

train at Putaruru. Looking at the wreck as it lay there I could not tell their original order of marshalling. F 165 and F 190 were the vans. A 452 was the car. I first inspected wagon R 66. Every vehicle was off the line. I think the R wagon and the first van F 165 were pretty close together. The gauge produced was taken from the rear van F 190. The glass was not broken. R 66 was in fairly good order, and ran down the line on its own wheels. The brakes were on four wagons all lying in a heap. The Westinghouse blocks were up against the wheels, but not on by a pressure of air. The damage to the brake-gear was keeping them up to the wheel a bit. The brakes were not on any other vehicle. The hand-brakes were not on any of the wagons. On various wagons they were broken off. The hand-brake on F 165 (van) had been applied, but was not very hard on when I saw it. I come to that conclusion by the screw having been worked. On the car the hand-brake had been very hard on. On rear van F 190 the brake was all broken, and I could not say whether it had been on. On some of the wagons there were still hand-brakes which might have been applied and come off when the wagons fell over the bank. I could not from the wreck form any reliable opinion as to the position of the brakes when the train got away. If the brakes had locked the wheels the wheels would have skidded and shown a flat surface on the portion in contact with the rail. None of the wheels showed signs of skidding. Supposing the brakes were not on tight enough to prevent the wheels revolving the brakes would show signs of heat from excessive friction. Those on the car (452) did show it. I could not say the blocks on other vehicles showed it. I looked for it. If you put the brake hard on a heavily loaded wagon the wheels will skid. I examined the cocks of Westinghouse brake. Some of them were broken off, some in their place, and on one wagon (3497) I found the angle-tap on one end closed. When I saw the gauge of guard's van it was out of the van altogether, and the tap was closed. I could not from my examination form a reliable opinion as to the position of the Westinghouse brake when the train got away. I know a fair amount about the working of the Westinghouse brake. Taking into consideration the length and weight of train, and the Westinghouse brake working perfectly at a pressure of 80 lb. with a reduction of 30 lb. or 35 lb., it should have held the train on the incline. I should think it would hold it for about forty-five minutes. It depends on the leakage, but all the vehicles would not be leaking. I have found the brakes to hold on a flat for five and six hours, and longer. I should say it would not hold so long as that on an incline. There is a greater strain on an incline and a tendency to relax the brakes. As long as there was an equal pressure in the cylinders on a reduction of 25 lb. it would hold the brakes hard on. If there was a leakage in the train-pipe the blocks would gradually creep on, but with no heavy pressure on the wheel. I consider the Westinghouse apparatus was in thorough working-order on this train. It had been thoroughly overhauled. We overhaul them regularly about once in twelve or fifteen months. In the meantime the cocks and couplings of hose are constantly under the eye of guards and train-examiners. The guard would report anything wrong to the train-examiner, who would report to me, and I would take steps to rectify the defect. The overhaul made is thorough, the parts being washed and cleaned and greased where required. All the joints and connections have to be kept very tight to prevent the escape of air. If an escape of air was taking place from the cylinder it would be detected, because the brakes would go off that vehicle, which would be noticed.

(Examination deferred.)

ROBERT SIMPSON.

Taken and sworn at Auckland, this 29th day of August, 1907, before me—CHAS. C. KETTLE, D.J.

Letters put in—Locomotive Engineer to Chief Mechanical Engineer, Wellington (Exhibit No. 24), and Car and Wagon Inspector to Locomotive Engineer, Newmarket (Exhibit No. 25).

This deponent, WILLIAM CROMBIE, being sworn, saith:—

I am Stationmaster at Auckland Railway-station. I have been over twenty-nine years in the service. I had eighteen years' experience on Home railways also. I know the rules pretty well. I am in supreme control at the station as to standing trains and seeing they are properly equipped. The guards and porters and persons employed in shunting are all under my control (Rule 168). Where a train is marshalled—after the engine is coupled on a few minutes before the train is ready to start—the air-pipes are filled. A train-examiner is present and signals for the brakes to be put on, and travels from one end to the other of the train examining brakes. Then he signals for release of brakes. If he finds a new coupling necessary he tells me, and I hold the train until he has renewed it. I do not think he ever goes along examining the cocks and couplings. I do not share responsibility with him. Rule 202 is pretty well enforced at this station. I do not do it myself, but see that the guard does it. I see him do it. I am on the platform when the trains start. I agree that the examination of the brakes before the train starts is very necessary. I know Rule 203. I exercise a supervising vigilance. Wherever there is a train-examiner the same course is gone through. Unless there is a train-examiner nobody examines the brakes, &c., not even the guard, but it is the guard's duty to see that his train is in order. As he passes through he looks at various things, but he does not do so before the train starts. In connection with the train leaving Putaruru, it was the duty of Stationmaster to see that the guard examined the train as to couplings and brakes before it started. You cannot constantly see that men do their duty. It is my practice to ask the guard if everything is all right. I have never known of any interference with the cocks. Such a thing has been reported to me once. It was reported that some children interfered with the cocks on an Onehunga train. The train-examiner and not the guard performs the duty of seeing that the brakes are all in order. The train-examiner tells the guard or signals to me that everything is all right. If I have not seen the train-examiner the guard signals to me that everything is right. The train-examiners at this station are very particular—too particular I sometimes think. There is an examination at this station of when the brakes are put on and when they are taken off.