

picked up the van I was on the footplate and do not know who coupled up. When we joined on to the train a porter or guard coupled us. I examined the coupling between engine and van, and the cocks were open. I knew the regulation on that subject and I act upon it. The only coupling I was responsible for was the coupling between the engine and the van. We generally delegate that duty to our fireman. The fireman always does and very often the driver will also examine it. We never delegate the particular job of seeing the brake is coupled up. I never leave that to the fireman. The fireman has also to see the train is properly coupled up. I never trust to him to do it. If there was no porter or guard the fireman would couple the train to the engine and the Westinghouse brake also, and I revise the coupling. I did so that night, and found it in good order and the positions correct.

T. M. COOPER.

Taken and sworn at Auckland, this 28th day of August, 1907, before me—CHAS. C. KETTLE, D.J.

This deponent, JOHN LAMBERT TAYLOR, recalled, saith:—

*Court:* I did no coupling at Putaruru that night. A guard or porter coupled my engine to the other engine but I cannot say who. I cannot say who uncoupled us when we came in that night. I am sure the cock at the back of the tender was closed or my air would have been rushing away. When I went to turn the headlight down I examined the couplings carefully, and they were in proper position. I never examine the cocks on the train. I generally examine the cock between the tender and the next vehicle. That is the only one I am responsible for. The fireman is also responsible to see it done. Sometimes the fireman goes and does the coupling and puts on the cocks if there is no guard or porter to do it. I generally examine those couplings, but there are times when it is not done. I recognise it is an important duty. I say positively I examined the couplings that night. As far as I know I was the last person to examine them.

*Baume:* I would not start away without making such an examination knowing I was going up such an incline. I cannot recall instances where I have not made the examination.

*Court:* I could not swear I have never started from Putaruru without making the examination, but on this occasion I did examine the couplings.

J. L. TAYLOR.

Taken and sworn at Auckland, this 28th day of August, 1907, before me—CHAS. C. KETTLE, D.J.

This deponent, CHARLES HENRY TYER, being sworn, saith:—

I am a porter on New Zealand Railways. I have been about eighteen months in service, and have been porter five or six months. I have not read the evidence taken on this inquiry in newspapers or otherwise. I know nothing of the evidence given, and am absolutely ignorant of what has been said at this inquiry. I have been staying in Auckland since yesterday week. I have not looked at a single newspaper. They never trouble me. I travelled on the train which met with an accident. I joined Taylor's train at Morrinsville. I took part in the shunting operations at Putaruru. The engine of my train was engaged in shunting for some time. I was not there when Leydon's train came in. I was having tea then. Leydon's train just got to the station when I came on duty again, but I do not know what time it was. I took part in the shunting again. Leydon's van was left standing on the track while Cooper did the necessary shunting for Rotorua train. Guard Lowe was in charge of the shunting that night. The train was made up on the track next to the main line. I do not remember Cooper's engine going down to the van. I do not know who did that coupling. While that was being done I was doing the coupling of the Rotorua train. I did not couple the engine to the van. I do not know who did it, nor have I found out since who did it. I only did the couplings between the wagons towards the front part. I did not do the coupling between the engine and the train. There were four, I think, engaged at the couplings and I do not know who did that coupling, nor have I heard who did it. I could not say how many wagons I coupled. Four or five I should imagine—in separate places, not in succession. I could not say how many wagons Cooper added to the train. I have no idea, and I do not know how many were on the train. Guard Lowe, Acting-guard Dwyer, the porter at Putaruru, and myself were engaged in coupling. I remember Taylor's engine being brought back and coupled to Cooper's. I was about half-way down the train then, and do not know who did that coupling. We were busy shunting—the ordinary run of shunting. I would call it an ordinary night. It was my first night there, and I do not know what shunting is usually done there. I had been at Frankton Junction for seven or eight months, and before that for about ten months at Auckland as porter. After trying the brakes the train started away. I was at the trailing van when the brake was tested where Guard Lowe was. I had a light. Guard Lowe and the Stationmaster were there when the brakes were tested. Harris was beside the van. I think he was talking to Lowe at the time. I could not say how long Harris had been standing there. The guard is subject to the directions of the Stationmaster. I saw the brakes go on. I was a few feet from the guard. I heard the brakes go on. I heard the ordinary clap of the brakes going on. I did not see any signals given. That was after the train was completely made up. I could tell the clap extended right through the train. I would not swear that every vehicle went on. I only know the brakes went on the carriage and the van. I put my light on and saw they were tight. The clatter of the brakes was as to a portion of the train, but I swear I saw the brakes go on the rear van and the passenger-carriage. I put my light on to see if the brakes were on properly for my own satisfaction and not in performance of my duty. I looked at front wheel of van and back wheel of carriage. If you stand out a little you can see if the van-brake is on. I was standing a little from the van. I heard the clap of the brake and put my light on and saw the brake against the wheels. I saw the brakes released. I saw them come off. I heard the hissing sound, and put my light on again and saw them come off. I might have been 6 ft. or 8 ft. from guard who was more towards the tail of the train. I did not see him signal. I was standing with my back