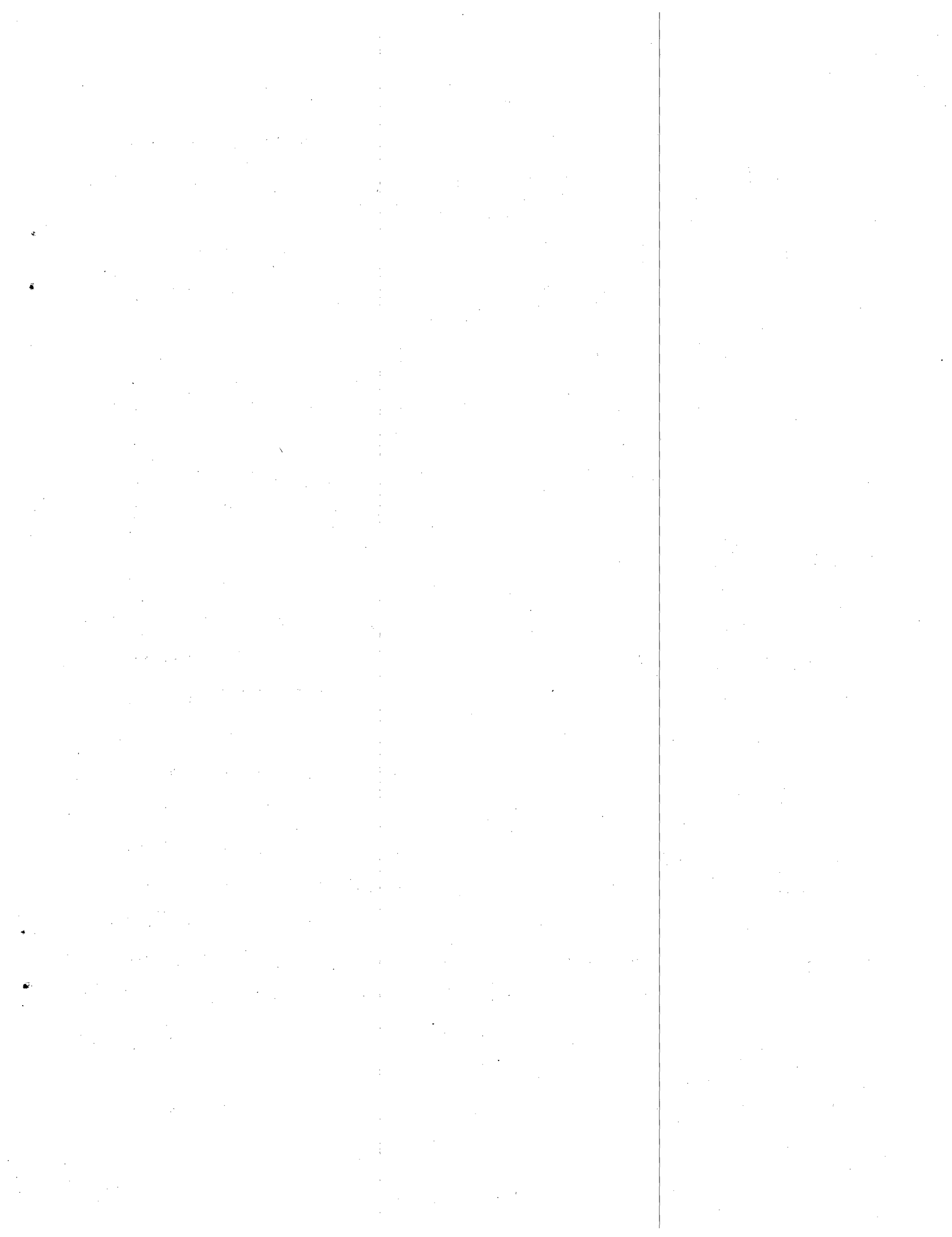
MR. CUTTS: I see a lot of this trouble in geographic lines. I think it is ridiculous to fight a fire on geographic lines. I think it is ridiculous to delegate authority on geographic lines when it is an emergency. This particular fire that gave us so much trouble last year started around five o'clock on Monday evening. I was away, and they called me about one o'clock, and got me out of bed. They asked me to blow thensome holes in the swamps to see if they could get some water. So I got up, dressed, and went with them. I asked them if they had dynamite. I had some fuses and wire. We went up there and blew a hole, and as it mostly does, dynamite makes a well and water comes in slow. There was a lot of water in that swamp, but there wasn't enough to give us the pressure to come in like it should. So I walked around it myself. I checked the dryness of the soil, and it wasn't dry. In other words, underneath it was damp; no fire would go into it. That was about three o'clock in the morning. So I came out, and Bill was there, and I said, "Bill, something can be done here. This fire can be handled." Well, Bill didn't have the authority on account of geographic lines. Somebody else had the authority, and he was up in the trailer drunk. That was Evans. He had the authority, and Bill was



afraid to take the authority the way the thing is set up, and I can appreciate it. I fooled around there until six or seven o'clock, and there was a heavy fog - you couldn't see a soul - and I said, "Boys, if you're not going to do anything, I'm going to leave, because you are going to have plenty of fire." I knew where the thing was; I was acquainted with that area. Now, I left about six-thirty or seven o'clock, and about ten o'clock she went out.

Now, here was the situation on that fire. In the evening there were forty men on that fire. They were localmen, and they agreed to do everything possible, but when it came dark, they went out and left it. They called me in there roughly at midnight, and there were about twelve or fifteen men there. This is what I suggested - they had a crawler tractor there, and they had the pumper in there at one time. I suggested that we drag the pumper in and get some fire hose, and regulate this water. There were two or three pumpers there, and I said we would take one into the fire; put another one as far back as we could get it. And the boys from Indian Mills had these tanks, and were willing to bring them in, but there was nobody with any authority. I wasn't a warden. It wasn't for me to tell them what to do. There was nobody there with authority. There was nobody there with the necessary initiative. They were afraid. But that fire could have been put out very easily. I have put out plenty more like it. It wasn't a deep fire, because I checked it myself, and it was in a light place; it wasn't in a bad place. We had about fifteen men there, and could have called in some more, but because nobody had the right to do it except Evans - and he was incapacitated - the thing went out. And you know what happened as well as I do.

Now I am telling you, you take Bill Hagerthey, when he goes on somebody else's fire, he should be told that is his fire until the other man gets there and takes charge, or vice versa. When he goes on a fire, that ought to be his fire until the section warden gets there. And those fellows should be made so they



are not afraid. I am afraid - I will be honest with you - I am afraid of you boys, I won't lie about it. But when I go on a fire where we are with MacDonald, we don't ask anybody. We go ahead. We know from Mac that when we go on a fire, it is our fire. When he gets there, then he brings in whoever he pleases and takes over. But we get there sometimes long before Mac, because we are much closer to those fires.

MR. McCAY: Besides MacDonald, you say Bill Hagerthey was there?

MR. CUTTS: Yes.

MR. McCAY: Is he the local district warden?

MR. CUTTS: He is the section warden.

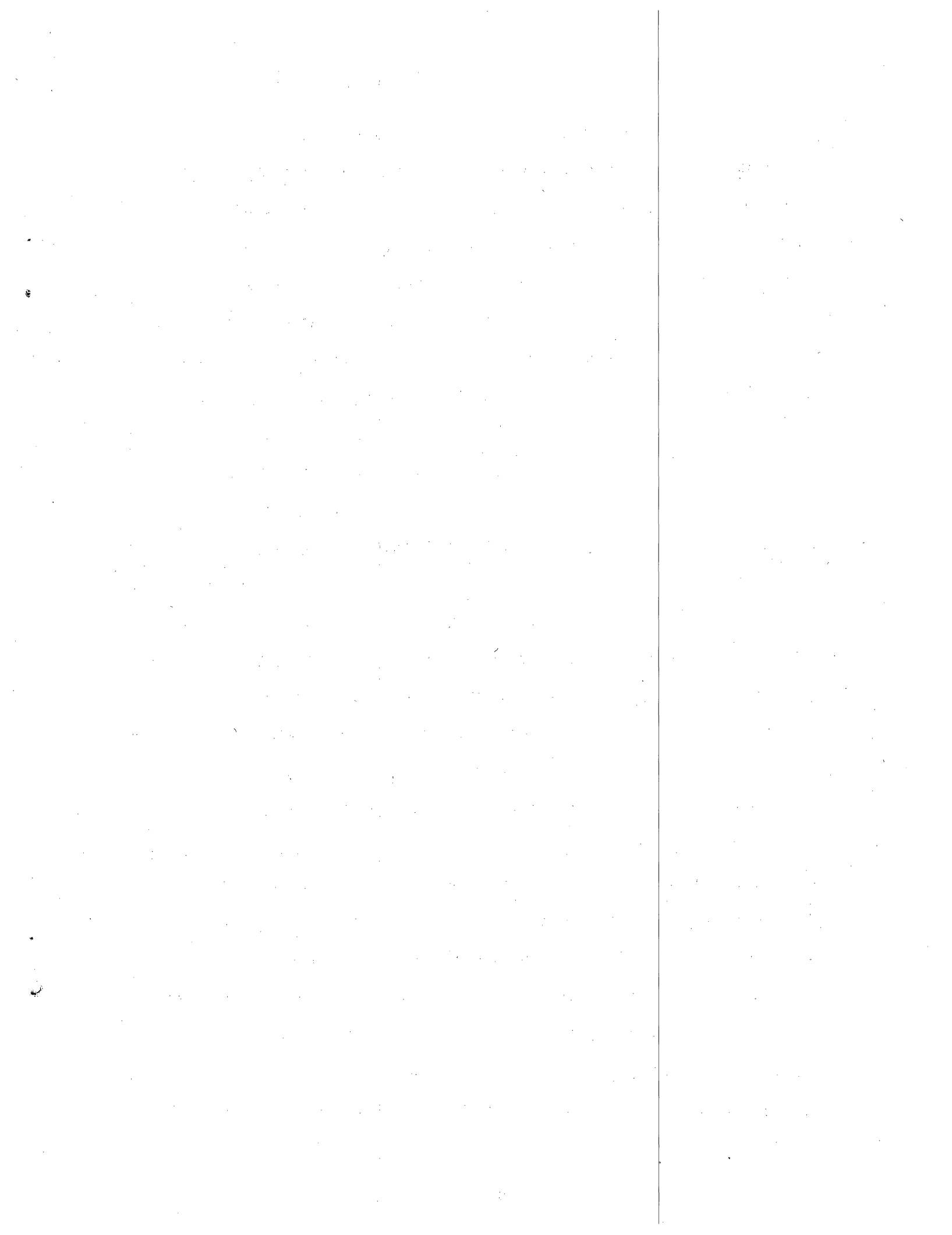
MR. McCAY: He was in his own section?

MR. CUTTS: No, he was in Evans' section. That is the reason I say a geographic line has to be eliminated. I know it is necessary for the boys to have an area, but when it comes to fire, there is no such thing as a geographic line in my mind.

MR. McCAY: Now, Evans, the section ward in charge of the section where the fire was, was drunk?

MR. CUTTS: He was drunk. They all know it.

MR. JENNINGS: May I say a word? I don't like to come in as a defense attorney for Evans, but I want to say this for him. I don't think Evans ever possessed the ability or the leadership that was necessary to supervise a big fire, or a lot of men. He was a valuable man in certain capacities, but when it came time to make decisions, that is when the man fell down. I don't believe he came on the job that way, but you know what happens on the job. The minute they are on there, they get thirsty. We know he had no business to get drunk, but he wasn't the kind of a man who could actually lead people in a serious predicament like that.



MR. CUTTS: There isn't enough cooperation in the whole service.

MR. SEIDEL: Let me ask you a question. You dynamited a hole. Did you get water?

MR. CUTTS: Some came in, but not enough. We checked the water first to see what was in there.

MR. SEIDEL: You put a hole in, and then you put the auger down?

MR. CUTTS: No, the auger was first.

MR. SEIDEL: Did you get water when you dynamited?

MR. CUTTS: No, but we could get quite a bit of water with the auger.

MR. SEIDEL: You put the auger in first, and found there was water there, and then you dynamited? Then did you get water?

MR. CUTTS: Slow, not fast enough.

MR. SEIDEL: Now, about Evans. Evans was a good truck driver. He has operated a truck for a number of years, and when he was under Carlton Taylor he was a good man. He qualified for section fire warden through civil service examination; that is why he came into the service.

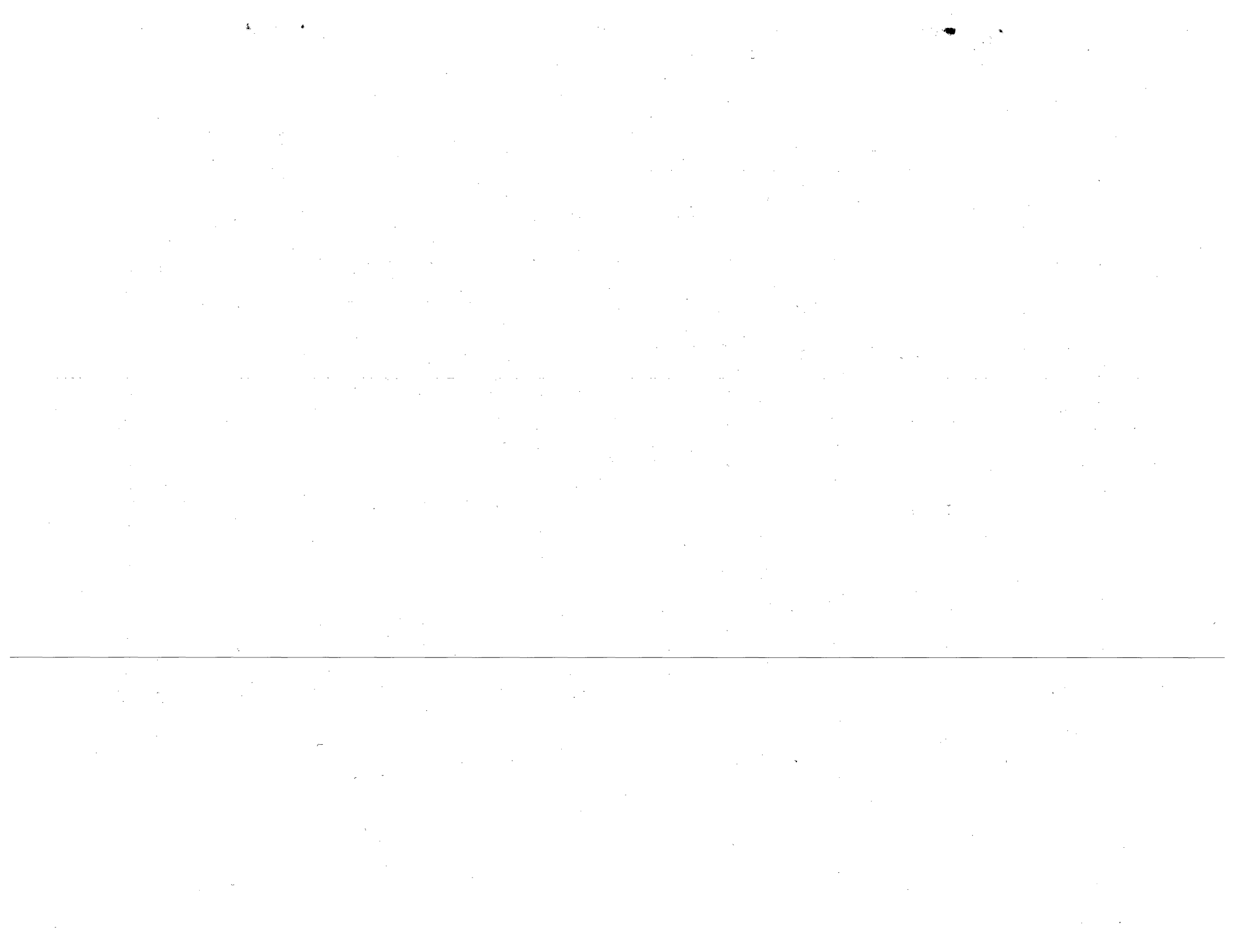
MR. CUTTS: I understand that. As much as I approve of civil service in its place, it often puts men in line for a job when they are not qualified for the job they are expected to fill.

MR. McCAY: I would like to have some clarification with respect to the authority along geographic lines. Mr. Seidel, when a section warden is in another section warden's territory, what is his authority?

MR. SEIDEL: He has the authority to act. He has the same authority he has in his own section. The same thing with the district warden. He has the same authority when he goes in on a fire, if he is there alone.

MR. McCAY: They don't seem to realize that, apparently.

MR. SEIDEL: I don't think that is the exact answer.



MR. BARTLETT: Are you speaking of this specific instance, or general instances?

MR. McCAY: This instance, as an example of Mr. Cutts' statement that authority should not be along geographic lines.

MR. CUTTS: It is general, not specific, not just this one case. It is so general that when a fire crosses a county line, they quit. You know that yourself. It has happened for thirty years.

MR. SEIDEL: I can show you instances where they come in across the Atlantic County line into Burlington County, the put the fire out, and vice versa.

MR. CUTTS: Yes, but that is the attitude and sentiment, and we want to eliminate it.

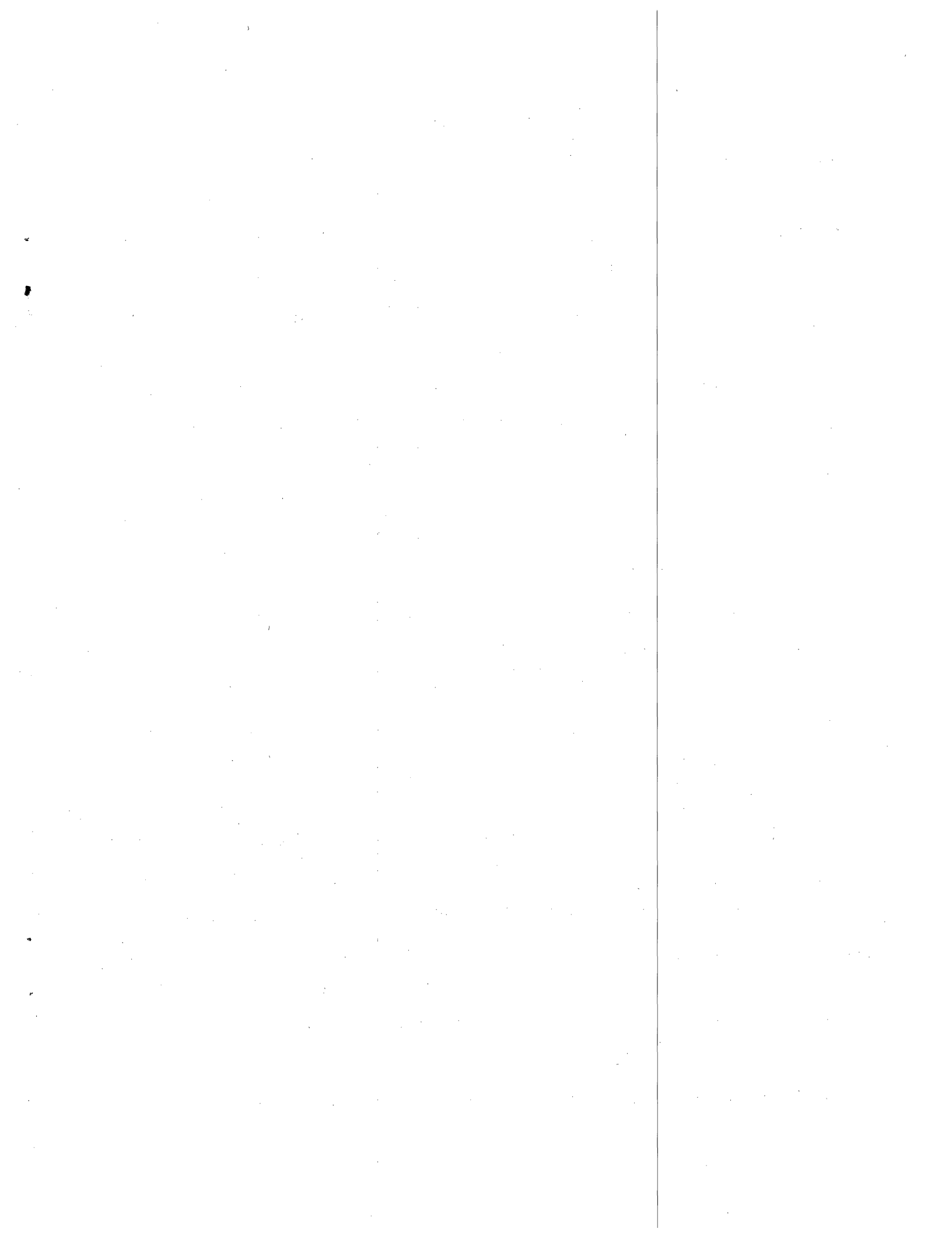
MR. SEIDEL: For the last seven or eight years, we have held annual meetings of all the section fire wardens, a three day meeting, at High Point Park. And after it was burned there this year, we went down to Atlantic City, and we got the section wardens together, and there is a much better attitude between the section wardens and the lines are being eliminated. Certainly the story is entirely different today than it was thirty years ago. Now, Hagerthey had all the authority he needed to go ahead an act.

