

133. This is the first Westinghouse brake on which you had any practice?—I had a little experience on the N class, but not much.

134. That is an English patent, is it not?—Yes.

135. Do you think the fact of the guard being left behind had anything to do with the accident?—I am sure it had. If that guard had been there, he is one of the best guards for using his brakes, and, if he had been there, when he heard the danger whistles, he would have had his brake on in the van, and would have gone through the carriages, and had the other brakes on as well.

136. Was the guard suspended as well as yourself?—No.

137. What speed were you travelling at between Ashburton and Rakaia?—Between thirty-four and thirty-five.

138. Is that the ordinary speed?—I am not sure; that is done there sometimes.

139. Was the Stationmaster at Chertsey aware that the guard had been left behind at Ashburton?—I believe he was.

140. And did not he attempt to stop the train?—No; he gave me the "All right" signal.

141. This was an excursion train, was it not?—Yes.

142. How long were you standing at Ashburton?—Somewhere about seven hours, I think.

143. Were those seven hours included in the time you gave in?—We only get paid this way: we get paid three hours' standing, and if we stand any length of time after that we do not get paid for that.

144. Then, I understand you to say only three hours out of the time you were standing at Ashburton were included in the fourteen?—The other four hours were not included in the pay.

145. How was the time made up on that particular day?—We put down the time of the steaming, and those hours which are not the standard are deducted off. Say I am standing four hours, one hour is deducted off and we are paid for three hours.

146. Can you give us any idea of the speed of the train at the time of the impact?—About thirteen miles an hour when I struck the other train.

147. Of course you saw, a few seconds before the accident happened, that a collision was inevitable?—As soon as my brake would not act I opened the whistle straight away and whistled to the guard, and thought it would arouse the station. If there was anything blocked in the station they would be on the alert.

148. Did you reverse the engine?—Yes; I dared not put steam on because she would have taken the wheels. I kept the reverse over and she worked on back-pressure. She was drawing the air and working against her pressure. Well, I could not have reversed then, but thought if I had not reversed they would ask, "Why did you not?"

149. Reversing the engine has more effect than the application of the brake?—Yes. From the time you shut off it does not take her many seconds to go a few hundred yards, and if she had picked up the wheels the consequence would have been she would have gone so much further with greater speed before I could have released those wheels again. That would have shoved her still faster ahead. I thought that by avoiding this that it would be far better. I could have had her stopped at a very short distance further.

150. How much?—A couple of chains.

151. From the spot where the accident happened?—Yes.

152. Would you mind telling us the causes that led up to the accident?—I reckon the cause of the accident was through the brake failing. The accident would never have occurred if that brake had not failed. On the other hand, if the stationmaster at Rakaia had been on the alert he could have prevented that accident.

153. That is the stationmaster at Rakaia?—There was no provision made for the safety of that train standing at the platform and for the prevention of an accident. There was no way for me to stop my engine. There was no preparation made for the safety of that train at that station.

154. There were other contributing causes, for instance, the guard being left behind?—Yes, the guard being left behind. If I had had his assistance I am pretty well sure I could have saved the accident. He would have seen the van-brake on and passed through the carriages and put the other brakes on. If I had had only one carriage-brake on, and put on properly, that would have saved it.

155. Were there any other causes, the weather for instance?—The weather was terrific; wind and rain too.

156. Was the wind behind the train?—It was a little on the side, if anything, but had terrible pressure on the train. If it had not been for the weather where I shut off I would have had to put steam on. If there had been no wind at all I would not have had to stop where I did.

157. From what direction was the wind blowing?—South-west.

158. And what direction does the line run?—About north and south.

159. *Mr. Taylor.*] Was it not one of the worst storms that had occurred for many a day?—The worst for twenty-five years.

160. *Mr. Flatman.*] I think I understood you to say the regulations were invariably broken by the engine-drivers?—Yes.

161. In what way are they broken?—There is only one of the regulations strictly carried out, and that is with respect to signals and semaphores. That is a thing that is always carried out.

162. It is the duty of every engine-driver to carry out those regulations?—Yes, but they are never carried out. A man could not act up to them. For instance, there is one rule that states we are not supposed to go over a pair of points without seeing they are right. If we acted up to that rule leaving Christchurch with the express, what time would we get to Dunedin—if we had to make sure of every pair of points?