

146. Had Carter ever been fined or reprimanded for any failure of duty previous to this accident?—Yes; he had been dealt with on previous occasions.

147. For any serious offences, or for minor offences?—Certainly minor offences as compared with the Rakaia disaster.

148. *The Chairman.*] The train was timed to leave Ashburton at 6.15 p.m.?—The first train at 6.5, and the second train at 6.15 p.m.

149. It was the second train he was driving?—Yes.

150. And it is shown to have been twenty minutes late in starting, making it 6.35 p.m.?—Yes.

151. It was also timed to reach Rakaia at 6.57—twenty-two minutes later?—Yes.

152. The distance is, how much?—Seventeen miles.

153. And the petitioner had no instructions to be later at Rakaia, although he started twenty minutes late from Ashburton? The time-table still held good—to make Rakaia at 6.57; so far as he knew, to do seventeen miles in twenty-two minutes?—Oh, no. I may say, Mr. Chairman, in elucidation of that, that the time allowed for that train to run from Ashburton to Rakaia was forty-two minutes.

154. How is that set out in the time-table?—6.15 to 6.57 equals forty-two minutes.

155. Of which twenty had gone before he had started?—Yes; but I might also remark to do the distance of seventeen miles in forty-two minutes would be an average rate of speed of $24\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour.

156. That is so if he had the forty-two minutes, but he had only half that space of time?—Yes.

157. What was to be his conduct without any modified instruction?—The rate of speed on that particular portion of the line for ordinary trains is thirty miles an hour—maximum rate of speed. He was quite at liberty to extend his speed from this time-table speed, from twenty-four to thirty miles an hour, which would have enabled him to pick up a certain amount of time. That was practically within his rights. His speed would have been slightly accelerated up to the maximum rate by reason of his being late.

158. He was free to increase his speed up to the limit you speak of?—Yes.

159. That would have reduced his lost time on reaching Rakaia?—Yes.

160. *Re* the use of the brakes. Is the acquirement of a knowledge in the use of the brakes comparatively easy?—The manipulation of the brakes is perfectly easy. It is taught to a young fireman in a very, very, short time; the actual application of the brake is simply turning a lever round. What you want is a little judgment in judicious handling.

161. You have a driver named Dawson?—Yes.

162. Is he using engines of this kind, fitted with brakes of this type?—He is.

163. You said, “Dawson is under the impression that he is very well posted on the air-brake matters.” Is that an assumption?—I think it is on his part.

164. Do you think he assumes to be posted on them without being well posted?—Judging from certain questions which I was asked in the Supreme Court, and certain replies and statements he made as a witness in the Supreme Court, I should doubt that he was highly posted.

165. Do we gather from that that you have a man in the service using these brakes who is not well posted in them?—I do not say in the use of them—I say the intricacies of them.

166. Your words were, “He is under the impression he is well posted in the air-brakes”?—I meant in the whole theory of air-brakes—a theoretical knowledge of them.

CORRESPONDENCE LAID BEFORE THE RAILWAYS COMMITTEE BY THE HON. MR. CADMAN AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE EVIDENCE TAKEN *RE* PETITION OF C. H. CARTER.

The General Manager, New Zealand Railways, Wellington.

H. Carter's Petition against Dismissal.—I have investigated the allegations made by Driver Carter, and examined the men referred to by him; also several others. Enclosed are statements from Mr. C. I. Denby and Mr. L. P. Pepperell, formerly Stationmasters at Winchester, and Mr. W. H. Dunnage, now Stationmaster there; Mr. G. Andrews, present Stationmaster, Orari; Mr. J. May and Mr. J. R. Martin, formerly Stationmasters, Orari; Guards Hobbs, Brittenden, and Radford (Guard Jones is now in Wellington District); Drivers C. Marshall, W. Hyland, C. R. Smith, C. Powke, M. Gardiner, E. Johnston, and W. Hill, all of whom, as you will observe, emphatically deny the statements of Carter, and that any such practice prevails. I have no hesitation in giving my opinion that there is not the slightest foundation for the statements made by Carter that guards, drivers, and Stationmasters have been acting in collusion to book false time.

With regard to the Stationmasters, the charge may be dismissed as utterly improbable; they could have no possible motive for any such falsification, and without some strong impelling motive it is beyond credibility that any person in the responsible position of a Stationmaster would lend himself to any such irregularity. The guards similarly have no reason for committing themselves in this way, as they are not, unless under some exceptional circumstances, responsible for late running.

During the sixteen years I have been in charge of a district I have made it a practice to perform the most of my travelling in the brake-van, where the action of guards and Stationmasters