MR. CUTTS: But you know right well that what I am telling you is true, that they tie up on geographic lines, and we want to eliminate that.

MR. SEIDEL: I agree with you, but I do not think they are in existence as much as you say.

MR. CUTTS: I am in the woods, Mr. Seidel, and I see it happen. A fire to me is a fire, whether it be North Jersey or South Jersey. I don't like to see them happen.

MR. SEIDEL: The only thing I can say is, when you have a large fire, you must have somebody that has the overall planning of it.



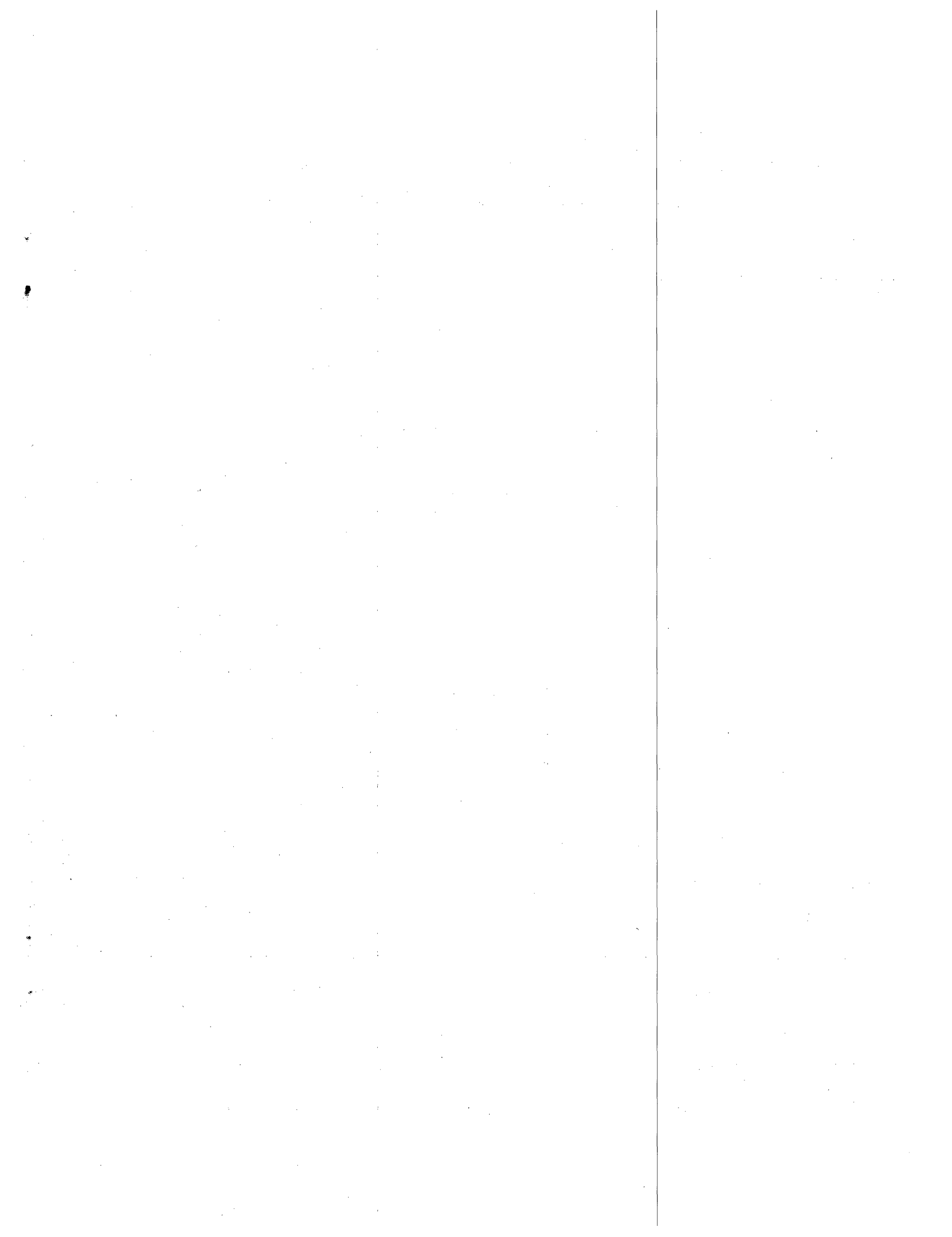
MR. CUTTS: But how about when there is an emergency, and one man is incapacitated? I can tell you if I had the authority, it would have been delegated, because that is how I do things. But nobody has authority.

MR. JENNINGS: There again, I think it is necessary for the forest fire service to have more money to acquire more equipment, because, as was brought out here before, no fire company likes to take a brand new piece of equipment into the woods to put out a fire, especially when that is supposed to be for the purpose of protecting someone's home, or buildings. And I know they commandeered every piece of equipment that was available in South Jersey on those fires to protect the homes, and they did a wonderful job. But as far as equipment to fight these fires, there really wasn't sufficient to do it with.

And I want to say another thing. There was criticism on the action that was taken by a fire company and a lot of its volunteers stationed at Chatsworth Road and the road that goes into Retreat, who were standing by there protecting some buildings, and gunning clubs, and so forth, and allowed the fire to pass over the road without trying even to put it out. And I know that only about four men went on the job, and went over the road, and voluntarily put that fire out, while another 50 or 75 stood by watching. There again, people will stand by and let the fire run right away from them, when they could have pitched in, and might have, if they had the authority to go ahead and try to put the fire out. They were there protecting buildings, and did not want to fight a forest fire.

MR. SEIDEL: I don't know what the criticism of that fire company is. Certainly they had the authority. Do you know who the other 75 people were standing there?

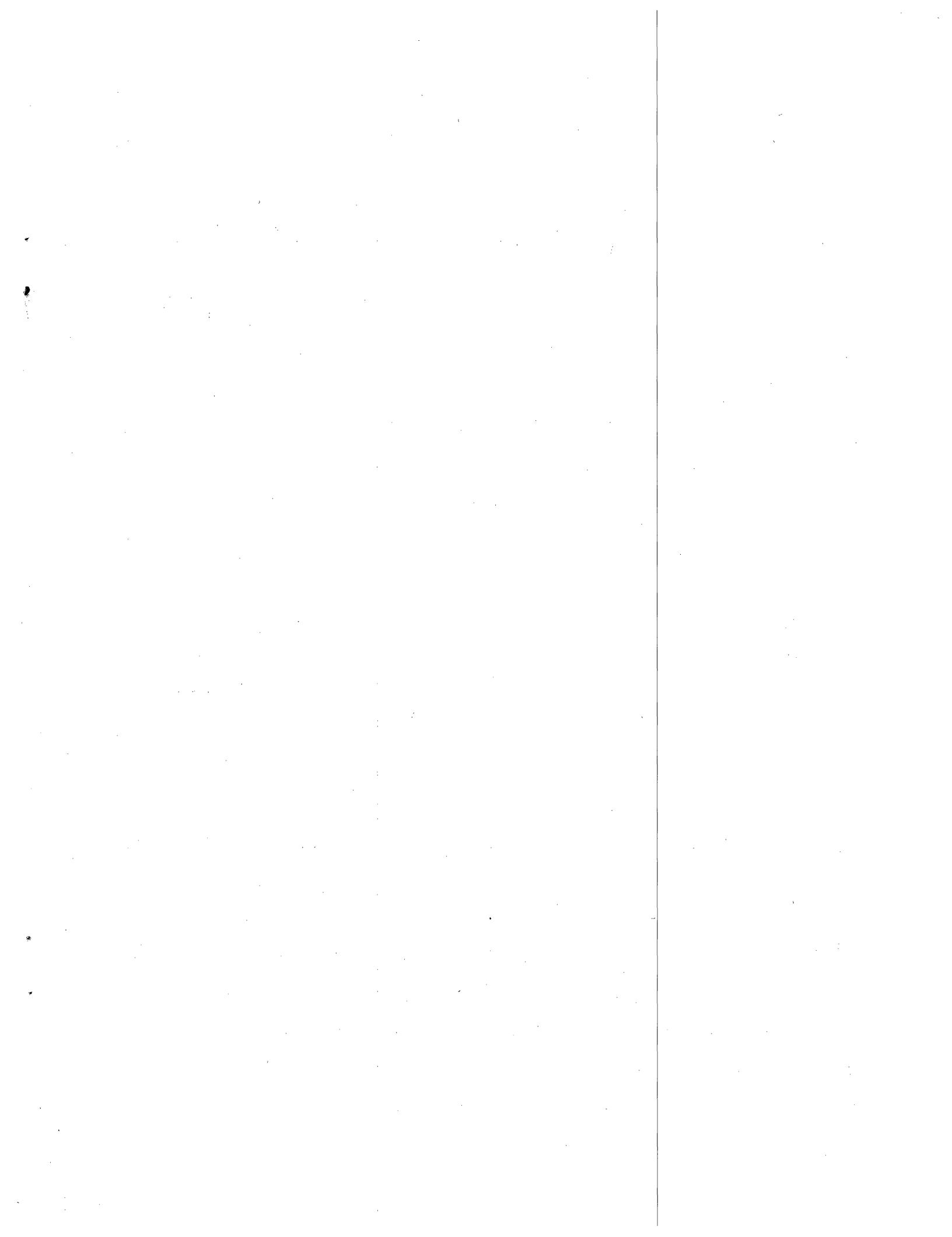
MR. JENNINGS: A lot of them, no doubt, were just onlookers. But nobody had the authority to move that piece of equipment a quarter of a mile down.



MR. GILBERT: On that subject, I would like to state that every time you have a big fire, you have more bosses than workers. In our case, I happened to have the pumper that was at the north edge of Chatsworth feeding water back into Chatsworth in a series of relays that helped save those homes down there. And being in charge of that piece of equipment and its manpower, I delegated men to wet down the woods on the side of the road from which the fire was approaching. And I gave them strict orders that I didn't care who came along, whether it was the Governor of New Jersey, that they were not to leave there because that piece of woods was coming through with a crown fire, and we wanted to knock it down. We had fire wardens; we had State Police; we had everybody else coming down there wanting to use those lines to fill up trucks coming by with tanks, and they gave the men who were on the nozzles a hard time, until such time as they came back to the truck, and they were told I was in charge of it. And I simply told them, right up hill and down dale, right point-blank, that we had two lines off that truck filling up other pieces of equipment, and they would have to stay in line and take their turn, because that was an emergency piece of equipment and we were not going to jeopardize it by pouring everything out.

MR. McCAY: John, I know you are anxious to get away. Would you like to continue at this time on this whole question of prevention, detection, control, and fighting of forest fires.

MR. CUTTS: You take this winter burning, or prescribed burning. If you think that out, there is no crown fire. You can go in there with men, and you are unafraid, and you can put it out. I don't believe in burning every area in the woods, a million acres, because we have at least two or three thousand acres we don't burn on account of the bumble bees; we don't want to kill them. But we burn the worst side of the area, and it can be done, without too much expense, over the State. They do it in Lebanon. Putting strips in is what wants to be encouraged



on the country side, not burn the whole countryside.

MR. SEIDEL: That has been my recommendation for years. This burning the whole State as a fire protection method is money spent for nothing.

MR. CUTTS: Let's do strip burning, and make them big enough.

MR. JENNINGS: I would like to ask a question. I am a property owner, and I have prescribed burned my property. I have a dangerous condition for me to try to prescribe burn, because we had to go in and cut lines, and plow, and bulldoze. Now, is there any way that we can force, or bribe, or get permission from the property owner to go in and let the fire run over on his property in winter burning, or prescribed burning? This particular man lived in New York City, and I couldn't get permission from him. He wouldn't even sign anything to allow me to burn his ground.

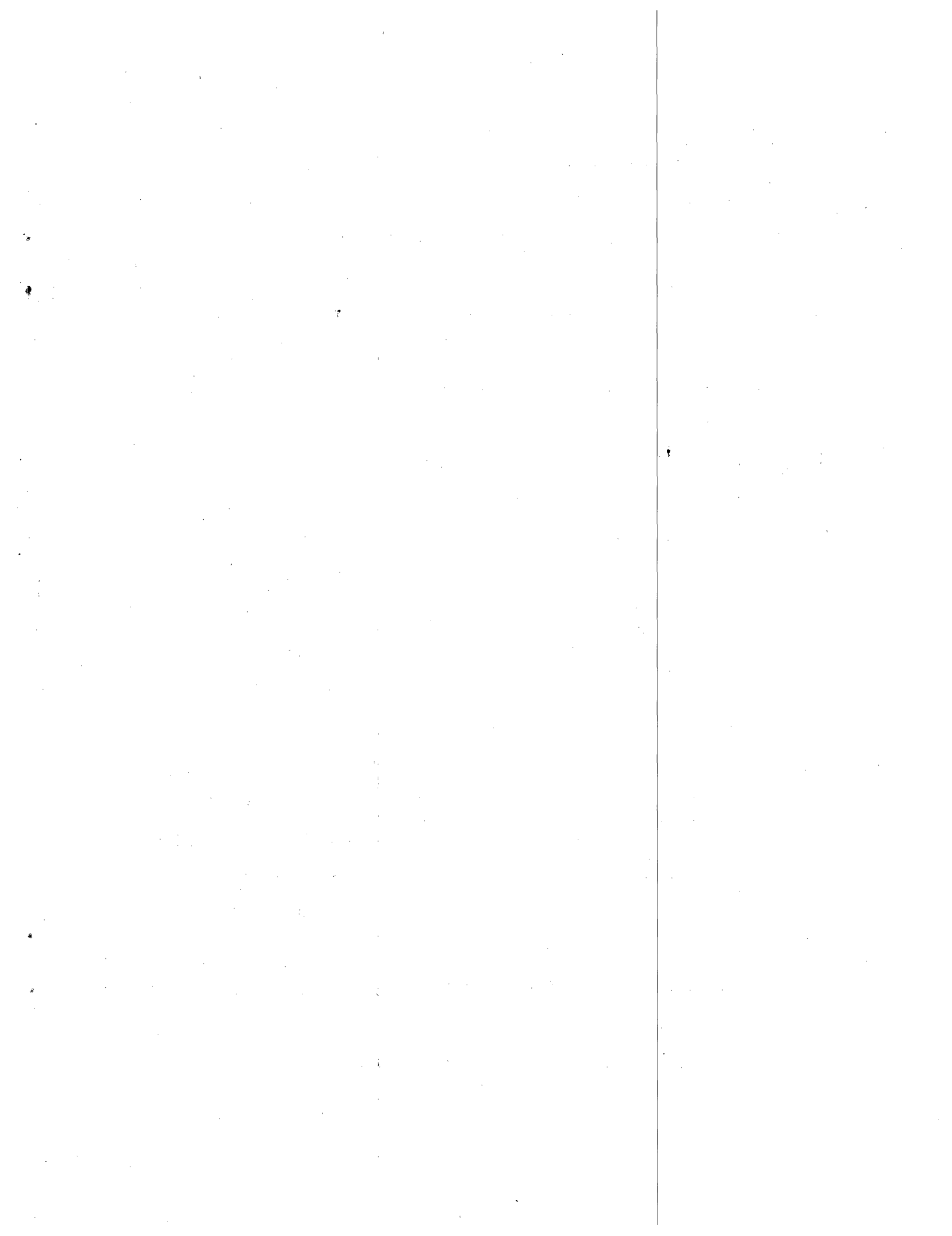
MR. SEIDEL: Is it all natural growth?

MR. JENNINGS: It is all natural growth.

MR. SEIDEL: There is nothing in our law that gives anybody the right to do that.

MR. JENNINGS: If we could only prescribe burn from road to road, irregardless of the property owner. Now, on big blocks of ground it is easy to do. But you take down in back of Medford Lakes, you have got so many people you have to be concerned about. And further, there is very little time in the winter you can do this prescribed burning. Not half enough gets done. So maybe it is necessary to have certain legislation whereby if a man continuously ignores his responsibility to take care of this condition which would create a fire, action could be taken.

MR. McCAY: We should take a recess, and I imagine our reporter agrees with that. But I am a little anxious about finishing with Mr. Cutts before we recess, because he tells me has to to leave when we do recess.



MR. CUTTS: I think there can be enough prescribed burning done to stop many, many fires. Of course, we might not get them all. But just take this business at Chatsworth. It wouldn't have taken many lines to break that up. It was in all directions, and surely some of those lines would have caught some of that head fire.

MR. SEIDEL: If the lines were put in in the right places, and put in recently enough. I would like to have you come down to my office some time, and maybe I could show you my opinion of prescribed burning, and what I have recommended to the department.

MR. CUTTS: I know in the winter time there could be a lot of work done.

MR. McCAY: As I understand it, Mr. Seidel, this prescribed burning is not under your jurisdiction, but under another division of your department?

