

mission, Mr. Chairman, I had perhaps better read this statement made to me by Driver Carter—namely: “Christchurch, 13th March, 1899.—Charles Henry Carter stated: I am a first-grade engine-man located at Christchurch. I was driving Baldwin U locomotive No. 284 on night of 11th instant, bringing excursion from Ashburton. Mine was the second half of a big excursion. The first half left Ashburton at about 6.5 p.m., and my train followed at about 6.31 p.m. I had seventeen total on I think. Very wet—pouring. On approaching Rakaia Station I shut off at the usual place for the class of train I had on—that is, the bottom of the dip, about half a mile south of the station. I had previously eased at the preceding down-grade to save any jerking of train. When I shut off we were going at about thirty miles an hour. I had been doing my best to make time after leaving late away from Ashburton, so as to avoid delaying No. 21 at Rakaia, where we were to cross. Just coming up the rise out of the dip my mate had his screw-brake on, and before reaching top of rise I put on my air-brake very gently. As I was coming up this rise, and nearly to top of it I saw three red lights ahead, and judged them to be the tail-lights of the preceding train, which I knew had also to cross No. 21 at Rakaia. I judged that these lights were away beyond the north end of Rakaia platform because they looked very dull and distant. I thought I had a clear road up to the platform, and whistled for a platform signal, but did not get one. Then, finding my train had not reduced in speed as much as it should have done, I applied the air-brake in “emergency position.” Called fireman to pull up the rod which applies air-brake to tender, and I whistled for guard’s brakes, giving three separate calls of three short whistles each. I opened the sand and found train was not slowing down as much as she ought to have done, and could not feel any assistance from the van, for I can tell at almost any time when guard’s brake is put on. I was not aware that Guard Climpson had missed his passage and was not on train. He is a guard I can always depend upon, and I could not understand how it was that he did not put on his brake. Had van-brake been properly applied directly I called for it there would have been no trouble in stopping the train in time to avert collision. My engine-wheels were not skidding. I looked over to see if they were. I have previously noticed that with a dashing rain the sediment washes up from ballast on to rail, and brake has very little effect. I have known where a train could not be pulled up in its ordinary distance on this same account. I did not think the rail would be so bad on this occasion, or would have shut off earlier and made earlier preparations for stopping. It is a side-rain which makes the rails slippery usually as described, and on Saturday night the rain was behind me—a heavy southerly gale blowing almost in line with the track. The gale would assist train towards Rakaia and help to nullify brakes. My engine-brakes were right and in good order—nothing wrong with them. Engine in splendid fettle. Addington, 14/3/99. On approaching Rakaia Station, before I applied Westinghouse air-brake, the air-pressure gauge was showing 125 lb. on the square inch. My boiler-pressure was 160 lb. at the time, and as I began to apply the Westinghouse brake, I opened the steam-valve to Westinghouse pump one additional full turn. It was previously opened five turns or thereabouts. You have to open it three turns before enough steam passes to work the air-pump. I do not usually carry more than 80 lb. to 100 lb. of air-pressure. I had 125 lb. this time. There was no special reason for this. The pump had been freshly oiled leaving Ashburton, and was working very freely; 100 lb. is ample pressure under any circumstances. It is quite enough. Directly I saw the red lights ahead I opened the sand. I had not used it between Ashburton and Rakaia. The first I saw of the red light, said to have been shown by O’Neill, was just as I ran past it, and it was a very poor light at that. I am positive that this light had not been exhibited to us in such a way as to enable us to see it before getting right up alongside. We were looking ahead for a signal from the time we came out of the dip. We saw no lights at the station until after topping the rise, or nearly up the rise, north of the dip. Then we saw the red lights of the van ahead of us faintly. Rain was coming down then in sheets, and our smoke blew right ahead of us, making it still more difficult to see ahead. I judged that O’Neill’s red light was shown about 2 chains south of the first train’s van. It was only just flashed to us as we passed. Something was sung out to us as we passed, but I could not hear what was said; storm too heavy. After we struck the van, O’Neill came up to me and said, “Oh, God, I am into this.” I promptly felt my engine brake-blocks, finding them fairly cool; tender-blocks pretty warm. I examined my engine at front end, and seeing that there was already a big crowd of people around the cars of front train, and that I could not apparently do any good, I walked back to my brake-van and felt at the blocks. They were quite cold, and by shaking the brake pull-rods I found that the brake was not “on.” I tried both sides of van, and neither side was “on.” The brake-blocks were just up to the wheels and no more. I then examined the train back to the engine. The concussion was not heavy. We felt next to nothing of it on the engine. It was just as if our engine pushed the van right into the cars beyond. My Westinghouse brake worked perfectly all the way afterwards from Rakaia to Christchurch, and was all right on arrival. My opinion is that the first special had made bad “braking-ground” for us at Rakaia—that is, the sediment and slime off their wheels made the rail much worse for us. I had expected a bad ‘braking-ground’ and shut off earlier in consequence. Directly I stopped at Rakaia I pulled out my watch, and made the time 7.15 p.m. At Ashburton, after arrival at 10.15 a.m., we did about fifteen minutes’ shunting, turned, cleaned fire, &c., and put engine in shed. I sat down on engine shortly afterwards and had my dinner. I had not then been in town. I went into town for a few minutes, got some tobacco and matches, had one glass of beer, and returned to shed, remaining there until time for train. I did some packing about engine and odd jobs about engine. I should not have gone into town if it had not been for wanting matches and tobacco. I state positively that the one glass of beer was all I had to drink that day. I do not think the other special engine-man left the shed at all. There was not the slightest sign of intoxication about any of the locomotive or traffic train-men. My mate was at shed all the time.—(Signed) C. H. CARTER. Witnessed—