

195. Did the men ask for any?—I asked the foreman for any information he had, and he said he had none.

196. Was there any occasion on which any driver was told to do the best he could with the brake?—Yes, I was told so; by the foreman too.

197. That he had no drawings, and that you were to do the best you could?—Yes.

198. And you were an inexperienced man with that brake, and had never used one before?—I had never used one before, though I had been on the N engines. I never have had a chance to take the brake to pieces like I would have done if I had had it a long time on.

199. Have instructions been given to the men since the accident, and have they been supplied with drawings?—I do not know since the accident. I have been off ever since.

200. You spoke of the Dunedin men having some advantage?—I heard they had great advantages over us. They had books of all descriptions, with brakes and everything else in them.

201. Have you no advantage of that kind in Christchurch?—No. We had a library once, but when the shops were shifted to Addington our library was shifted too.

202. You say the Commissioners at the inquiry did not go into the merits of the brake?—They did not trouble much over the brakes.

203. There was some case of a man driving with one of these brakes which was casually mentioned at the inquiry. The name was Gardiner?—Yes.

204. Did not Gardiner take the blame upon himself?—He was asked, "Did not his brake fail to act?" and his reply was "Yes, it did fail," and Mr. Rotherham stopped him from giving information as to the cause. Mr. Pendleton insisted on him giving the answer, and Gardiner said it was owing to the newness of the brake. If he had not been stopped he would have explained the cause.

205. Did Gardiner say the cylinder did not act smoothly?—He put it down to the newness of the air-brake.

206. Did the conduct of Mr. Rotherham at the inquiry give you the impression that the officials were anxious to suppress or conceal something?—Yes.

207. Did you immediately after the accident—within a day or so—sign a statement to the effect that the brakes were in good working order?—Yes, the brakes and everything were in perfect order as far as I was concerned before the accident.

208. That they worked well up to Rakaia?—They worked well at Ashburton while I was shunting, and everything was all right till I came to stop at Rakaia, and that brake never went on, and, of course, driving up and finding the brakes were not holding I thought some of the split-pins had come out and let some of the pins out; then I examined everything, and could not see how it could be. I am always very careful to see all my pins are correct. Then, after leaving Rakaia my brake acted all right; that is the thing I could not account for. I told Mr. Beattie when he took my statement down that I put it down to the slotted blocks and the badness of the weather, but when I went into the interior of those brakes—got books and drawings—I was made aware of the fact that one of those valves had never acted.

209. You were not aware of it at the time?—No.

210. How do you account for the brake working satisfactorily after the accident?—There are valves that work after shutting off—after shunting something must have struck this valve so that it did not drop down into its place. When I put on the brake at Rakaia the valve was out of its place, and had no effect on the cylinders.

211. On the same brake?—Yes. Well, afterwards this valve must have dropped into its place and worked all right. A man told me you might work five years without a failure, and then it might stick you up.

212. Then, you think the brake might work for five years or more without the slightest accident?—He told me the valves are liable to stick.

213. On rare occasions?—Yes. In this way: We have got double valve places; if one sticks up, the other one holds. I have known both to stick up together. That happened to me once in four years. Both my valves stuck up on a V class English engine. I had been working that one constantly. One day it stuck up, and I had a terrible job to get the valves down in their place again.

214. *Mr. Lawry.*] What means had you of communicating with the guard between the engine and the van?—Two whistles sharp, or the guard could communicate to us by putting his brake on quickly and releasing it quickly, because it jerks the engines and causes us to look back at once.

215. Do not you think there should be some better means of communication between the engine driver and the guard than that?—I think on all the trains in the Old Country there is a cord goes from the engine to the van, and that rings a bell over the driver.

216. Did you make the usual signal to the guard?—Yes, directly I found my brake did not hold, I whistled three whistles.

217. Did the boy respond?—No, I never felt any response whatever.

218. Could the boy have put on the brake?—Yes.

219. Are we to understand you attribute the accident almost entirely to the fact that the guard was left behind?—If the guard had been there and only had got one brake on besides his van-brake it would have saved the accident, because I was getting her down fast when the accident occurred.

220. *Hon. Mr. Cadman.*] You say you asked the Commissioners that you might have counsel, and if you had been enabled to have counsel things would have been quite different?—They would.

221. Did the Commissioners allow you to have some one to act for you?—I asked Mr. Ronayne for permission to let Mr. Dawson act on my behalf, but, of course, Mr. Dawson is not a lawyer.