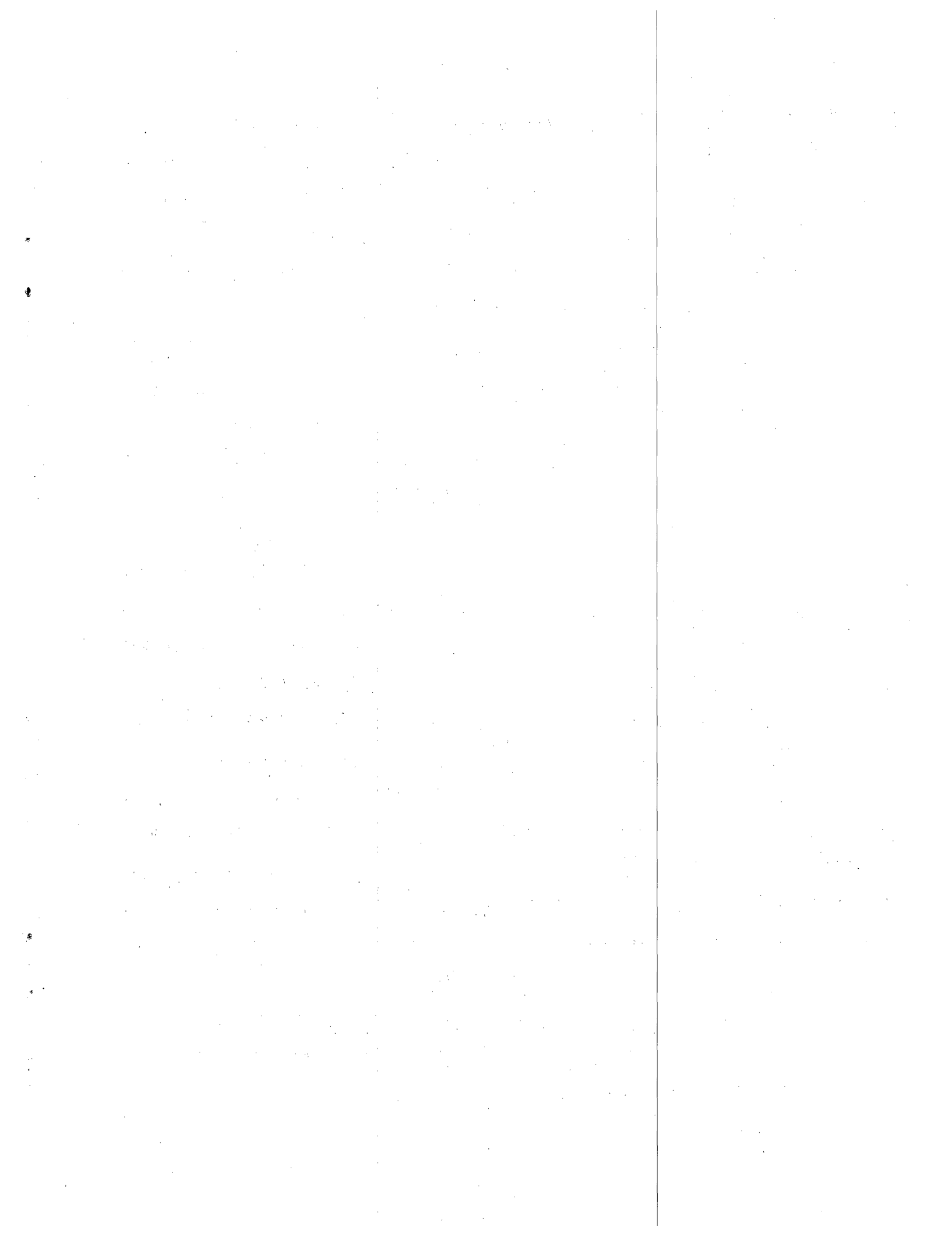
MR. SEIDEL: That is right.

MR. CUTTS: That is why I say there is really no division in this Department of Conservation. It is a unit.

MR. SEIDEL: The department has set up certain rules, and they are the rules I am following. That is under review right now.

MR. CUTTS: It is up to this commission to break those rules, and make some new rules. A fire truck in the winter time could do a lot of good. You know, in prescribed burning, you have to work sometimes. I do plenty of it I know.

MR. SEIDEL: The department ruling on that is whenever the prescribed burning specialist feels there is need for a fire truck, he can request one, and the truck is made available, but the driver is paid for it. When there is a prescribed burning schedule set up, I am asked to furnish the truck and plow, if needed, and recommend the man to operate it, and the man is paid by the property owner. The only thing I want to do is to make sure they are not tying that truck up so it can't be used on a fire, if necessary. That is the departmental policy,



and we have always made fire trucks and plows available for all prescribed burning. As a matter of fact, the only thing the department says is that the operator must be paid by the property owner.

MR. CUTTS: They are paid men.

MR. SEIDEL: They are not paid men. The section wardens are paid men. The men operating the fire trucks put on prescribed burning are not paid men. The men on the trucks are not paid men; they are district fire wardens paid so much an hour. And those trucks are used to the extent that we have quite a bit of trouble getting them back in shape for our fire season.

MR. CUTTS: In prescribed burning, if we save two or three fires, the expense is already paid for.

MR. SEIDEL: If you put them in the right place, that is right. For the record, I would like to say, in answer to one of Mr. Jennings' statements, that the men on the fire do have an identification, and their cars are also identified by a tag, and they are also issued an arm band that they may, or may not, have on the shirt they are wearing.

MR. McCAY: We still have more people to be heard, but I think we will recess now until two o'clock.

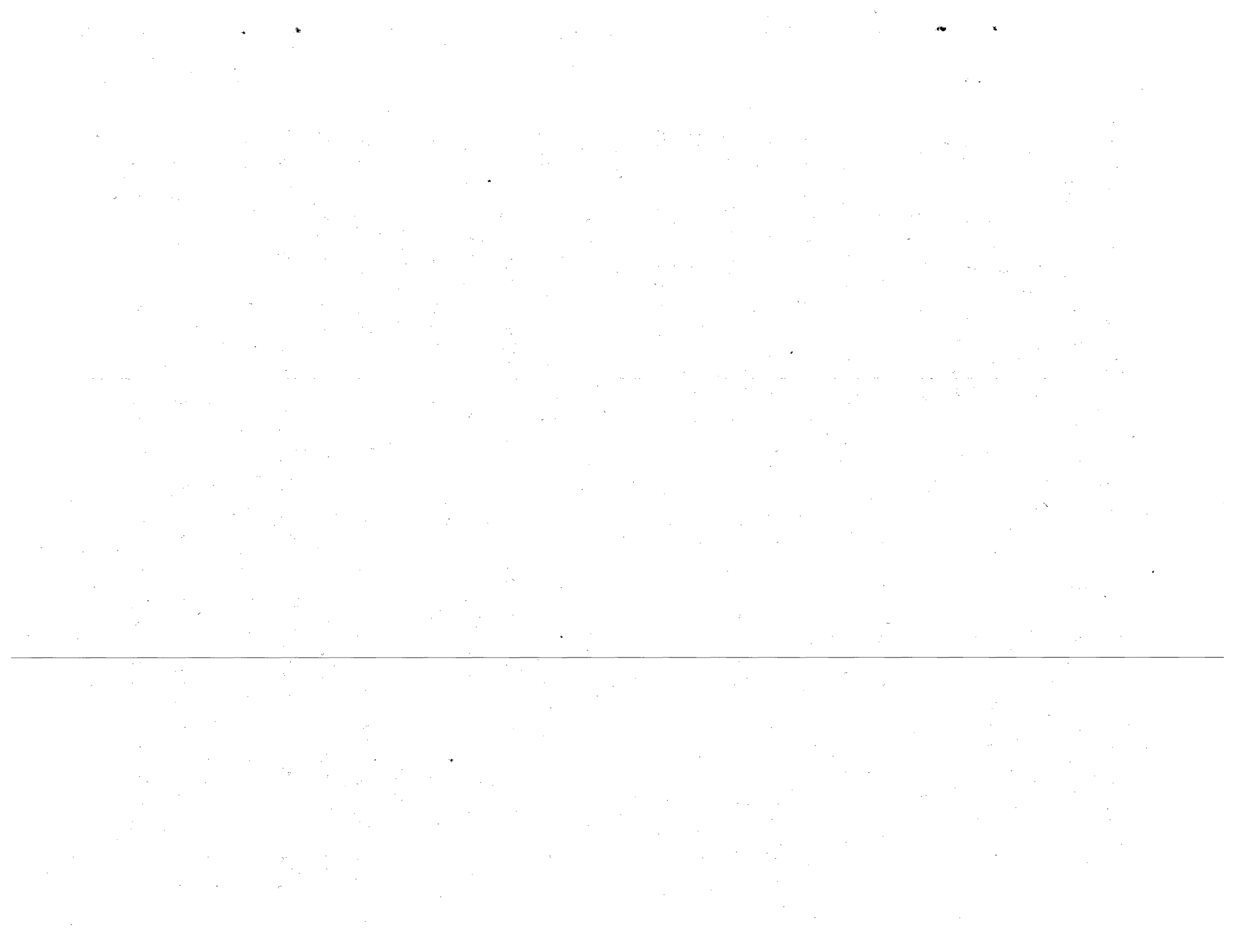
(Recess)

(Afternoon Session)

MR. McCAY: We will now call Mr. J. Rogers Brick.

MR. J. ROGERS BRICK, Medford, New Jersey.

Most of the discussion has covered a lot that I was going to say, but there are two or three things I would like to mention. I was talking to Paul Gerber on Sunday - he is our local warden - in anticipation of this meeting, for information, because I have about 2000 acres, and I wanted to know how we were

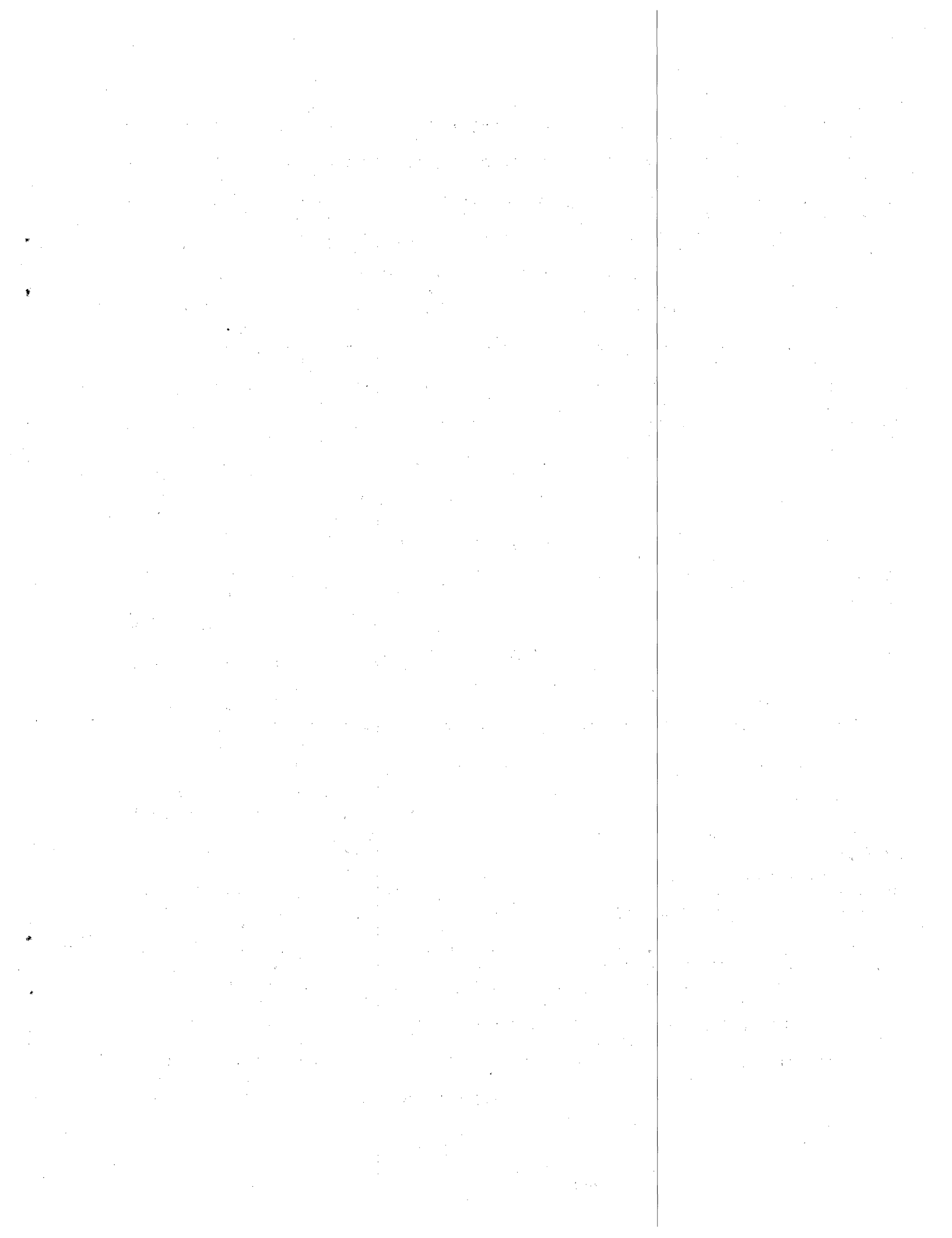


protected. So I said that suppose a fire breaks out up in my district, and he is notified, then what does he do. Suppose on looking it over, he finds he has to have help, where does he get it. He said, "I radio for the other truck". I said, "Where is the man with the truck?" He said, "He has been working down at Presidential Lake". I was wondering why two or three other men couldn't be taught to operate that truck. There are plenty of them in Tabernacle Township who could do it until he got there to take charge. In other words, that truck couldn't get there for many hours that way, which I didn't think was very good management.

Now, we have to depend on this equipment to put out fires. We can't depend on help because that piece of equipment is as good as fifty men if it is there on time.

Now, we had a fire up around my other property in the West Jersey bogs. That lasted for a week or ten days. That wasn't anything but a grand picnic for a bunch of bums up there. They were drunk every day, and the sad part of it was to see the expression on their faces when the rain put the fire out. Now, those things cannot be prevented maybe, I don't know. One night they told me they were going to backfire, and I thought I better go up. If there was one man there, there were fifty. They even had an orchestra with them. I could see no use in firing the road they were going to fire; the fire had been burning there for a week, and it hadn't come out. They said that the plow was coming through the road in the woods, and as soon as it got out they were going to backfire. Well, the plow got lost, and didn't come out within a mile to where it was supposed to, and then it ran out of gas. I stood there all night, and the gang finally went home. What would have happened if the fire had been coming out there, I don't know.

Now, if I was the head of the department, I would consider those things a reflection on my management. Imagine, carousing on the fire for a week. If you want to lay the blame on the local workers, all right, but if I was head of the department, I would consider it a reflection on my management. The head is



responsible for the conduct of the employees when they are on the job. Those things do not make for good cooperation, loyalty, or efficient management. I think there is a big opportunity to build up that morale, which certainly has been lost in the last several years. I am speaking of my own territory now.

MR. BARTLETT: I wasn't over in the West Jersey bogs; I couldn't say what happened. I do know we had a lot of good men in there that never touch a drink, never. I also know that Hagerthey was there, and he called me and said he was going to fire from the West Jersey bogs, and I told him it wasn't necessary, and I would not stand for any backfiring there. If the fire was going to come through there, it would be so slow that they could put it out. And they did not backfire. However, I wasn't there.

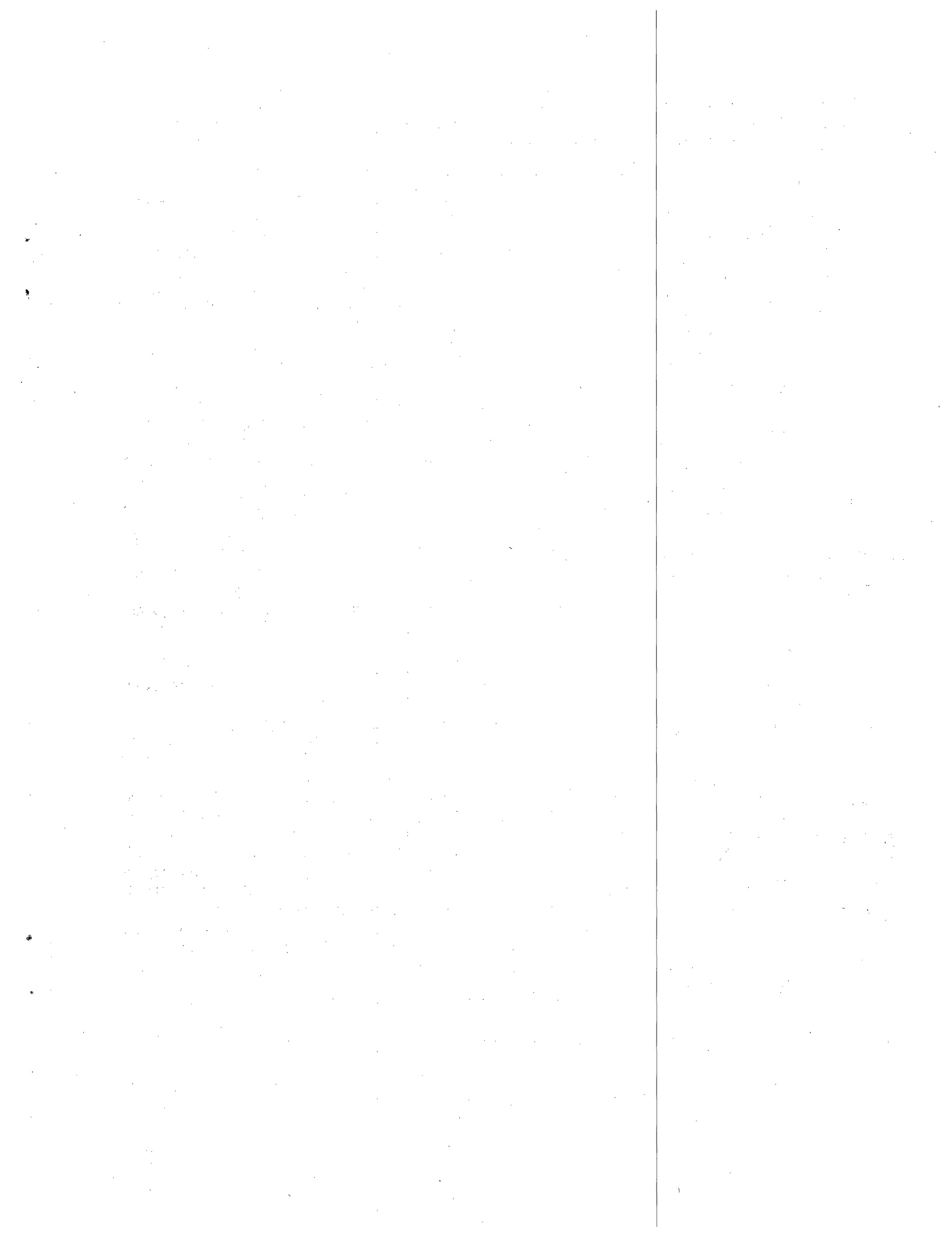
I agree that anything you speak of is my responsibility. I am responsible for that division, and if I know it, I stop it. But this is the first time that that gang down there was on a drunken spree.

MR. SEIDEL: I was there, and I didn't see any carousing.

MR. BRICK: I am in West Jersey, and I know what goes on there. I put my sprinkler system out on my side, and told them they needn't worry about me; I would take care of myself.

MR. BARTLETT: I couldn't see any reason for firing that road. You ask Hagerthey; I told him not to fire.

MR. JENNINGS: Isn't it true there were a lot of hot spots on that fire? Because on that fire, they had a lot of my employees on it, and they furnished them food. I don't know what happened. All I know is every day they called me and said they wanted them, and I let them go. I was told there were some hot spots in there that hadn't burned out, and they were waiting for these spots to get out, because they didn't know when they were going to break out again. I know they got ten or twelve men from me, and they had them in there at least three days, and we had trouble getting money for them. I don't know how many others were in there. It did



look like they had been in there a long time. They didn't get cleaned up, because they certainly came out dirty enough.

MR. BARTLETT: Actually they were in there for three weeks.

MR. JENNINGS: They were on the far side of the fire then, not on the side Rogers is talking about.

MR. SEIDEL: I would like to have more information on this carousing and drinking you are talking about.

