

FIRE NEAR GRASS LAND. RUSSIAN FINED £2.

Charles Pulpe, 26, a Russian, was charged at the West Maitland Police Court to-day, before Mr. C. H. Gale, F.M., with having, at Seaham, ignited inflammable material within ten yards of certain grass land (the grass being in an inflammable condition), whereby the property of Claude Hamilton Fisher and Leslie Brandon Fisher was endangered. Defendant pleaded not guilty.

Sergeant Dolman stated that about 4 p.m. yesterday he saw defendant lying under some willows on the Paterson River at Woodville. Defendant admitted lighting a fire at Seaham. Witness said, "Didn't you know you were liable for lighting fires in weather like this." Defendant said, "I know now." Some men came along in a motor car, and put the fire out. I lit a big log, and didn't think it was going to burn so much."

Leslie Brandon Fisher deposed that he was a grazier, residing at Seaham. He was joint owner of certain property with Claude Hamilton Fisher. He saw defendant on the evening of January 1st on the road near Seaham, about five yards from witness' paddocks. It was grass land, and in an inflammable condition. Defendant had a fire alight, a log six or eight feet long by 12 inches thick. Witness said, "Don't you know it is dangerous to light a fire like this," and defendant replied, "I'll watch this." It was then 7 p.m. Witness went

away, and passed defendant about midnight. The fire was still burning; defendant was apparently camped beside the fire. The fire was about five yards from his grass lands.

Claude Hamilton Fisher also gave evidence and stated that he put the fire out with water.

Defendant stated that he lit the fire to boil his billy, and lay down alongside it. What Mr. Leslie Fisher said was correct. He was watching the fire. When he got up on January 2nd, he burnt all the grass away round the log that might have caught fire. There was no water near. The fire would have burnt out, and he was sitting watching the log burn off when Mr. Fisher came along and put the fire out.

Defendant was convicted, and fined £2, costs of court 7/6, in default 14 days' hard labour, in Maitland Gaol.