

minutes to examine a train of fifteen cars. I usually take that time. The fifteen are brought there before the engine is on. I examine that train, and then the engine is put on and I examine the brakes. I make two examinations—ten minutes for the first examination and five or six minutes for the brake-test. An average train would take me about ten minutes to make the two examinations together. It would take me about ten minutes to examine an incoming train. That keeps me going pretty well all the time. In our spare time we have other things to do. I am engaged about six hours examining trains. A fair average is fifteen minutes a train. I do not handle either the cocks or hose unless there is something wrong that I can see with my eyes. I can see the cylinders from the lower side. On the first examination I go round both sides of the train. I look to see if the pistons are out to see if the brake requires taking up. I do not see how the guard can make the examination that we make without delaying the train. It is not possible for him to make such an examination and keep his time-table.

*Court:* It is easier to examine the brakes in daylight. At night I have a lamp, and make the same examination as I do in the daytime. It is very seldom I am hurried. I have plenty of time to make my examination. A thorough examination is very essential. One cock turned the wrong way dislocates the whole gear. I know Putaruru Station. There is no examiner there. In my opinion, when there has been shunting to make a train up, the guard should make the same examination as I do. It is all the more important as he has to negotiate heavy grades. I examine the hand-brakes, truck-brakes, and van-brakes. On a grade of 1 in 36 supposing there was no Westinghouse brake the hand-brakes would hold the train, but I should put them down on every vehicle. Supposing I had the Westinghouse brake and wished to leave the train on the incline, and did not know as a fact that the Westinghouse would operate through the train, I would first find out whether the Westinghouse did act through the train. I would communicate with the guard and tell him what I was going to do. With the Westinghouse on they could not push it down the incline. I doubt whether one engine without the Westinghouse brake could hold the train. Two might.

*Baume:* I have no experience of train-running.

*Court:* I have been up and down the line a lot with the train before the line was open for traffic. I was getting timber out for the workshops. In my opinion three truck hand-brakes and one van hand-brake at head of train would not hold it. They would retard it very little.

*Baume:* I have never been a brakesman but have seen a lot in shunting, but not on an incline. If the Westinghouse was on the whole train I do not think there is any necessity to put hand-brakes on. Common-sense may tell me a little more than experience.

*Court:* I would not leave the train on the incline any time trusting only to the Westinghouse brake. I should not leave the train at all without warning the guard.

LOUIS HILL.

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

This deponent, ROBERT HAMPTON, being sworn, saith:—

I am a railway guard on New Zealand Railways. I have been a guard between sixteen and seventeen years. I am mostly on mixed trains. I know the incline in question. Have been over it many times when I was running on Rotorua express. Once I ran a goods-train from Putaruru before Westinghouse brake was put on. Supposing I was there making up a train for Mamaku, marshalling it myself, I would test the brakes in the usual way by giving the driver a signal to test the brakes. If the brakes applied properly and released properly I would report to Stationmaster and ask his signal to move away. At night-time I would give the driver a signal by light to put on the brakes. I would be standing at rear of train. I am speaking of a train wholly made up at Putaruru. Standing at rear of train I would signal by a light, and would hear the brakes apply, and could put your light on also to see, and on releasing brakes I would apply my light to see the brakes release. I would not examine the gauge. The couplings of Westinghouse must be right if the brakes go on. If I had not done the coupling myself I would have to go along the train to see that coupling hooks and chains were right, and to see that the hose was connected and that the taps were right. Starting from where the train is made up I would examine each vehicle. I have the Westinghouse Brake Instructions. The rule as to examining every vehicle is complied with at a terminal station as Putaruru was on this occasion. Every coupling apart from the Westinghouse-brake couplings should be examined. It is very important. I have an idea where the 48-mile peg is. Supposing on that incline I was guard of a train of twenty-two vehicles, and the engine-driver desired to disconnect the engine from the train, I would as guard expect to know something about it, unless the driver himself made the train secure before he uncoupled. I have the Appendix. I know the rule on page 6 as to engineman whistling. When the driver stops, intending to disconnect his engine on the incline, I would expect him to give me some warning. I have the rule-book. I know Rule 231. I am prepared to say what I think is correct. I have never seen a train left on an incline with only the Westinghouse brake, even with three or four other brakes. I should certainly secure the train with hand-brakes, and I should expect some intimation unless they had thoroughly secured the train. I should expect to be consulted as guard in charge of the train. Supposing the driver was looking ahead on a dark night, you could not signal him. I carry a whistle, but the driver would not be likely to hear the whistle if the train was moving except it was just starting. Of course, with the Westinghouse brake the guard could stop the train if he desired. Assuming the Westinghouse to be in proper condition and worked by competent enginemen, it is a good brake. I have never had any misgivings on that point. I have never known it to fail when called upon. I never heard of it failing on New Zealand railways previous to this. In my opinion it is a simple brake provided it is kept in good working-order. It is a brake the working of which is easily learnt. I do not think there is any difficulty about the working of it.