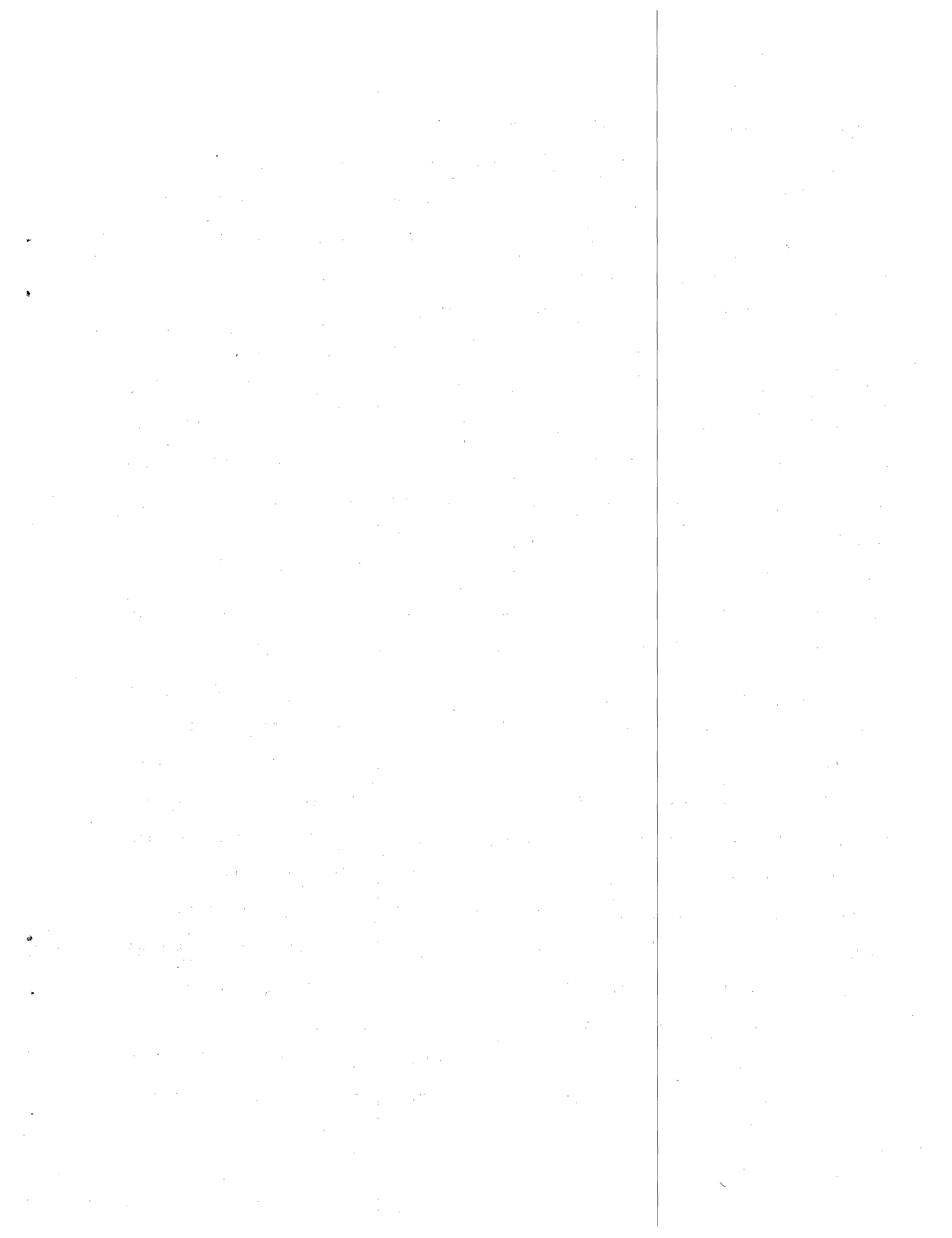
MR. E HAINES: I will back Mr. Brick up in that. There was too much of that being done on this fire we are now talking about. There is no question about it.

MR. SEIDEL: Now you are talking about some men that were drinking and carousing. I would like to know who they were. I want to do something about it.

MR. E. HAINES: The one in particular, Mr. Seidel, is not in the service anymore. We have run him down into the ground, and yet, as Mr. Bartlett and all of us will have to admit, when he was under Carlton Taylor, he was a good man. Frank, unfortunately, is not a leader; he is a follower.

Now, another thing. We are even more short of men today than we were last summer. Now, they had to get whoever they could, and they commandeered them, and unfortunately, they were followers. They were not regular personnel of the forest fire service that they were commandeering to go in there and help Bobby and Frank work. We are not out to gun for anybody. We are just trying to get the facts on the table. We need more cooperation and spirit from the top down. I am not criticising you, but today is the first day I have ever had the pleasure of meeting you, and I think you need more help in your office to come out and rub elbows with the fellows in the field.

MR. SEIDEL: About ten years ago we inaugurated all day meetings of district wardens and their deputies, and we have those in every section, in which

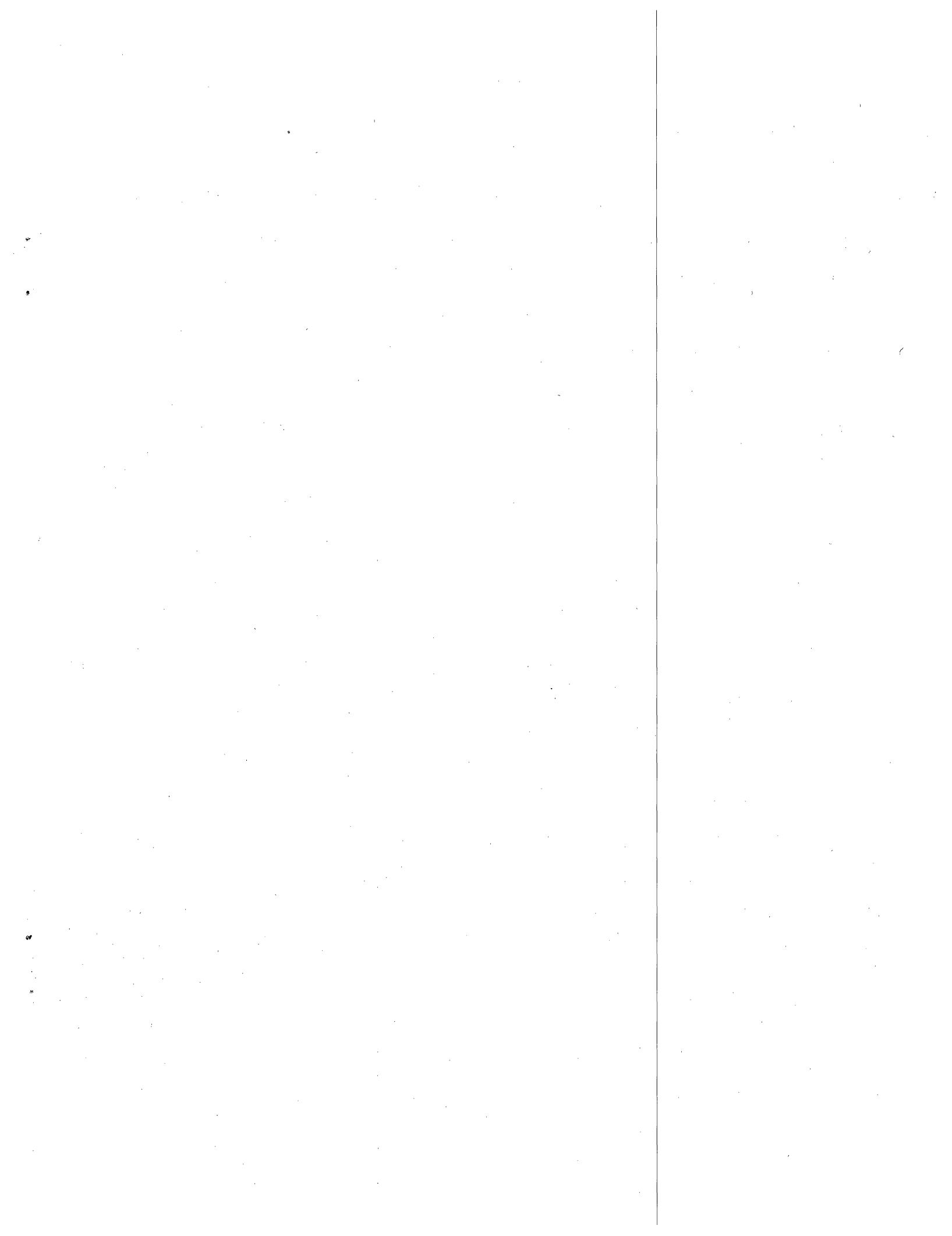


every section personnel attends. That has been going on for ten years.

MR. E. HAINES: But sometime get your section warden to invite the volunteer firemen that have to come and help you shoulder to shoulder, and man to man, and you will go a long way in furthering the good will of the volunteer fellows to come out and help. This fire Mr. Brick referred to, I will personally say right here was a disgrace to the forest fire service of New Jersey. It has no reflection on Mr. Bartlett, because he could not control the men that were commandeered to come in. That day I had dinner in Mt. Holly, and I was due in Moorestown, and I told my wife I couldn't go and leave a bad brush fire the other side of Medford, and I went. We worked shoulder to shoulder with Mr. Bartlett and his men until midnight, until we were relieved of the personal property and the houses that were having trouble. But the next week it dragged on, and I honestly believe that if the right command had been given, they could have gotten in there, and put enough men in there, and gotten it out.

MR. JENNINGS: Doesn't it all come back to the appropriations again? We do not have available enough funds or money. In other words, you are trying to hold down the cost of these fires, and the cost of fighting these fires. You are trying to stretch the amount, and sometimes when a decision has to be made, you are reluctant about going out and hiring enough personnel to do the job. Isn't that the case?

MR. SEIDEL: That is true to a certain extent. But I would like to say this, that in the last ten years we have had 12,180 fires, and of those fires just 158 of them, a little more than one percent, burned over a hundred acres; and 18 only, in ten years, became fires over a thousand acres. When you check back the records, and we have them for a number of years back to 1924, you will find we have cut down materially the number of fires that have burned over a thousand acres. In one year we had 28 in a single year, and now we had only 18 over 10 years.

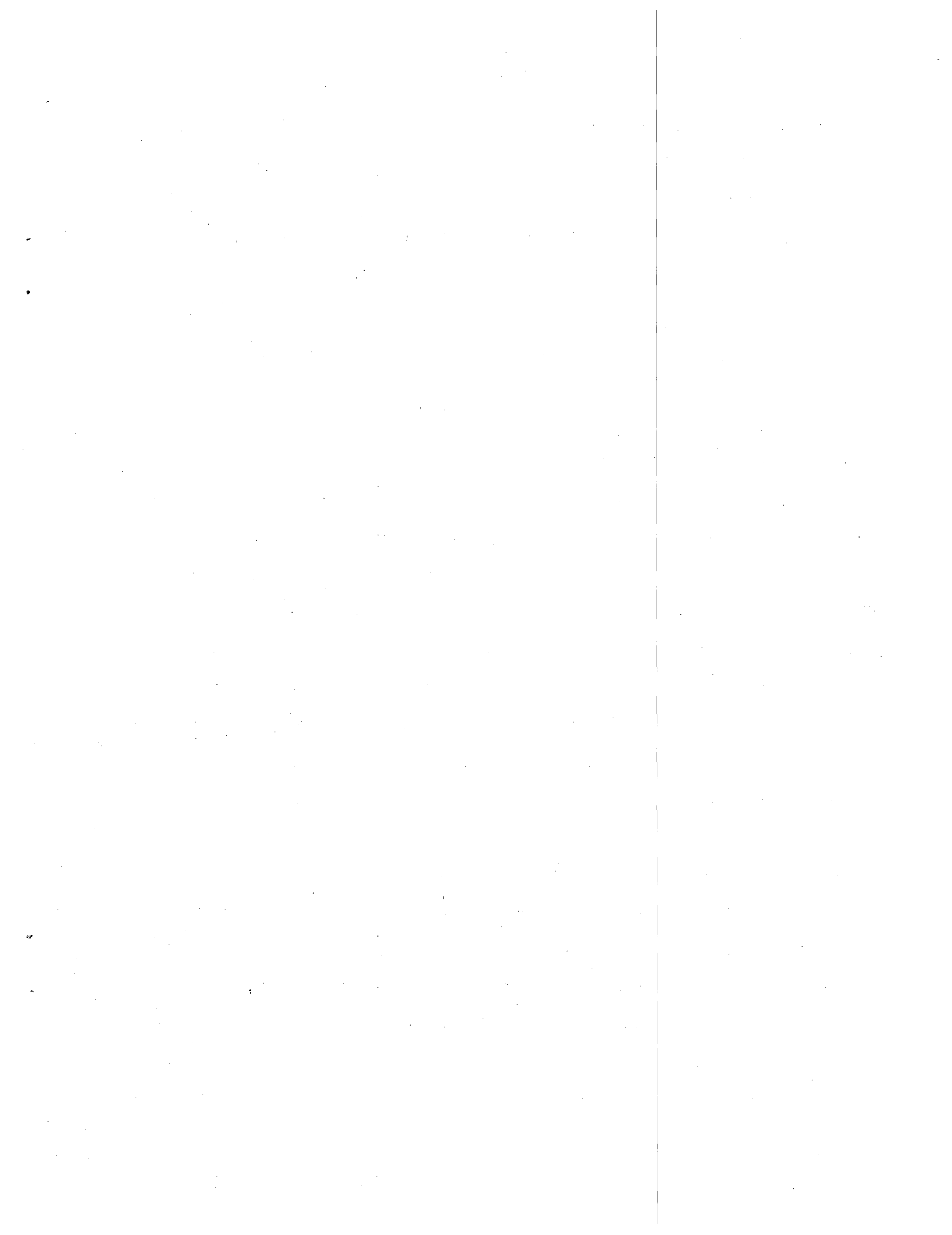


Of course, there are mistakes in judgment made; there are failure of equipment. We are working on that problem. It is improving; it has improved in the last ten years. We started to get trucks in 1937; we got ten year that. In 1942 we had 29 fire trucks, and we increased that until in 1948 we had 60 trucks. Now we still can use some more fire trucks. The plan now would be to have reserve trucks that could be used as replacements for trucks that are temporarily out of service. That is one phase, one way we could plug up some of the holes that are letting fires get away.

I don't know whether you people know it or not, but the federal government has been making studies over the past number of years, and they have come up with this blow-up fire idea. In other words, it is a condition that generally accompanies showery thunder storm conditions, where you have sprinkles in some places, and no rain in others, and once a fire gets up to forty acres, and you have had four, five, or six days of what we term a build-up index of 50 points, then you have got blow-up conditions all the way around. When these fires go back 40 or 50 acres, then you have a tremendous amount of energy released, and fires will create their own draft, and sparks and embers will be carried high in the air a half-mile ahead, or two miles ahead, or to one side, depending on which way the wind shifts. Now that brings us right back to the fundamental of trying to get these fires out before they get into this blow-up condition.

MR. BRICK: That is what I was trying to bring out. Personally, I would rather see one of your trucks come rolling in on my property in case of fire, instead of 50 of the men we get nowadays. Now then, how to get that truck there. The truck is on the highway, and the only operator is working 20 miles away.

MR. SEIDEL: It has been mentioned here that we should put people on stand-by. Well, we do that. On bad fire days, the recommendation will come in



from the field, and we give the approval to put them on stand-by on these trucks, one or two, or sometimes three men, if the conditions are bad. So we do have those men available. But there again you come in to the question of money.

MR. E. HAINES: Is the money sufficient to warrant him taking off from his job to stand by?

MR. SEIDEL: You can only pay them what the law allows.

MR. E. HAINES: Why are we so far behind in our salaries for the forest fire fellows?

MR. SEIDEL: Mr. Bartlett, do you have trouble with people putting them on stand-by when we ask for standby?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes.

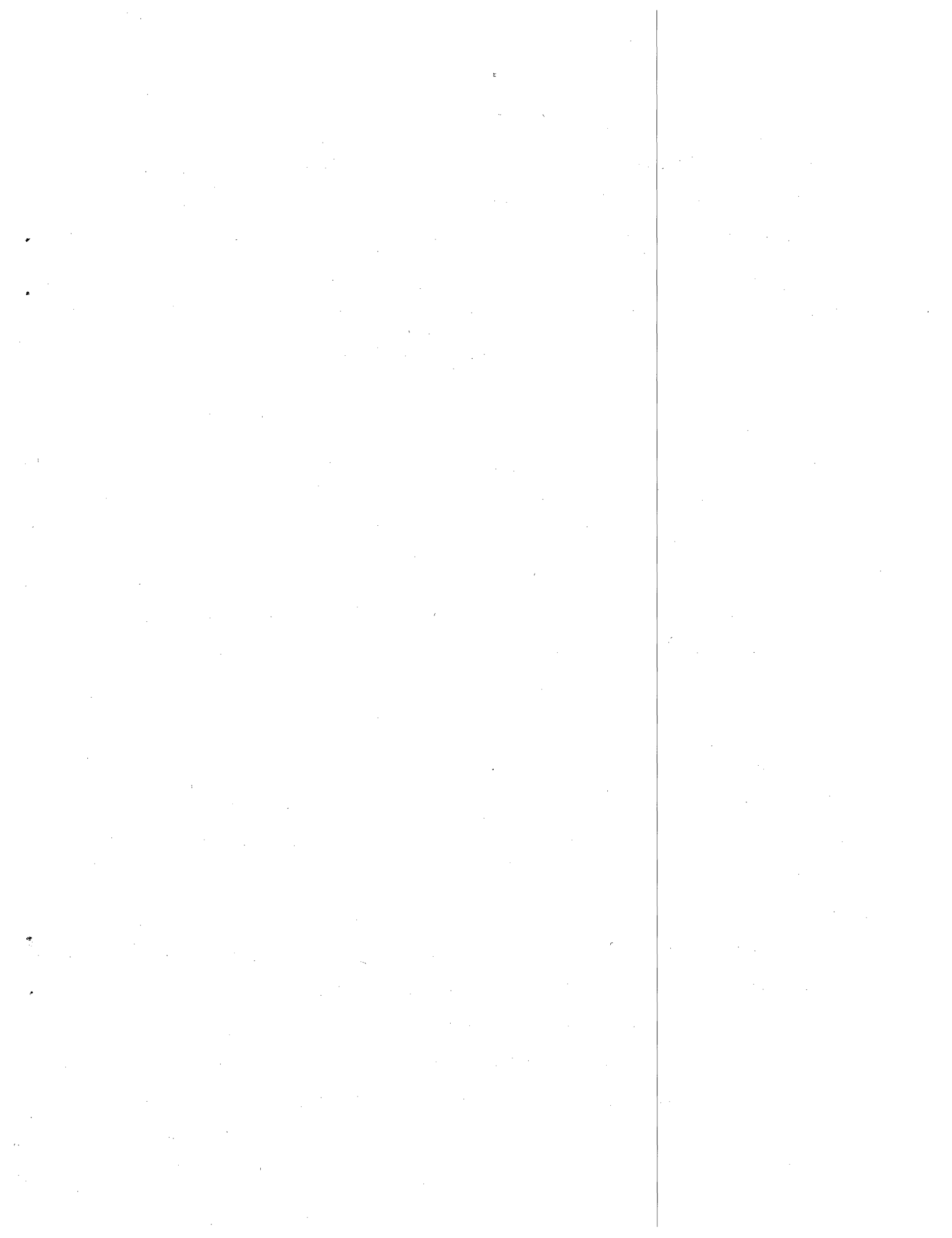
MR. AARON: We have been pretty lucky in that respect.

MR. BARTLETT: Saturdays and Sundays we don't have too much trouble. But you take a working day, and we ask them to go out there for 75 cents, and they don't want that.

MR. BRICK: I don't think Gerber would have any trouble getting two or three fellows to handle that truck. What I am trying to bring out is, you have the equipment, but we can't get it on the job because there aren't enough men trained to run it.

MR. BARTLETT: There is another driver for that truck available. I can't think of his name right now. If you know of any good man that would be an asset to us, we would be glad to see what we could do to take him into the organization somewhere.

MR. BRICK: I have a man available any time, a fellow by the name of Dill. He is an employee of mine, who would be glad to help you; and the three Haines brothers are neighbors of mine. They are fire fighters; they are not thinking about the money primarily.



MR. BARTLETT: It isn't definite, but I believe Gerber is considering a man to drive his truck.

MR. SEIDEL: I would like to go back to something Mr. Jennings said this morning, about working agreements with the Army. We have had working agreements with the Army, particularly Dix, for a number of years, and we have always used soldiers fighting forest fires. They furnished men on the Chatsworth fire, and on any other fire they will furnish them when there is an emergency. But they want to get them back in just as soon as they can after the emergency is over.

MR. BARTLETT: Then there is the question of paying men for protecting their own property.

MR. SEIDEL: Of course, that is a department regulation, and it is carried out more or less, that people are not paid for protecting their own property. You mentioned the men down in Atlantic County that had to go down and protect their own property down there. I feel that is a responsibility that every property owner has, to protect his own property.

