

APPENDIX G.

MEMORANDUM for Mr. G. Ross, Wellington.

Locomotive Engineer's Office, Petone, 23rd September, 1891.

As verbally informed yesterday, your application for two weeks' leave of absence has been approved, dating from to-day.

A. L. BEATTIE, Locomotive Engineer, per P. D.

APPENDIX H.

SIR,—

Wellington, 3rd October, 1891.

Please forward my resignation to the Railway Commissioners through the proper channel.

I remain, &c.,

The Locomotive Engineer, Petone.

GEORGE ROSS.

APPENDIX I.

GENTLEMEN,—

Wellington, 3rd October, 1891.

I hereby beg to tender my resignation of the appointment as locomotive foreman, New Zealand Railways, and I request that it may date from the 23rd September last, that being the date on which fourteen days' leave of absence was granted to me. With your permission I will state the reasons that have caused me to take this step, and in doing so I shall briefly refer to what has transpired. On the 23rd December, 1878, I was appointed fitter and driver on the Nelson Section. On the 14th April, 1879, I was transferred to Wellington Section, and took charge at Cross's Creek as foreman. On the day that I was placed in charge at Cross's Creek by the District Manager and Mr. Blackett, the Engineer-in-Chief, there was only one Fell engine available for work, the other three being disabled. At that time public opinion was strongly expressed against the Rimutaka incline route, and it was generally believed that the Fell system was a failure. This feeling was created principally through mishaps due to want of proper care and management. After my transfer to Cross's Creek there was a very decided improvement in the working of the incline, and some twelve months afterwards I was complimented by my superior officers for the successful manner in which I was working the Fell engines and the incline. In addition to the incline work, I had to attend to all locomotive repairs and locomotive-running arrangements north of Summit. In May, 1886, I was promoted to the position of locomotive foreman for the Wellington Section, and transferred to Wellington Station, where I have been located ever since. During the whole of the time referred to my practical work has never been called into question.

I will now refer to matters that are more immediately the cause of the very unpleasant position that the department placed me in. On the 1st January, 1890, my clerk and storeman, J. T. Bovis, was taken ill with typhoid fever. He died on the 1st February. I was without clerical assistance from the 1st January to the 4th February, 1890. On the latter date J. C. Arthur was transferred from the Locomotive Superintendent's office. This man was not suitable. He was ultimately dismissed. On the 27th August Charles Duffy was transferred from Addington, *vice* J. C. Arthur. Duffy proved incapable, and was practically an invalid. He was off duty, sick, from the 8th to the 22nd September, and finally he was transferred to Addington on the 25th September. About the 7th October J. McNeely was transferred from Christchurch, *vice* C. Duffy. McNeely was a good man, and did well, but he was transferred to Greymouth on the 4th November. On the same day J. T. Hadfield was transferred from the Locomotive Superintendent's Office, *vice* McNeely. Hadfield would have suited had he been allowed to remain with me, but he was transferred to Christchurch on the 8th November, after having been with me four days. S. Howard was transferred from Christchurch on the 19th November, *vice* J. T. Hadfield. Howard understood the work, but was dismissed for some irregularity committed at Christchurch. On the 9th April J. Slater was transferred from Hillside, *vice* Howard.

The foregoing list will show that the changes effected with my assistants were very frequent. That, coupled with the fact that some of the men referred to were incapable, others sick at different times, and taken together with the intervals that occurred in replacing some of the men who were taken away, shows that I was for a great part of the time without assistance, and a good deal of time was taken up in adjusting the mistakes made by men unfamiliar with the work that was required of them. When my returns were sent to the Locomotive Superintendent's office direct things went on in a satisfactory manner; but afterwards, when I had to render them to the Locomotive Engineer, Petone, the office-work increased rapidly—so much so that I had frequently to remain in my office all the evening and up to 2 and 3 o'clock a.m., and to be out again at 8. Having attended to my practical work during the day, I repeatedly worked all night in the office and went up the line by the 7.15 a.m. train, and after my return at 7.38 p.m. had then to work in the office up to midnight. And, under the circumstances stated, is it a matter for surprise and condemnation that some of the correspondence and routine office-work was overlooked?

Early last month I was called before the Locomotive Superintendent and the Locomotive Engineer, in the Traffic Agent's office, Wellington Station, when I was informed by the Locomotive Superintendent in kindly terms that I had done my work faithfully and well, that I had been loyal to the department throughout, that there was nothing against me except that I had allowed my office-work to fall into arrears, and that this could not be allowed. He had decided that there must be a change—that a driver-in-charge was required at Palmerston North, and that I could have the position if I felt disposed to accept it. The Locomotive Superintendent said that he had a long list of unanswered correspondence before him. To this I replied that a similar list was sent to me, and that the most of it had been replied to in due course, and that press copies were now in my letter-books. Those remaining unanswered were of trifling importance.