

it. I do not know who coupled the van to the trucks. I remember Taylor's engine being coupled on to ours. Cooper signalled Taylor's engine to come back. I do not know who coupled the two engines. I cannot say whose duty it was to do so. I did not do it. Cooper had a conversation with Taylor at Putaruru. I think the engines were then coupled. I overheard the conversation. It was that if we wanted to stop on the bank Driver Cooper was to give a pop on the whistle. I read the evidence of the drivers on that point. I heard the conversation, but cannot say who spoke about the whistle. I heard the brakes tested. I heard the escape of the air on engine when the brakes were applied. I do not know how far back the brakes operated. I did not notice the pressure-gauge just then. I remember distinctly the brake-test being made. It was not made at any other station. That was where I joined. I have been acting as fireman since accident on several occasions. I should say I could recollect every time it is made. In my mind now I have a distinct recollection of the escape of the air on brake-test being made at Putaruru that night. I was on the footplate at the time. I did not see the brakes released but I heard them released. I heard the air passing. It seemed to pass through the engine. I could not explain the noise. It was a sort of rushing noise. I think I was working the previous night. I think we assisted up the bank the previous night. That was all the work we did that day. I do not remember what hours we worked. The engine whistled on several occasions the previous day. I look upon the brake-test as a matter of course. It is always carried out. It is not part of my duty. After leaving Putaruru the first stop was made at Ngatira. Both engines took water there. The brakes were applied slightly there. I heard the reduction on the engine I was on. The handle was not shifted on my engine. I could hear the reduction passing through my engine. The brake was applied by leading engine. I remember stopping on incline. At Ngatira I heard the release of the brake also. I heard the same sounds at Ngatira as I did at Putaruru. I heard the sounds at Ngatira on two different times. When the leading engine stopped to take water was the first time, and the second time was when the second engine moved on to take water. The brake was applied on each of those occasions, and on each occasion I heard the putting-on and release. On the incline I heard the engine missing her beats. Cooper at once shut off steam and gave the whistle a pop. I screwed on my hand-brake and Cooper got a torch and lit it, and got down alongside the engine. Both engines and train came to a standstill. It is the usual thing to put on the tender-brake. Cooper got down on the driver's side. The train was then being held by the Westinghouse brake and my tender-brake. On the engines stopping I heard the Westinghouse brake applied. I should say my tender-brake acts on the same blocks as the Westinghouse. Cooper got down with his torch and Taylor came along from his engine, and they examined the sides of the engine. I did not then overhear any conversation. I was watching them from the driver's side. They examined that side and crossed over between the two engines and examined the fireman's side. Then they came back to driver's side and Cooper got underneath and Taylor stood alongside the engine. Cooper was underneath eight or ten minutes. I was out of my engine for a few minutes. I did not speak to Taylor when I got down. Cooper was under the engine when I was on the ground. Cooper told Taylor to get a hammer from me. I was on the footplate. Taylor came and got a hammer, but I did not hear Cooper tell him to do so. I could hear some one tapping under the engine. Cooper had a torch under the engine and Taylor had one. Cooper came to me and told me to put the lever in fore gear, give her a little steam so as to hold the weight of the train. Then he went along to the front engine. I gave the engine steam. I could not say what Cooper did at fore engine. Taylor went along to his engine and Cooper came opposite to his and gave me directions to put the lever in fore gear, &c. Then we went to Taylor's engine. Cooper was standing on steps or in cab of Taylor's engine. He stood there until they released the brakes and pumped up. I could hear the release. I was leaning out watching them. I heard the noise of brakes released, and I could hear the exhausting of the train being pumped up, and brakes were applied again with a reduction of 30 lb. or 35 lb. I saw the gauge at the time, but did not take much notice, but the gauge was down to about that. I did not take notice of the first reduction, but I did of the second. The pressure on pumping up was about 80 lb. I looked at the gauge as the train was pumped up. It is a usual thing to do. I cannot say what the gauge registered next day at the different stations. Stopping on a grade like that it was only natural I should look at the gauge. After Cooper stood on footplate of Taylor's engine they both got down again, and Taylor came along and went to uncouple. Cooper was coming towards the cab of the second engine. Taylor was uncoupling at the time. I heard the report of the hose. I was watching Taylor and saw him go in between van and tail of engine, and then I heard the report of the hose. At this time Cooper was by the cab, and said to me, "That'll do. Shut off steam." I had steam on holding the weight of the train when Taylor went to uncouple. I shut off steam immediately. Cooper got up into the van next tender. Then Cooper and Taylor came back to my engine, and I heard Taylor remark that he had dropped some hand-brakes—three, I think. He said he dropped three hand-brakes. Cooper said he had screwed on the van-brake. Cooper told me to give her a bit of steam, and we moved away slowly from the train. When Taylor was uncoupling and after the hose was uncoupled he sang out to his fireman to ease up, and I moved back a little. Then we moved ahead a little bit and Cooper and Taylor walked along driver's side of Cooper's engine as we moved along three or four yards. Then Cooper sang out to the fireman to stop, and steam was shut off. Cooper told Taylor to tell his mate that when we moved a bit ahead to shut off steam and let the second engine push the first engine. Then I gave her more steam and proceeded slowly along the line while Cooper and Taylor followed alongside the engine on driver's side. We moved along sixty or seventy yards. I watched Cooper and Taylor part of the time—not while I was pulling out the regulator. They remained on driver's side until we stopped. Cooper told me "That'll do," and I stopped. When we stopped Cooper happened to look round—I did not happen to see him actually turn round. I heard Cooper say, "Bert, the train is off." Taylor made a rush for his engine, and Cooper rushed for his own and got in, and