MR. BARTLETT: There is the question of men getting paid, referring to what he was just talking about. That is the policy by which we are governed, and there is nothing we can do about it. If the fire is burning in back of his house, we expect him to go out, and put it out without pay. That is his responsibility; that is, the department considers it that way.

MR. JENNINGS: But the point arises, to what extent can a man protect his own property? I could protect my property by backfiring, possibly against the permission of the fire warden. If I want to put fire around my property to protect my property, I might endanger someone else. In the case I was talking about, both men that I know of were down in Atlantic County working for several days trying to prevent that fire from getting any larger, and then also they had



to go back there each day and put out fire that apparently they felt the department should have put out. A person doesn't mind going out for two or three days, but when it goes on longer than that, naturally it hits them financially. Some arrangement should be made, because he is not only protecting his own property; he is naturally protecting other peoples' by not letting it get any larger. I think that is one thing that in the future probably they should have a ruling on of a little different nature than you have today.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: We don't want to lose sight of the fact that this is a legislative commission, and that in our recommendations we can recommend changes in the present statutes. If there are weaknesses here, it is our duty to change them. If we are not paying enough to certain people for fire fighting, or if we need larger appropriations, or things like that, this is the time to consider it.

MR. JENNINGS: I feel myself that years ago when volunteers received no compensation for fighting fires, that the fires were extinguished, with the limited facilities they had, a lot quicker than they are today, with the facilities we have. Of course, that is not the policy today, and maybe it might be worth considering that you fire wardens have a right to go out and command a person to go in and fight a fire. I consider it any citizen's duty to go out and help put a fire out, but after he has to stay on the job for such a length of time, then it changes the picture entirely. They should be compensated for that overtime they put in, because a volunteer fireman who will go out and save my home or your home, they don't ask for any compensation.

MR. SEIDEL: That is right. When they get on a forest fire for days on end, then they cannot afford to take a two dollar or two dollar and a half loss, because it is taking food from their families. I agree with you on that.

MR. McCAY: All right. We will hear from Mr. Edward Haines.



MR. J. EDWARD HAINES, Medford, New Jersey

Senator, to get my point across, we will have to quickly review some of the things said so that Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Seidel will understand a little bit of our background.

We have been born and raised under Carlton Taylor who, as all of us do eventually, get to the age where we have to retire. Sometime ago Carlton had to relinquish his activities, and the department saw fit to put another man in, who is a man with a wife and a child. At the time he was working under Carlton, he had another job, and could be reached on the 'phone for the big truck. So as to clarify it in my own mind, Mr. Bartlett, actually they are supposed to get your consent before they move the big truck, is that not correct. So Mr. Bartlett would have to send word to Frank to come from his other job. Then Frank Evans was moved up to a temporary section warden, and changed jobs, and lived near town most of the time, and another man was put on the big truck. As I understand it, Frank was qualified for the job; he did pass civil service.

MR. BARTLETT: He did pass. He was appointed from the Civil Service list as the only man available from the list.

MR. E. HAINES: Then if he passed, why wasn't he made a regular section warden instead of a temporary one for such a long time? Isn't it possible that if he had been given the position of section warden right away that he might have more initiative and assumed greater responsibility? That is a question I am asking. If you can't answer it today, all right, but it is food for thought.

MR. SEIDEL: I will tell you why he wasn't appointed. That was out of my control; it was a department reorganization policy, and he was appointed temporarily as section warden even though he did pass the examination. There were plans in the department to replace section wardens by professional men.



MR. E. HAINES: Isn't that a detriment to those out in the field?

MR. SEIDEL: I agree with you, but there is nothing I can do about it.

MR. E. HAINES: Where can we go to get to the bottom of it.

MR. SEIDEL: Also, Mr. Bartlett reminded me, when Taylor resigned, he had something like 300 days sick leave coming to him, and the policy of the Civil Service Department is not to replace anybody on sick leave until they are taken off the payroll. From my point of view, I do not agree with it, but Civil Service has the say.

MR. E. HAINES: What do we have to do then to correct that?

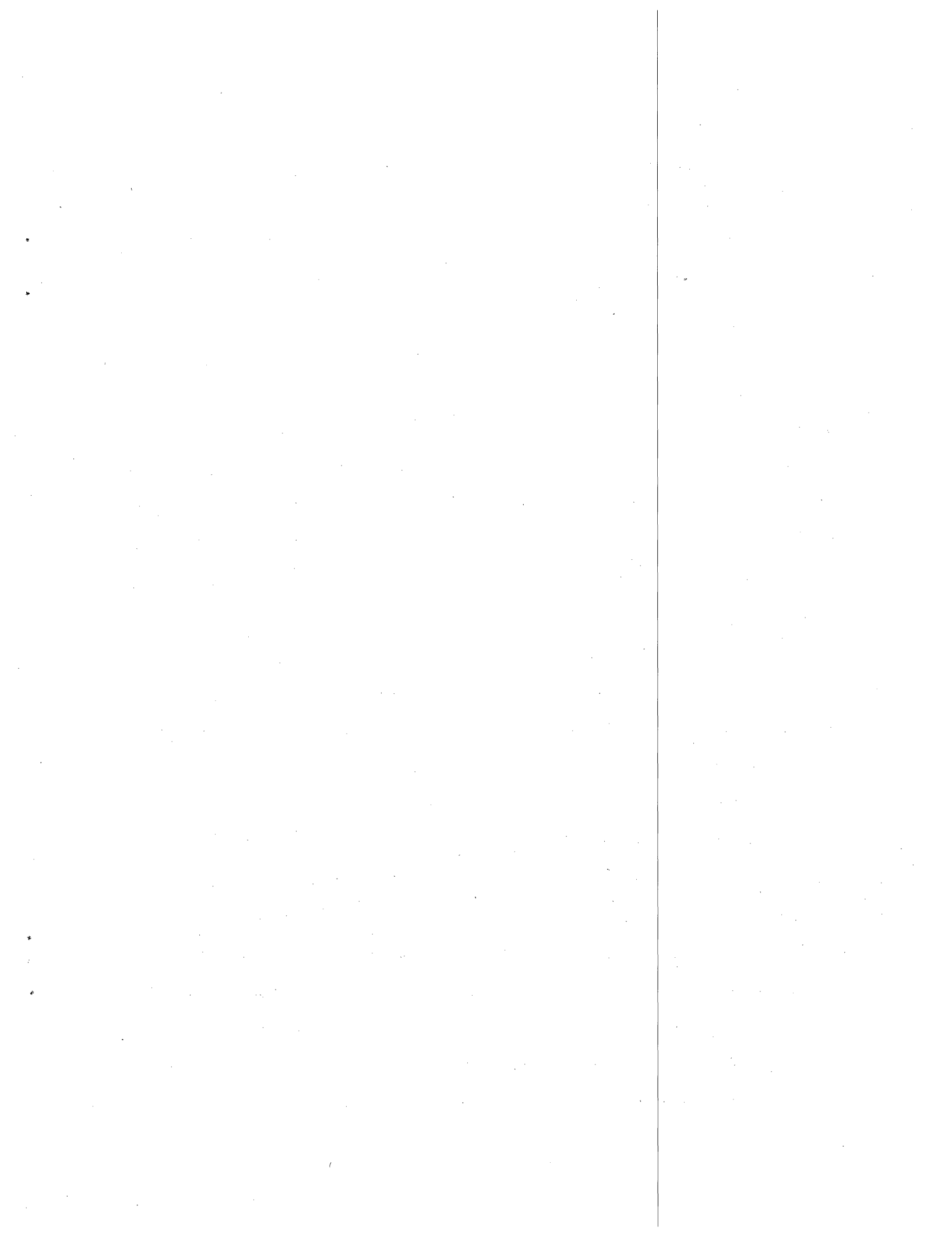
MR. SEIDEL: That is a very good point, to clarify terminal sick leave so those men can be taken off the payroll and permanent appointments made. That is a real good point. We have that continually. At the time Taylor was off, there were about five different section wardens off on sick leave, and we had all temporary appointments in their places that had come off a civil service list.

MR. McCAY: I might say that we did invite to this meeting today a representative of Civil Service that knows about these matters, but he was unable to be here; he is on his vacation. But the Commission will talk with him, and I have asked our secretary to make a note of that particular question.

MR. SEIDEL: I think that is a vital point. It is not only in our department; that is all over the State. There are a lot of men that I know who have been with the State for 25 and 30 years, and have this sick leave piled up, and some day these men are going to be out on sick leave, and the jobs have to be taken by temporaries, and those temporaries are going to be in for maybe a year or two. That is a personnel problem that ought to be solved.

MR. JENNINGS: Isn't it true too that Evans was acting as a temporary appointee during the time of this fire?

MR. SEIDEL: That is right. When Taylor retired, if it wasn't for his sick leave, Evans would have been appointed section warden. He would have had



all the rights and privileges from the date he was originally given the job.

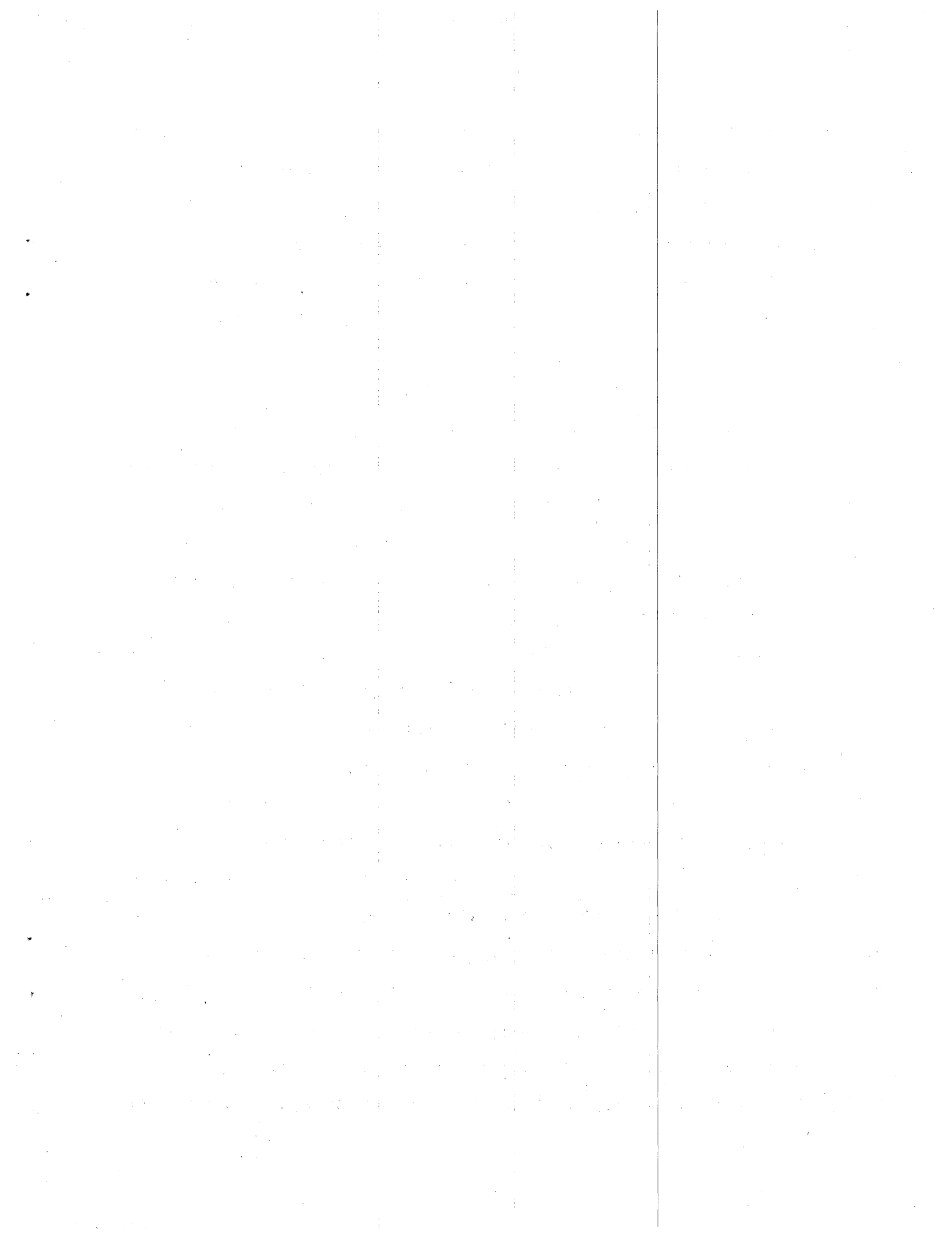
MR. McCAY: As I understood one of your answers to Mr. Haines' question, it was that there was under consideration a policy of replacing section wardens with professional foresters, college trained professional foresters. Has that matter been abandoned, or is it still under consideration?

MR. SEIDEL: Let me answer it this way. There are three men now that are temporarily tied into the 6000 numbered positions, which means they are permanent until the reorganization takes place. Some of the other men, where those jobs were not tied in, have been given their permanent appointment. Now I understand that the plan will be abandoned. Further, a section warden examination has been scheduled, and there will be another examination. So I believe that part of the reorganization plan has, at least, been temporarily abandoned. That is all I can tell you about that.

MR. E. HAINES: Then we have the section wardens, and I believe Mr. Seidel gave us the brackets that the salaries came in. It certainly is not inducive to a young man with a family to give his time to it compared to what the rest of the young men are getting at other industries. And I am afraid it comes right back to Civil Service again that controls that salary bracket, and I heartily disapprove of it. I think Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Aaron, and Mr. Seidel will all agree with me, that to get a conscientious man to do the job, you have got to pay him.

MR. SEIDEL: Actually, these men work about four hours, or three and a half hours, about half the time in comparison with other civil service employees, and they are available for fire calls. We don't have trouble getting good men for section fire wardens. I would like to have Mr. Aaron say something on that.

MR. AARON: The idea of having part-time men started with the reorganization of 1923. At that time, the salary was \$900. At that time it was felt



that the average man who would work for \$900. wasn't the man for the job, and that is the theory we have been working on. In other words, the man we want for the job cannot afford to work for the money we pay him. He must have something on the side. That way we are able to get a better man, by permitting him to do this other work, than we could otherwise. We have men in our service who are probably making \$10,000. plus our salary. They have time enough to do our job, and do a wonderful job.

MR. McCAY: You feel that generally, Mr. Aaron, the section wardens are competent men?

MR. AARON: Yes, as a whole. We will always find a man here and there that probably is not doing the job we want. We have to get after him and try to get him to do the job. Either he does that, or he finds himself in hot water. But I think we are better able to get the man who can do the job by making it a part-time job.

MR. McCAY: What is that bracket today?

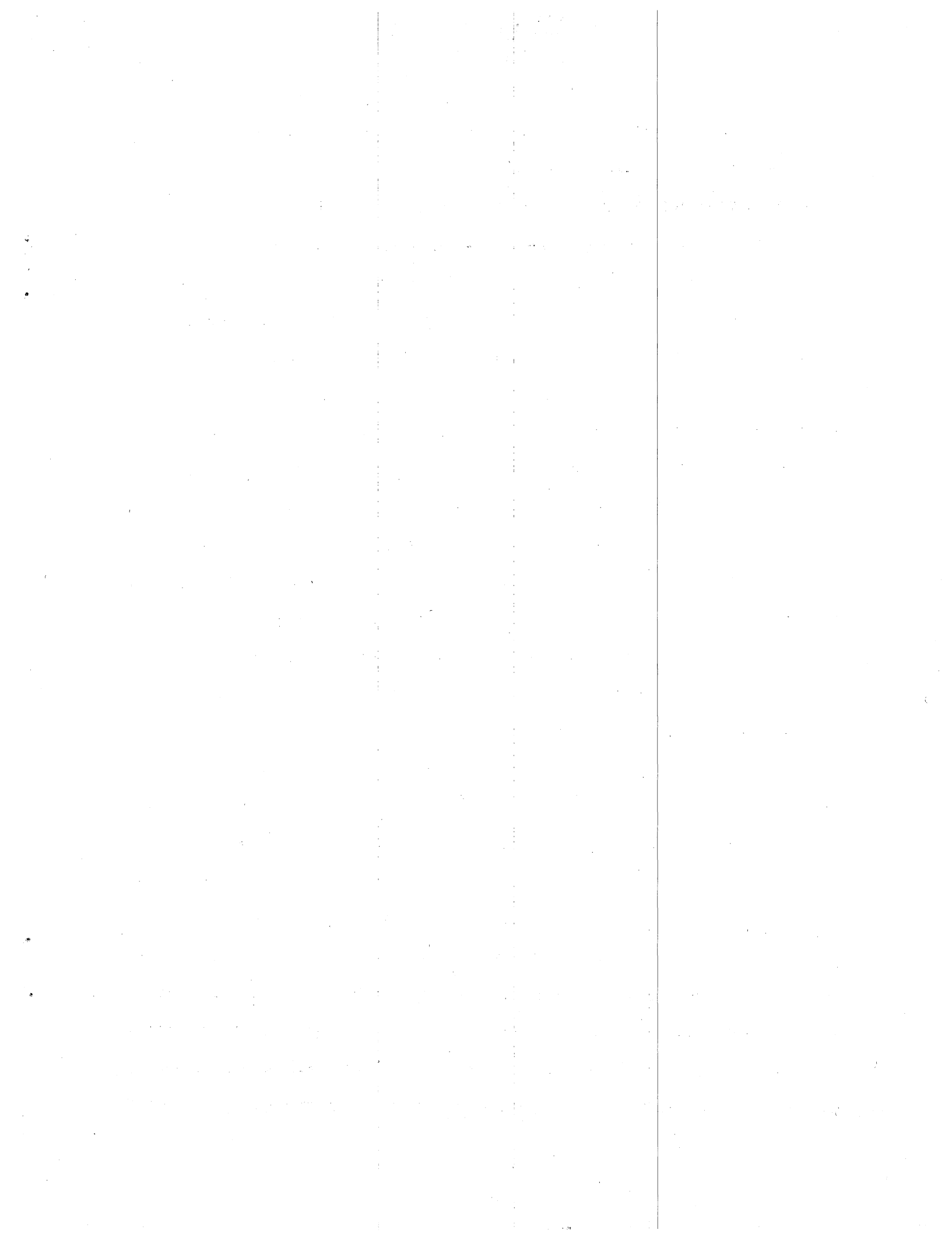
MR. SEIDEL: \$2520 to \$3120.

MR. BRICK: Talking about if they don't do their jobs, that they find themselves in hot water. It came out today that your section wardens have the authority to put a fire out, even if it isn't in their district. Did any of them get in any hot water?

MR. AARON: I don't know anything at all about that. I do know that our men are instructed that when they go to a fire, and if they are their fires, they must assume the responsibility and do something about it.

MR. BRICK: Did Bill Hagerthey get in any hot water about that?

MR. BARTLETT: No, I took the responsibility for that one. If I had gone over there that night and got some hose over there, it might have been different.



MR. E. HAINES: Were you in there, Mr. Bartlett, or were you consulted over the radio that night?

MR. BARTLETT: Yes, I was consulted over the radio. They said they had three wardens, three or four trucks, and I forget how many men - twenty-five men there.

MR. E HAINES: And they told you thenthey had to pull the truck in by crawler to get the truck into the fire?

MR. BARTLETT: No, they just said they had difficulty getting the truck in.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: Did they ask about hose?

