

arrangement on single lines of railway, such as these principally are, would inevitably result in collision of trains and consequent loss of life. I still adhere to my rule that no such discretionary power is to be allowed to any but the traffic manager upon the division allotted to his control. This officer has quite enough on his hands to properly arrange for the safe running of trains, together with the discharge of the rest of his duties connected with the traffic. If, as proposed by the Commissioners, his time should be occupied in looking after matters connected with the rolling-stock or permanent-way, the confusion into which the train arrangements would be thrown, and the disaster consequent thereon, may be readily foreseen. The Commissioners proceed to give an example of the extent to which my alleged mismanagement has been carried in the reference they make to engine-drivers having stopped at certain points, acting under orders from the locomotive engineer. The matter is not, in my opinion, worthy of the prominence the Commissioners have given it, but as it has been mentioned I will state the facts. Certain regulations for the guidance of railway employes were made by Order in Council dated 17th April, 1877. This was previous to my appointment to the general management of the Middle Island Railways. The railway was at that time under the control of the late Engineer-in-Chief for the colony. He directed that the books of regulations, prepared as stated above, under the Government authority, should be furnished forthwith to the employes concerned, which was accordingly done. Rule No. 132 in that book provided that—"At all facing-points the handle must be held down whilst any train or vehicle is passing."

Now, there are several stations and sidings at which no railway employe is resident; consequently no one was present to hold the handle of the facing-points at such places for the approaching trains on the morning this rule came into force. The drivers, in obedience to the rule, stopped their trains before reaching the points, and the guards got down to hold the handles. This occurred in the northern part of the Canterbury railways in July, 1877. I was then stationed in Dunedin. The officers in charge on the spot immediately issued a circular informing drivers, pointsmen, and others that, provided the facing-points were properly pinned and locked, it was not necessary that any person should hold the handle. The circumstance was reported, and the circular amending the rule adopted, and has been safely worked to ever since. I draw particular attention to the fact that the rule under which this difficulty arose was not made by me, neither was I consulted respecting it, nor in any way responsible for its issue, and I ask what right have the Commissioners to advance this as an instance of my mismanagement. It seems to me it rather goes to show that they have either been seeking far and wide to make out a case against me, or otherwise, as I prefer to believe, that they have not gone sufficiently exhaustively into the subject to form a correct apprehension of the matter.

Under the heading "Confusion" a vague allusion is made to some order of mine affecting engine-drivers, which the Commissioners find was too literally interpreted, and, as a consequence, the public suffered loss of time and incurred some danger. I have no difficulty in recognizing in this a reference to a special order issued by me directed against the dangerous practice of running trains at excessive speed to make up time lost by delays. The lines in New Zealand were not constructed in a manner to admit of anything like the speed commonly attained on many first-class railways at Home. To exceed the rate of speed for which a railway is adapted by its construction is not only highly dangerous, but is productive of enormous waste and loss from the excessive wear and tear.

I have strictly enjoined a moderate limit of speed to be adhered to by traffic managers in the compilation of the time-tables of the trains. Every one knows that it is impossible always to prevent the occasional occurrence of a train being behind time. On a moment's reflection it will be seen that it would be futile to restrict the rate of speed to, say, twenty miles an hour, according to the printed time-tables, if at the same time it be allowed that, when trains are late, they may be run at thirty or forty miles an hour, in order to make up their time. This is a matter in which the management on all railways have to exercise control, as the tendency to run at excessive speed is a growing one, unless kept duly in check. There is no discretionary line that can be drawn to define at what speed a train half an hour behind its time may be run. Therefore it is necessary to impose an authoritative limit.

As I do not desire that, on the railways under my charge, the ultimate limit should be reached—that is, that a train should run off the rails through travelling at excessive speed, I have imposed other limits. It is no doubt provoking to passengers when the train is delayed, perhaps in the early part of a journey, to find they are kept behind time for a considerable part of the day. But they will doubtless agree with me that it is better that it should be so than run the risk of an accident through running at a reckless speed to make up a little time. I can tell them, from a life-long experience, that they need place but little reliance for the safety of their necks on the consideration that the experienced driver will take good care for his own sake not to run too fast. There is nothing a driver loves more than a good smart run: accustomed, it may be, to fifty and sixty miles an hour on a fine old English railway, he feels fettered by the jog-trot of a narrow gauge. Only give him a nod, to permit him to "let her out," and he will drive, and, if the road will not stand it, then it ought to, and that is no business of his. Knowing these things full well, it behoves a careful manager to put into force all proper and necessary restraint; to withdraw it, as the Commissioners would have it, would be to court confusion and danger.

With regard to the railway telegraph, the matter is one on which opinions may widely vary as to the real economy of its maintenance or abolition. I have strongly advocated its maintenance. It was not, however, initiated by me, as the Commissioners allege, although, under the able superintendence of the officer appointed by my desire, the efficiency of the service was largely improved.

The railway telegraph was first introduced by the Provincial Government of Canterbury under a qualified telegraph inspector attached to the staff of the Canterbury provincial railways. Under this arrangement the block signalling of Lyttelton tunnel was first established.

Under my management, since then, equally necessary systems of electric signalling for the security of trains have been established on other parts of the railway, where, from the formation of the country and consequent inability of the drivers to see more than a few yards ahead of them, the line was as dangerous even as the Lyttelton tunnel itself, unless a proper system of signalling were in use. The introduction of the telegraph into the railway stations has resulted in a direct saving of time, labour, and money, besides adding largely to security of traffic. This I have extended.