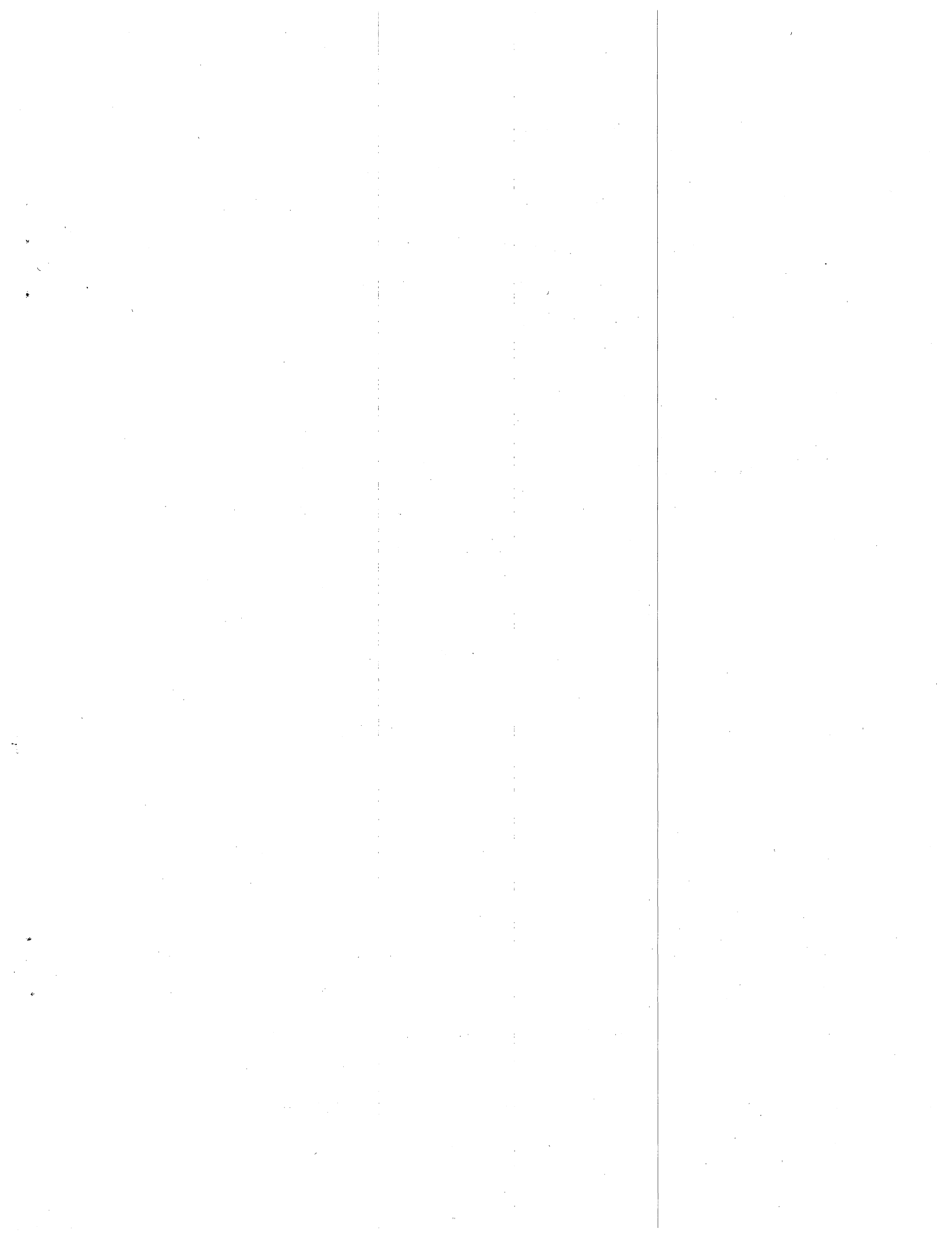
MR. BARTLETT: No. They said they were having trouble, and I asked them if they could keep it down that night, and they said yes.

MR. E.HAINES: But you yourself were not there?

MR. BARTLETT: No. I was in a rather difficult spot, because on this economy move, the staff at division headquarters was cut. One man was on vacation, and one man had just been transferred. I was there alone, and with five counties to look after, I didn't feel I was justified to go to a three acre fire. I went down there early the next morning, though, and decided we have to have hose, and we were going to relay water in there. But before I could get the hose, there being nobody from headquarters, I had to go out of there. So I took the responsibility for that fire. I feel directly responsible for it, and I do not blame it on Frank Evans, and I do not blame it on Bill Hagerthey, or Bill Sloan. It was my understanding from the local wardens, and others, that they were there all night. When I looked at it in the morning, it didn't look severe, but it hit a brush pile, and that is when it took off. The breaks were against us, that's all.

MR. McCAY: Where was the brush pile?

MR. BARTLETT: It was on the southeast corner.



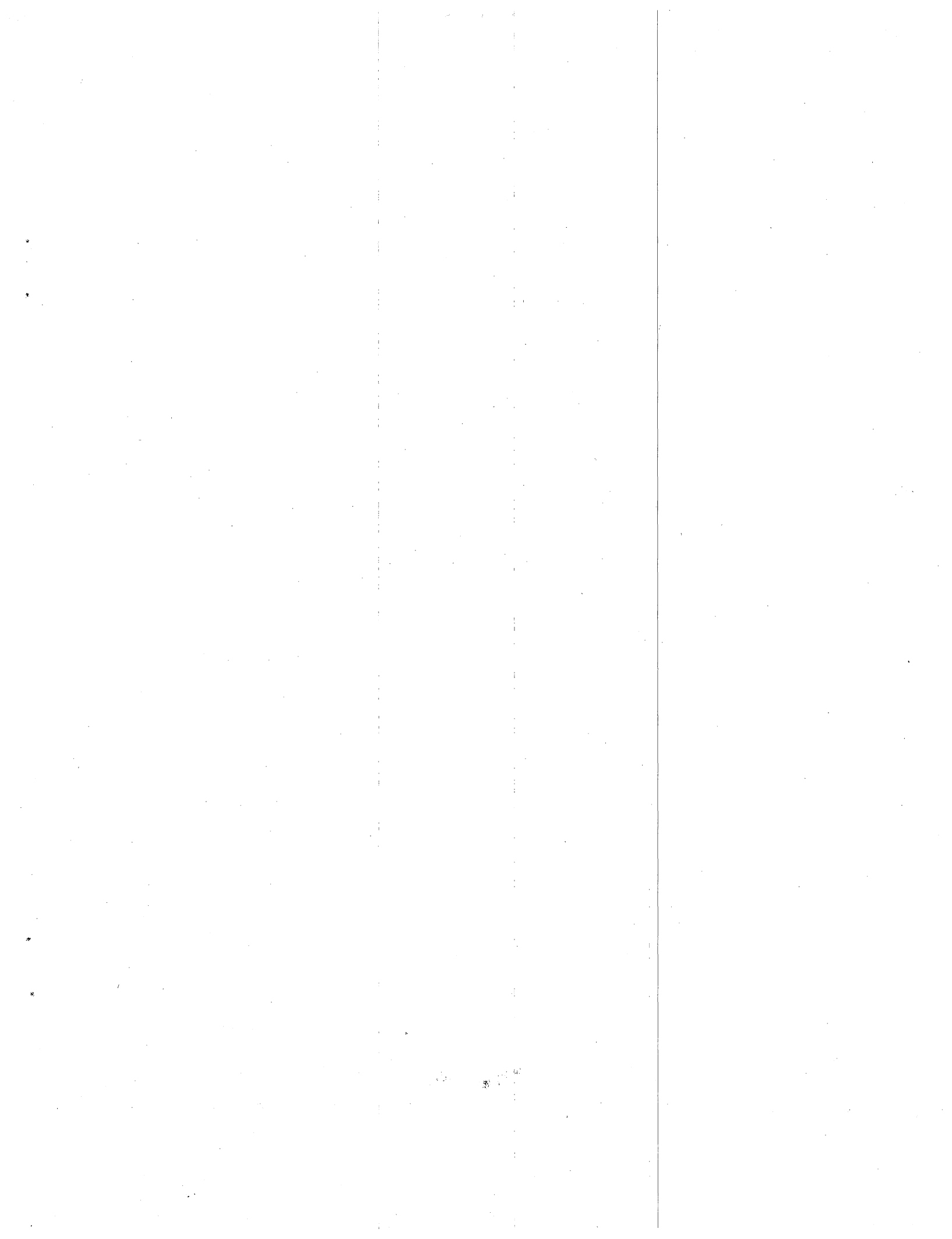
MR. McCAY: On private property?

MR. BARTLETT: Oh yes, yes.

MR. JENNINGS: Of course, on a lot of these occasions we overlook all the conditions that are conducive to a large fire starting or getting out of control. At that time there was no moisture on the upland areas, even though this was in a swamp, and that was misleading. They probably told you it was down in the swamp, and there was dampness there. I was there that afternoon it was in the swamp, and they were having difficulty getting in there. In fact, nobody wanted to go in. Everybody was waiting for the fire to come out. Nobody went in. Only a few people went in, like John Cutts, and a few others. I can bring supporting witnesses here, and tell you that the man who ran the bulldozer on the outside, a man by the name of Adams, who had his bulldozer in there, he left there very late in the morning. He was interested because he had cedar and property he owned on the southwest side of that fire, and he wanted to be sure that someone was going to take care of that, and he was assured that someone had been over there. When he went home, I believe he sent someone back, and found out that one of these wardens who was supposed to have gone over, or sent somebody over, didn't investigate, and they went in there and put the fire out, and it happened to be his father and another brother. They went in early the next morning, and the fire would have gone out in another direction if it hadn't been for them, apparently. So it just shows there is not enough cooperation sometimes, and they didn't realize the seriousness of the situation.

I feel, regardless of whether a fire is a half acre fire, or a ten acre fire, or whatever size it is, we have to consider it as a dangerous threat, and it should be treated the same, with all the amount of manpower, and all the amount of equipment you can command to put on it.

Now, this thing that you call the economy move. I feel that the natural

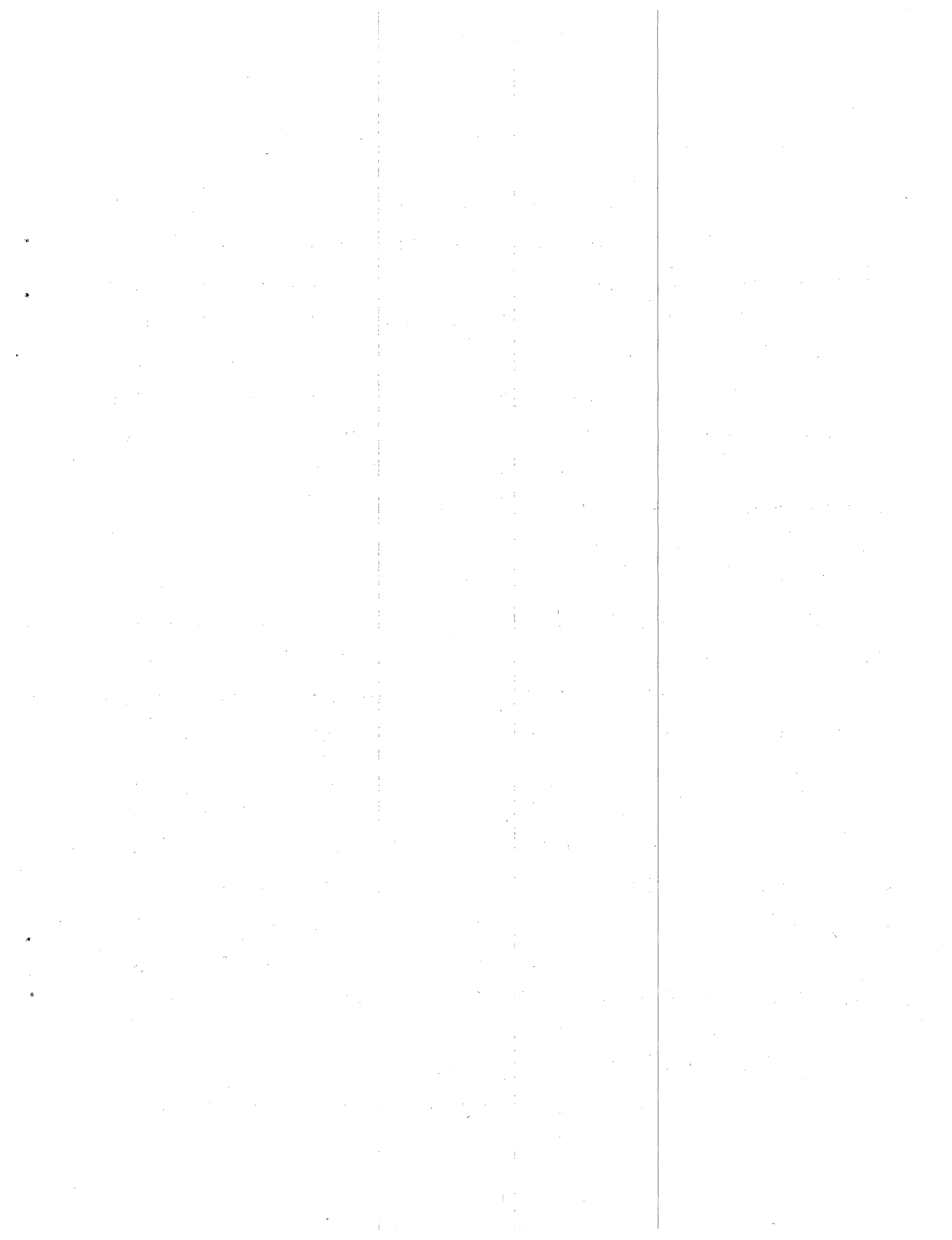


resources in the State of New Jersey are so valuable to us with the increasing population that we cannot afford to be too economy minded, and that we must provide sufficient money to do the job and do it right. If you need more personnel, there must be the means provided to pay the bill. It takes years, and years, and years, to replace the damage done by a forest fire. The sportsmen are only reminded of the seriousness of what happens during a fire when they go out hunting in the hunting season. They don't seem to worry too much about the fire being fought properly, or they don't care who pays for it. The only thing they worry about is the game. The property owner worries about his own property. But if we want to keep our State green we have got to pay the bill.

I ask that our Senator and Assemblyman here go on record to say that they will request sufficient funds to do this job, and do it right.

MR. McCAY: Of course, that is one of the duties of this Commission in its report, to recommend additional funds for fire fighting if there are not sufficient funds at the present time. Mr. Seidel, is this economy move still in effect?

MR. SEIDEL: It was put to me as an economy move. Actually it was to change the fire service around and put more men in as technical foresters, and less men as fire wardens. That is actually what it was. It was approved by Governor Driscoll. I was against changing the section warden system. The plan embodies prescribed burning at the rate of three or four hundred thousand acres a year, and using that as a basis of fire prevention. At least, that is my interpretation of the plan, although I have never seen the plan. In order to stall off the breaking up of the section warden system, I suggested reducing the division office by one man. And further, the pay wasn't saved, but was used for the appointing of other men in the department.



MR. McCAY: Is Mr. Bartlett's office undermanned at the present time?

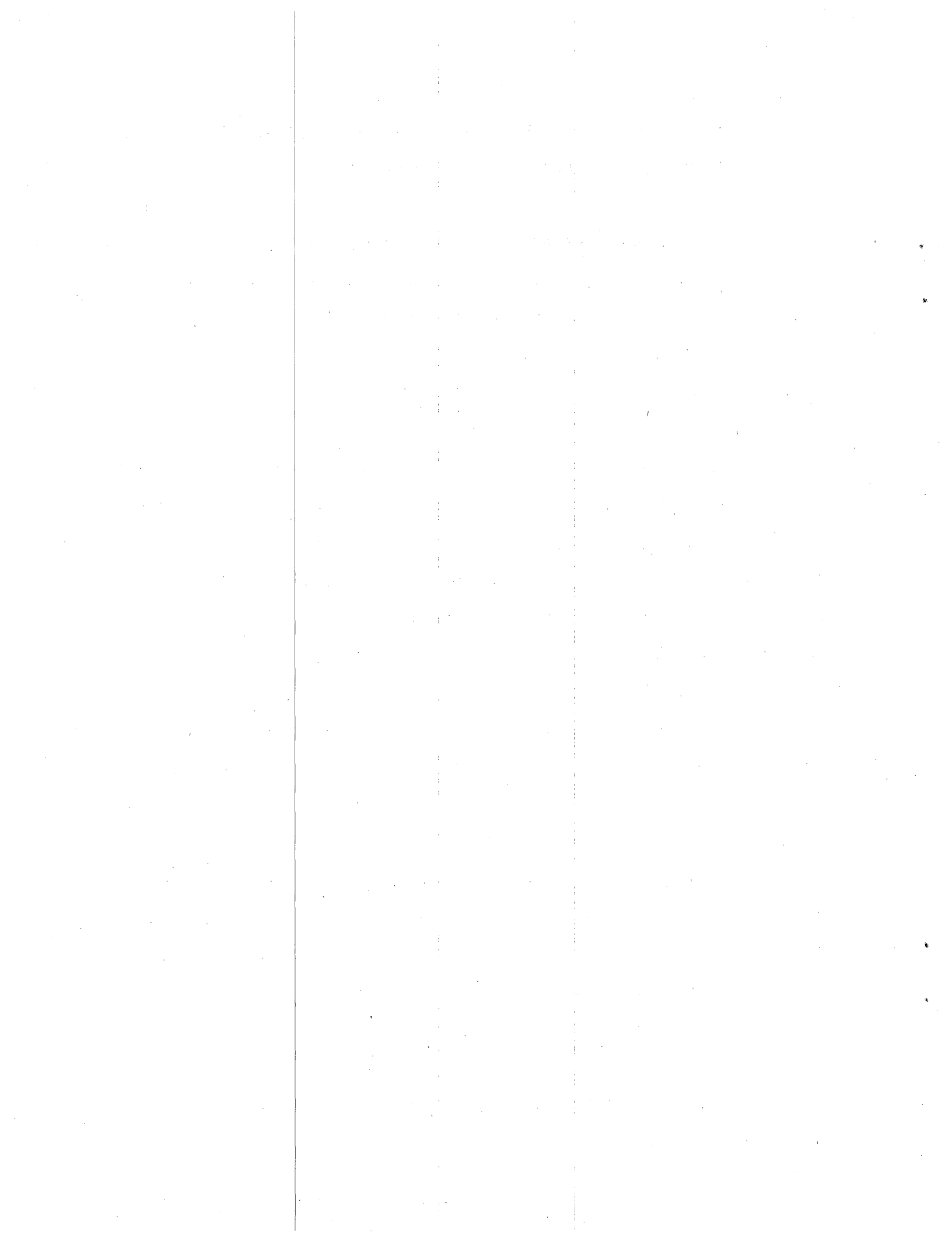
MR. SEIDEL: He should have one more man put back in each of the division offices.

MR. BARTLETT: I would like to comment on that, being vitally interested. We had a fire start in Middlesex County on Friday night. My assistant spent Friday night there; I spent Saturday night up there; he spend Sunday night up there; and the next day we have to go in the office and do our work in the office. I have another man on vacation, and they have 85 compensatory days that I should give them by September. What am I going to do about it?

MR. SEIDEL: Of course, you must realize we had three dry summers prior to this. We haven't had too much fire trouble in the summer for a number of years before this. This is that part of the cycle that gives us summer time worries. Whether it is going to change, I will leave it up to you to guess. I would say it is going to change and swing the other way, and we will have wet summers, but when, I won't even attempt to say.

MR. E. HAINES: Now, in our setup, the section warden has a truck, and to get it serviced he has to take it to Toms River. In other words, he cannot have anything done on it in his locality, and the only time that he can take it down there is in the daytime. How in the world is a section warden going to take his truck downthere in the daytime now when he is so vitally needed in the area? Why in the world can't we have the use of the local garages? We ordinary people in the county will open up our garages for a farmer whose truck breaks down, and he has to have it the next morning. If he needs a spark plug, he has to wait for it to come; he cannot go out and get one on the outside, or even a bolt, or anything. They have to wait until somebody comes from Toms River.

MR. McCAY: I might add that Mr. Haines hasn't told me that before, but other people have, about the spark plugs.



MR. SEIDEL: Aren't your section wardens allowed to have a grease job done on the outside?

MR. BARTLETT: We discussed that at the last division wardens conference, and it was decided that where a man had to go all the way from Medford to Toms River to get a grease job, maybe it would be better for him to get it done locally.

MR. SEIDEL: Conover, what is the ruling on that?

MR. CONOVER: Any time during emergencies, if they call up and ask, they can always get approval to have it done locally.

MR. E. HAINES: Why do they have to call up in the middle of summer when it is so dry?

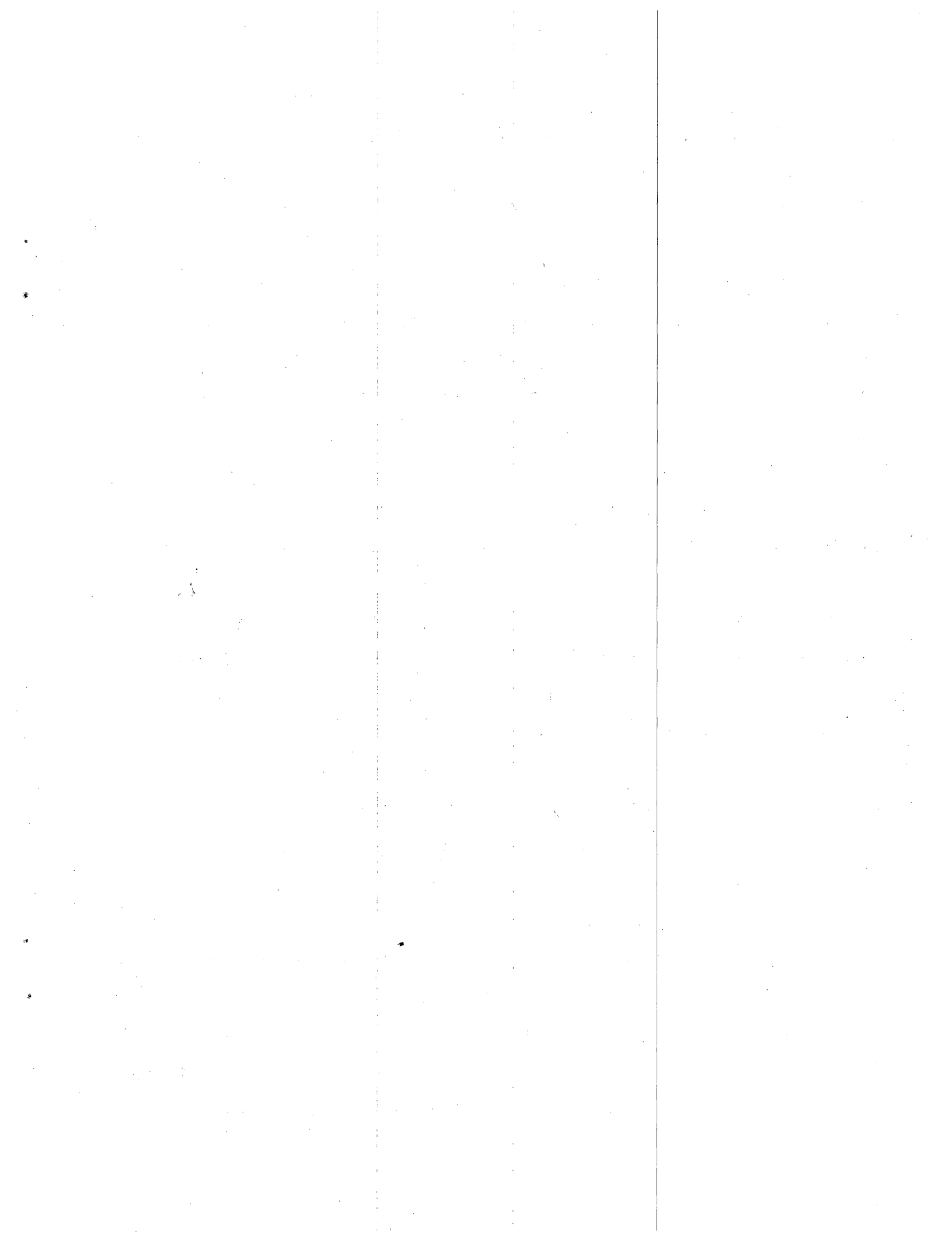
MR. CONOVER: Because we have to know what is going on. Well, you never dealt with the Purchasing Department. The Purchasing Department gets those spark plugs for half price; that is why they don't want you to get them outside. We can't put an extra set in every truck.

MR. E. HAINES: That is 80 miles to drive for a wire, or spark plugs, when the man is vitally needed on the road. That is ridiculous, a man taking the truck out when he is needed in the area. In the winter time they ought to service them, and get them cleaned up, and when you need special service in the summertime, you ought to be able to have it done right there.

MR. SEIDEL: We have a garage at Bayville; another one at Mays Landing, and another one at Trenton. Those trucks are serviced in the central part of the State from Bayville, and in hot times, men are sent down from Trenton to the fire areas.

MR. E. HAINES: Only the radio men.

MR. SEIDEL: Oh no. Last year there were two mechanics there on almost every large fire. On large fires, we send a mechanic right away with spare parts and things. I will grant you that it sounds ridiculous for a man to



have to drive to Toms River to get a spark plug. We have extra plugs, but those things are kept at Toms River and at Trenton.

MR. E. HAINES: Mr. Seidel, on that Sunday fire that went across the section south of Tuckerton Road, we did not see any State mechanic at all, and we had to send our own mechanics out on two different occasions to get the forest fire trucks out of the woods. And Mr. Bartlett will back me up in that. And we did not put a bill in for it.

MR. CONOVER: I would like to say something on this truck proposition. I guess you have seen the way the trucks are used in woods. No truck on the roads gets the abuse they do. When we let them go to the service stations and get serviced, half of the time there would be two or three grease fittings knocked out, especially on the drive shaft, and they don't put a new one in, and it doesn't get greased. In the last two months, we had to put in two new drive shafts, and that costs \$25.00 a piece. But when they go in the local stations to get greased, they don't do it, and that is one reason we like to bring them into our shops and have them checked over periodically, because when you run that truck through the brush for two or three days or nights, when it comes out, half of it is liable to be missing.

MR. E. HAINES: Let's do that work in the night, and not in the daytime.

MR. CONOVER: We can't work all night every night.

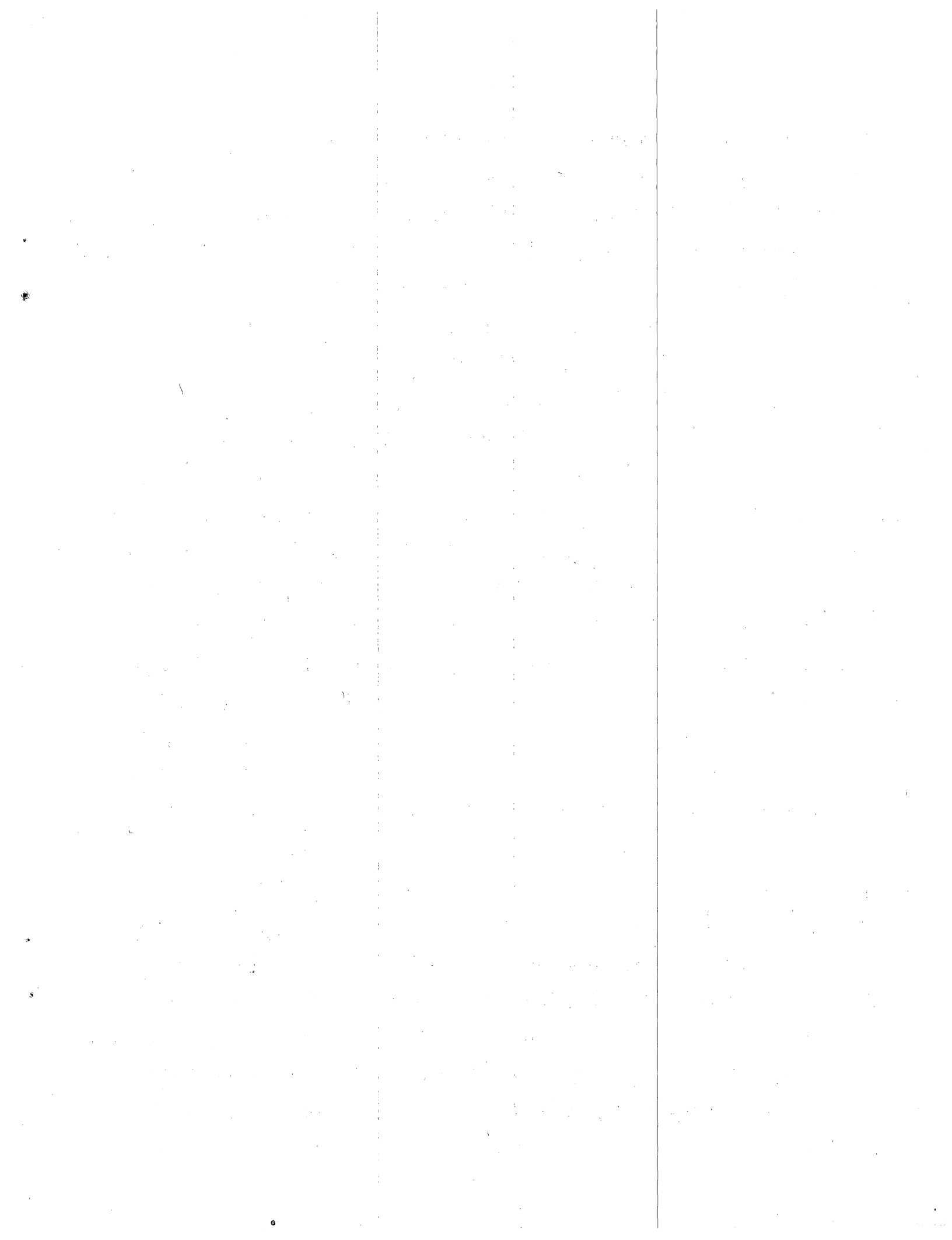
MR. E. HAINES: You can shift your crews around.

MR. CONOVER: We don't have enough men to shift them.

MR. E. HAINES: Why don't you demand that you be given enough money so you can go ahead and maintain your equipment right.

MR. CONOVER: We have been doing it for years and don't seem to be getting anywhere.

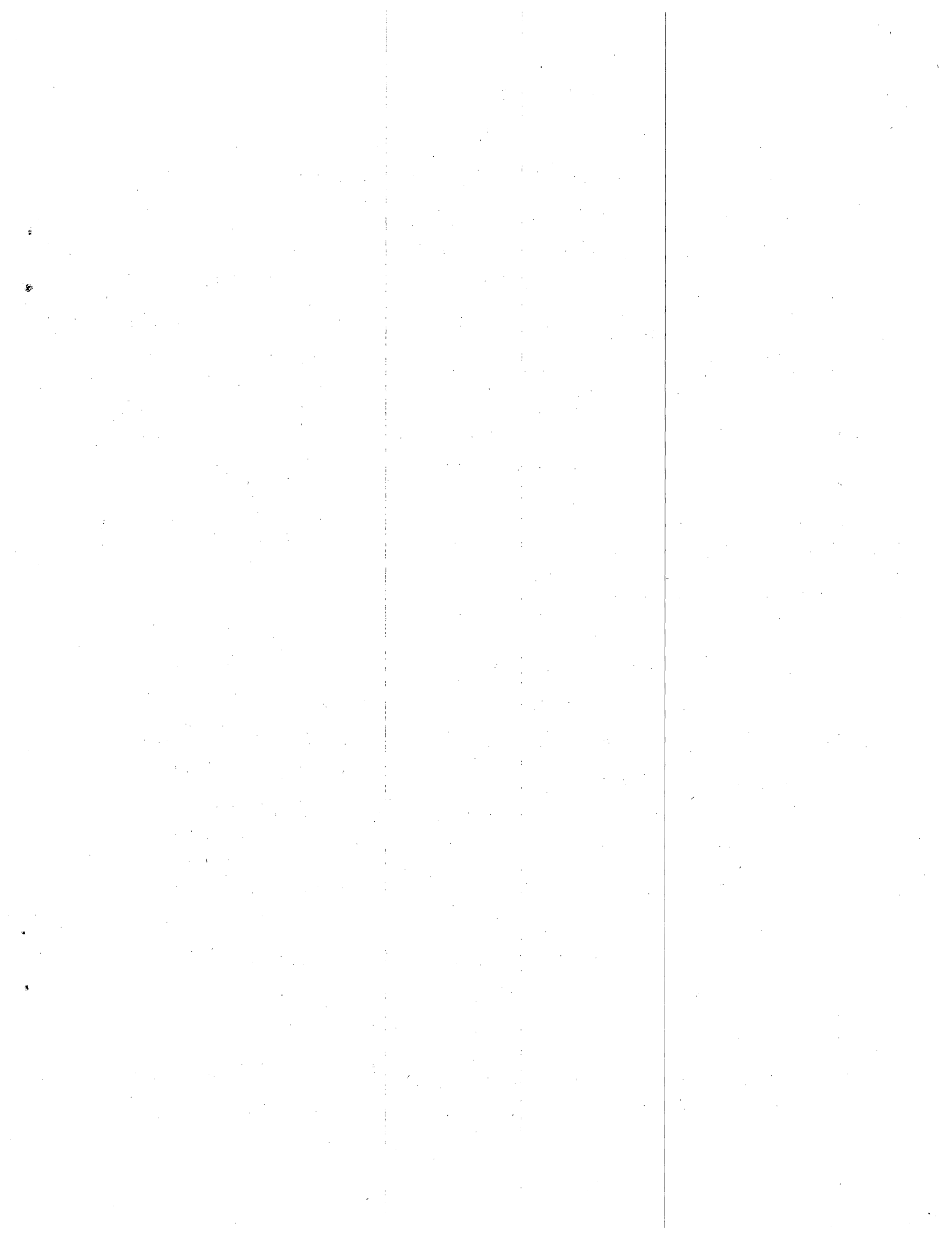
MR. SEIDEL: That is another point. We have had extra mechanics on at



Bayville and Mays Landing for six months now, or almost a year. They should be transferred to the State payroll and made permanent. Actually, they are only temporary.

MR. E. HAINES: Back in 1930 when that fire went across Pipers Corner, from then on Carlton used to have a good quantity of canvas hose that we could take. There wasn't any weight to it, and we could stretch it from portable pumps and run it through the woods. I will admit, you lost probably too much of it, but why is it we don't have portable pumps such as you might have used on that Monday night fire back of Indian Mills, and brought water in without dragging heavy equipment that had to be taken in by crawler. We carry portable equipment on our truck, and we can put it in anywhere there is a stream and pump it, and take care of thousands of feet of space. Of course, we don't carry the canvas hose that you fellows used to carry. But why isn't canvas hose available, and the portable pumps, like they used to be.

MR. SEIDEL: Again there is the matter of money. In 1930 Carlton didn't have a fire truck. In 1937 we started with fire trucks, and as I showed you before, we have now 60 fire trucks. Each one of those has a power take-off pump; each one has a live reel with three or four hundred feet of three-quarter hose. Now, that has replaced the portable pump. Most of the portable pumps were not used when these trucks came into the picture. Understand, we have 60 trucks with pumps on, instead of the 30 pumps that we used to have. We still have some of those. They get worn out; the rubber hose has gone to about 40 cents a foot, and it is hard work to roll that up. The three hundred feet of rubber hose takes care of 99 percent of the fires, and also part of the other one percent. Another item I think we should buy is several thousand feet of linen hose, when we get the money to do it. We had some hundred thousand feet of linen hose back in 1935 and 1937, but we haven't bought very much, except Army surplus, and that hasn't worked out since then.



MR. E. HAINES: All right. Now we go back to the inevitable again. On Friendship Road, on Tuesday afternoon, when that fire jumped over our heads, a question was asked about where were the Indian tanks. Now, I can be wrong on this figure, but the most that I have ever seen on a section warden's truck was eight Indian tanks. Isn't that correct, Mr. Bartlett?

MR. BARTLETT: That would be about right.

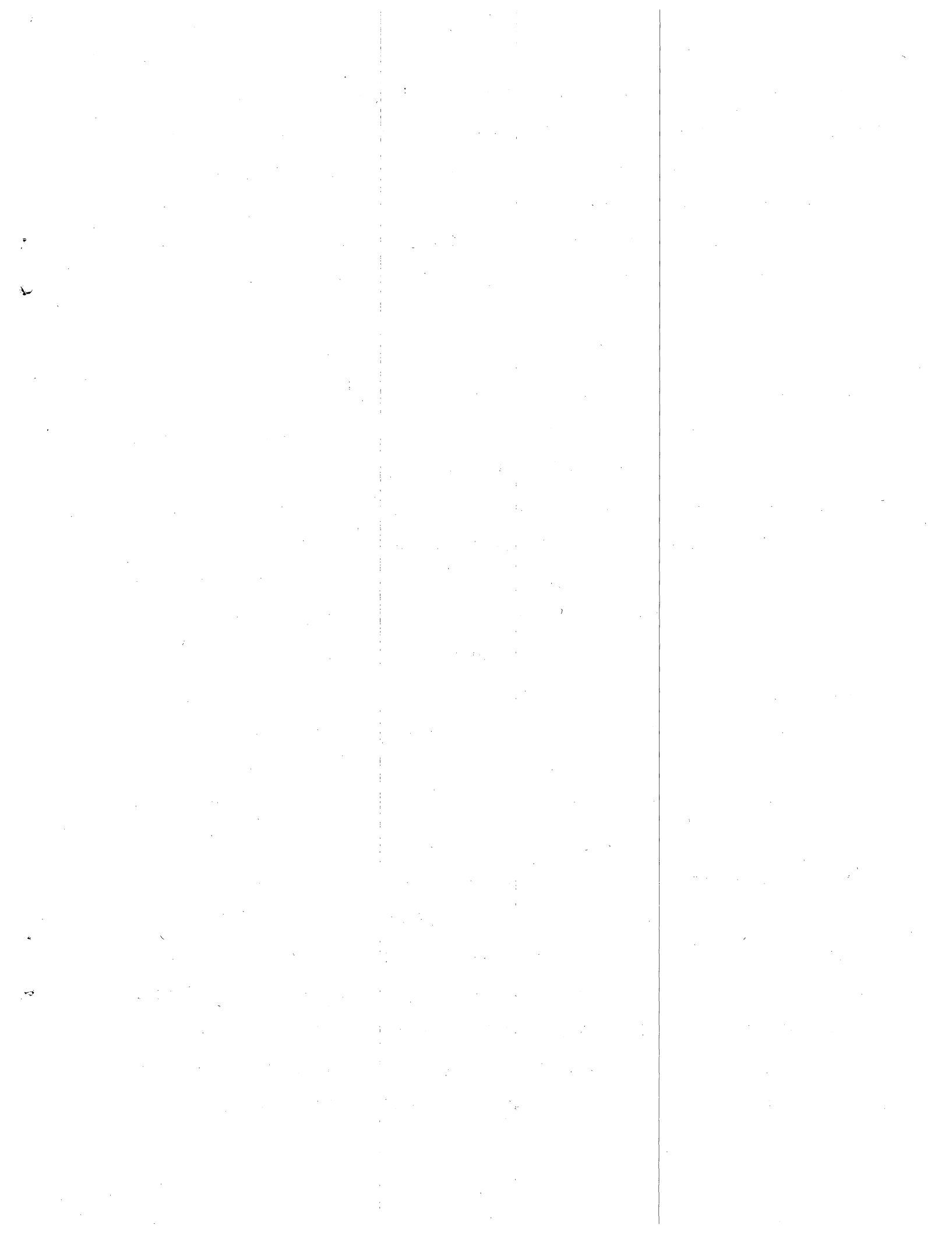
MR. E. HAINES: And you allow your district wardens up to four, and then he has some shovels. When we get spread out over such a vast areas as we were spread out over, why can't we, through Mr. Bartlett, call Bayville and have more Indian tanks brought up? There we were hollering for Indian tanks that afternoon, and there were no more to be had, and nobody would send down and get more. I even offered to get my truck and sent it to Bayville.

MR. SEIDEL: Who did you offer that to?

MR. E. HAINES: The section wardens that were up there.

MR. SEIDEL: Do you know which ones?

MR. E. HAINES: Well, most of them aren't in your service anymore. But Bill Hagerthey was up there. We were working there with him. I am not saying that to get Bill into trouble, because Bill and I work together, and we are going to continue to work together. But we offered the forest fire service our trucks. I don't see why anybody couldn't have gotten permission from somebody to go down and get them. Our little company lost eight tanks in the course of that fire, and Ed Gilbert will back me up as to what they cost the individual fire companies. I called out source of supply, and they were out of them, the galvanized tanks. I bought four copper tanks to have for the truck that night, and the source of supply brought them up. We have been replenished now; we have a full stock. We are not complaining. Personally I have no grudge against any one of you four gentlemen at the end of that table. But it is these facts that I honestly believe should have been brought to light last summer when they were fresh. We are not



grinding an ax now. It is unfortunate that we couldn't get this commission together any sooner. If Mr. Bartlett calls and wants help, we will be out there any time. But we do need something cleaned up on the top level of the forest fire service to get this money and equipment available.

MR. SEIDEL: As far as Smith tanks are concerned, there has been an ample supply of Smith tanks in division headquarters, and there are more in other parts of the State that could have been used. I think at the time we had some extra tanks at Trenton. As a matter of fact, we have an arrangement with the Smith people to supply them to us if we really need them. We have taken care of that situation. There is no reason why you couldn't get Smith tanks, and there is no reason why Hagerthey didn't call for them, or anybody else. I do not think you have a gripe here before this Commission about Smith tanks, because that is one of the things we have kept up as well as we have anything else.

MR. E. HAINES: But let's ease it up on being able to get them. Everybody is afraid to ask for them.

MR. SEIDEL: I don't think it is a case of being afraid to ask for them. I do not think there is a section warden in the State that is afraid of anything, the way they talk to me. Why they didn't ask for more if they needed them is more than I can understand, because they asked for plenty of other stuff on that fire.

MR. E. HAINES: One of my last points is your man in the tower. When is he supposed to be off, and when is he supposed to be on?

MR. BARTLETT: A man in the tower is supposed to be on 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. when the woods are dry, and other times when it is necessary. In other words, 9 to 5 on days when the woods are dry enough to burn, but we can keep him on all night if necessary.

MR. E. HAINES: We had a slight precipitation on Sunday, and the Medford tower was not manned at all on Monday. We had a slight precipitation on



Monday night, and it wasn't manned at all on Tuesday. That was only in the town of Medford. You could heave a stone to the edge of the rain, and yet our tower was not manned yesterday or the day before. I think you are having trouble there.

MR. SEIDEL: That is a personnel problem.

MR. E. HAINES: But it is awfully discouraging to the volunteer to get a call from a local person that smoke is coming up, and I, as a representative of the Medford Fire Company, have to call the tower and get no answer.

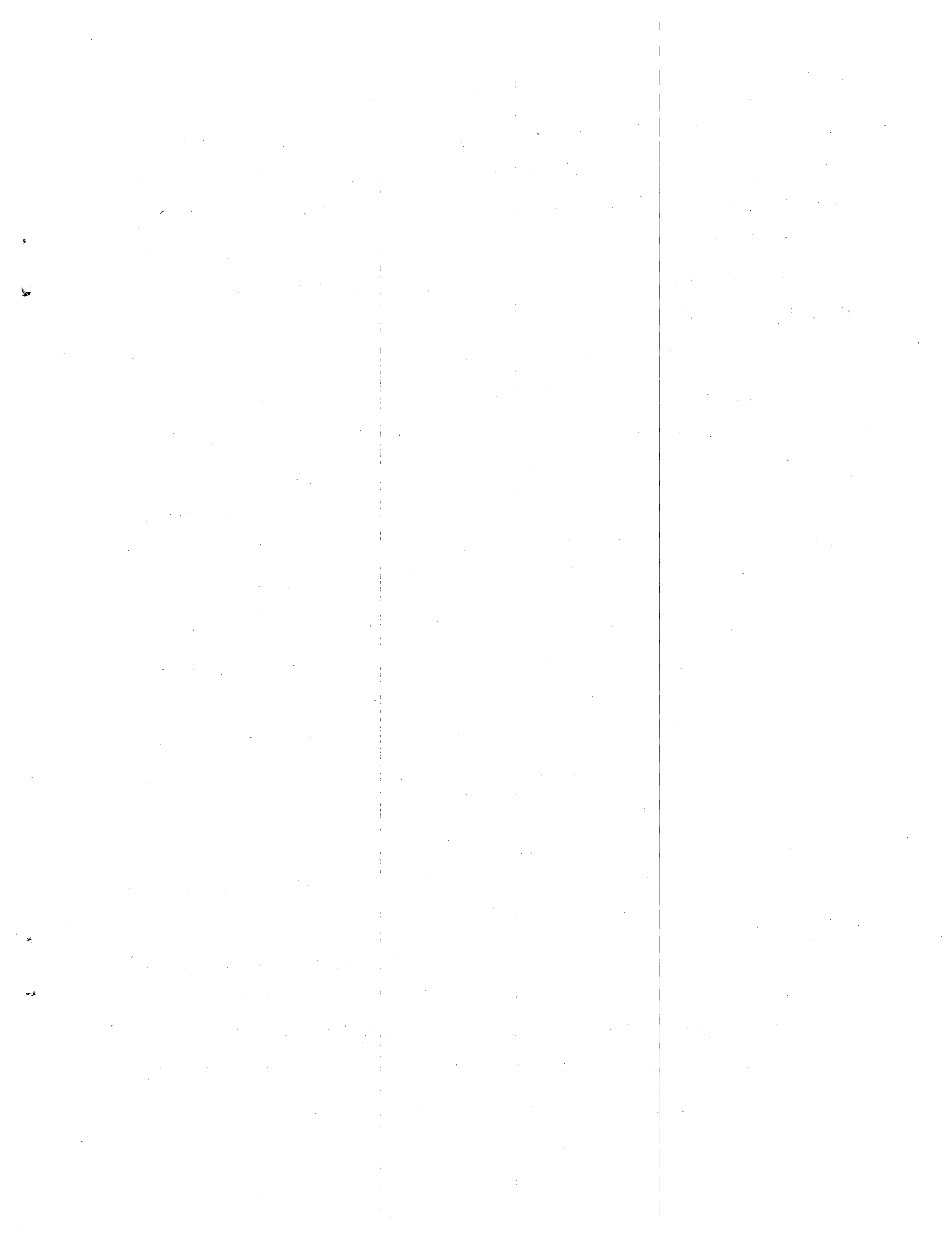
MR. SEIDEL: That is a personnel problem that we are in the middle of right now.

MR. BARTLETT: This noon at lunch, I discussed that with the Director. That is a problem we are trying to solve. We know that - and this is not the first time.

MR. E. HAINES: I am sorry he has the trouble that he has at home, and I am afraid that is part of it. Believe me, gentlemen, it is no fun when a home is split up.

MR. BARTLETT: I don't think that is the cause of it, because it has happened before.

MR. SEIDEL: We have a system where some towers on duty four months of the year; others ten months, and others twelve months. The idea is, the four month towers are working on State forests or State parks, and when we get into a dry period, we open those towers immediately with that personnel. That stems out of an incident a number of years ago when I went down to a tower and found a man in there. I hadn't been out in the field very much. I stopped in there and asked if there were any fires today, and he said, "No, we don't have any fires this time of the year." The first thing I thought was if somebody else came through there, they would wonder why the State was spending money to keep the place open. So we figured on keeping, as a permanent basis, three towers on all year around - they are the radio relay towers - and we keep two more open for ten months, and the men are



given two months employment in the State forests. Then we keep the other three or four towers on four months, or as much as we need them. Now, with the development of this fire burning method, and this buildup index, we get a little better mathematical calculation of fire dangers. I think we can work it better now than we could before.

ASSEMBLYMAN HAINES: Are you speaking of the whole State when you say three towers are open the whole year?

MR. SEIDEL: I am speaking of the whole State when I talk about those towers. Actually in the towers that are open all the time, the man works about 90 percent of the normal work week over the year. He may catch three months where he is working two out of three Saturdays and Sundays, and he may catch three months when he isn't working Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. They are paid from \$2400. to \$3000.

MR. JENNINGS: They get as much for manning a tower as the wardens do.

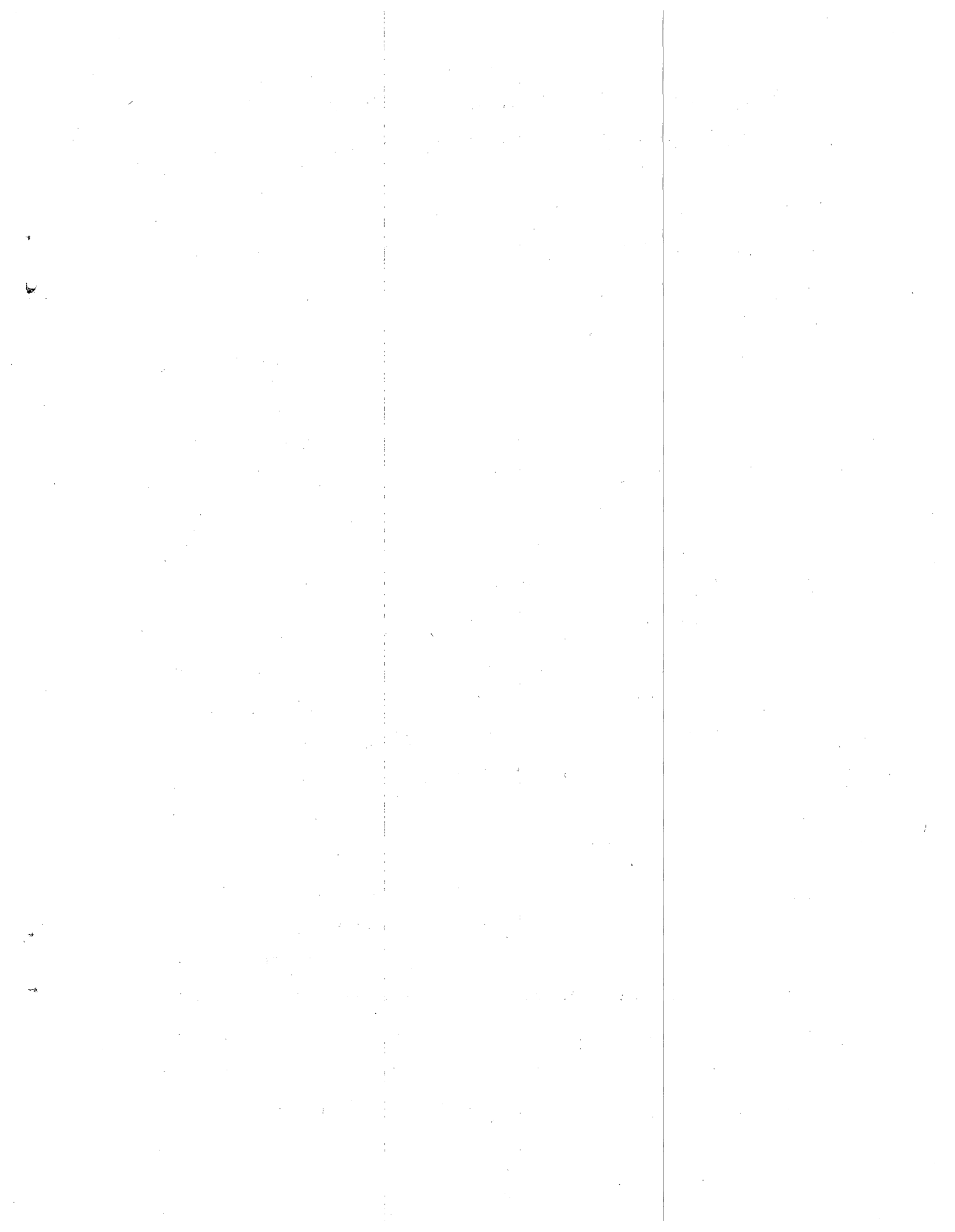
MR. SEIDEL: Yes, but they are in there on definite hours. Their time is taken up; they can hardly have any other occupation. In fact, most of them can't even have a garden unless they do it after the tower closes.

MR. E. HAINES: Isn't that the trouble with Medford tower? The fellow gets a few hours sleep every night, and goes there at nine o'clock?

MR. SEIDEL: I understand that he isn't working, other than on the tower.

MR. BARTLETT: He is working again.

MR. E. HAINES: In conclusion, fellows, we certainly wish you legislators would cut the red tape and get some action, instead of dragging it out. We had a temporary man for many months, and we now have a temporary man again. I will admit he is not a civil service man, and to get that job you have to pass civil service, and I suppose they have their red tape too, and you cannot just up and have an examination without weeks, and months, and years, of publications and reprintings, and then the poor soul gets a chance after he has been temporary all



time. As I said in the beginning, there is no initiative in a temporary appointment.

MR. SEIDEL: Would you suggest to this commission that they do something about that?

MR. E. HAINES: I certainly do.

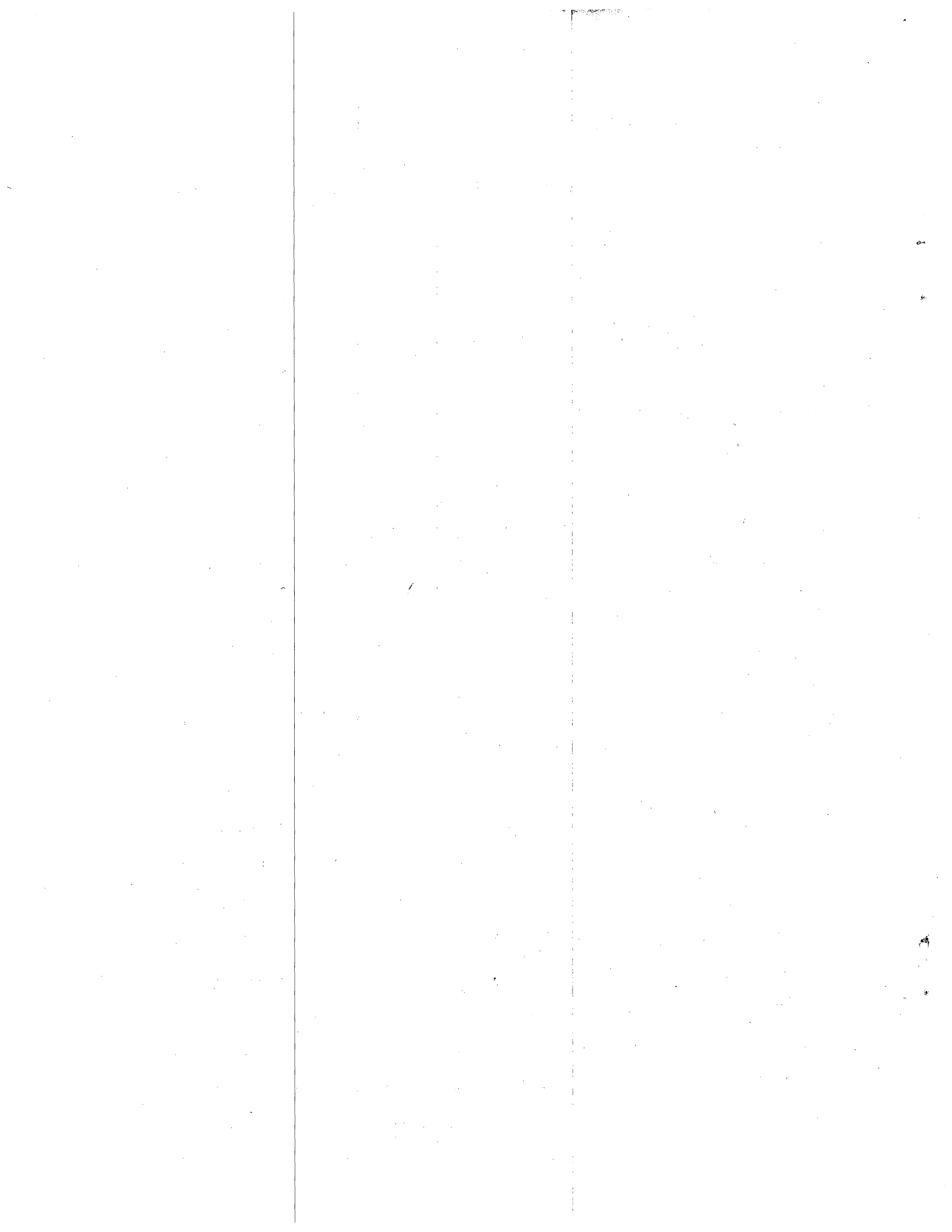
MR. SEIDEL: That is fine. I will agree with that.

MR. McCAY: We have made a note to take that up with Civil Service.

MR. E. HAINES: I have been wondering, Mr. Bartlett, about the strips around some of the towns, for instance, Medford Lake and Chatsworth. What is the situation on that?

MR. BARTLETT: I doubt very much if you could make a wide enough strip to guarantee that it would keep a fire out of the town. When that fire jumped at Tabernacle Road by the lake, it started a fire right in back of Bill Sloan's house, who is our section warden there, and that is a half-mile. When it reached route 72 - the other side had been burned - and it jumped right over that and landed in the Lebanon Forest. Now, a safety strip in ordinary fire weather might be of some value, but a safety strip in weather such as we have now, unless it is terrifically wide, would not guarantee any protection.

MR. BARTLETT: I have a suggestion that is very pertinent in so far as operating our trucks is concerned on night fires. We are compelled by the rules of the Purchase Department to purchase Esso gas. Our men working on a fire run out of gas; they have got to look for an Esso station, and if they can't find an Esso station, then we are going to have to take them out of service. That is very definite. One time on a fire near Toms River there was no Esso station available, and the man bought some Texas gas. He put it on the State bill form 100; the State bill form came back to me that they could not pay that, and I said they would have to pay it, it was an emergency. And it came back again. I finally paid it out of my own pocket. Now, there should be some rule, or some change of the regulations whereby a man who is fighting a fire at night is not compelled to go



hunting for an Esso station to get enough gas to keep on fighting the fire.

MR. E. HAINES: What right do they have in the Purchasing Department to dictate what kind of gas? There is enough gas in the field; the refinery is all the same. It is just terrible.

MR. SEIDEL: Of course, they contract on bid for all the gasoline. That is the machinery of it.

MR. E. HAINES: Yes, but that tank for that gas isn't down there in the woods.

MR. SEIDEL: That is right. This is a thing that should be straightened out.

MR. JENNINGS: They borrowed 40 gallons off me during that fire, and I never got it back. Now, may I ask a question? You are using equipment, I understand, as specified. Do you select that equipment, or is the specification set up by your department? I see you use only one type of truck, which apparently is good, but are they put out on bids or not?

MR. SEIDEL: Yes, they are put out on bids. We write the specifications, but you cannot eliminate a competitor handling the same material. Now, there is nobody I know that makes a truck like a power wagon.

MR. JENNINGS: I was talking with a ranger who has been in the far west, and they use a lot of jeeps. I don't know whether you have any of them or not.

MR. SEIDEL: We have four jeeps.

MR. JENNINGS: We mentioned here before about these section wardens not having any equipment that is necessary for him to use; his own pickup to transport his men back and forth into the woods, into a fire. Jeeps are fairly inexpensive; they hold up very well; they do not require too much service. It would seem to me, in spots where there are possibilities for fires to break out quite frequently, that it would be a good idea to have a plan to replace some of the larger equipment with jeeps. They can get on the job a lot quicker than you can get a big truck in.

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