EXHIBIT No. 18.

New Zealand Railways, Running-shed Foreman's Office, Auckland,
6th March, 1906.

Notice to Enginemen.

THERE is nothing objectionable in firemen uncoupling and coupling engines to trains at watering-places when a porter, &c., is not available, providing the tanks are not foul of a cross-over road or outside any signals. Time can thus be saved, as the porter can be used for station-work. Please note.

GEO. BOWLES,
Running-shed Foreman.

EXHIBIT No. 20.

(Private and confidential.)

One-tree Hill, 26/8/07.

SIR,—

Being an ex railway servant of some seven years' standing in the Caledonian Railway, Scotland, when I went through all the different grades of the service, or most of the grades—viz., shunter, brakesman, both mineral and goods, passenger guard, detective, and while on the detective staff I used to relieve the saloon attendants, Glasgow and London, at odd times. I left the railway of my own accord, and hold their reference to that effect. On account of the above I have taken a good deal of interest in the recent runaway-train accident on the Rotorua line. I have refrained from making any remarks regarding the accident in the newspapers as I do not consider any good could come of it; but still, as a man having a thorough practical knowledge of the working of railway rolling-stock, I would like to make a few remarks which, in my opinion, might enable you, as conductor of the inquiry at present sitting regarding the accident, to get at a point which seems to me might have averted the accident even after the uncoupled train had got considerable impetus on the downhill grade. To make myself clear, I will explain to you a method that was in vogue during my service on the railway, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, still prevails. I refer to a method of assisting one or two of the London-to-the-North express trains up Beattock Summit. This is a steep gradient of some seven miles commencing from near to Beattock Station. Just outside of Beattock Station there is a small siding, where a pilot engine takes up its position prior to the passing of these express trains. The points from this siding open out on to the up main line, upon which the expresses rush past at—I can say with all confidence at the rate of sixty miles an hour. The moment the express is past the siding where the pilot engine is standing the points are opened, and this pilot engine rushes after the express train just past, and, when it catches up to it, the fireman, who is standing on the front of the pilot engine, couples on to the rear of the express train, and the pilot engine then commences to assist the express train to the top of the Summit by propelling from the rear. When the Summit is reached the fireman uncouples the pilot engine from the rear of the train, and then the pilot engine crosses by means of a through shunt on to the down main line back to Beattock Station. My idea in giving this illustration is merely to show that there was a possible chance of the runaway train having been caught if the driver of the engine next to the train had used his utmost endeavours to do so. It was stated at the Coroner's inquest that the coupling of the vehicle next to the engine, and which works automatically, was left up in position, so that had the engine come up against it it would have coupled on to the engine of its own accord. If the fireman was then unable to couple up the Westinghouse brake on to the train the brakes of the engines could have been applied and the engine reversed, which would have considerably lessened the speed of the runaway train, and, even if it had not stopped it, the speed by being lessened would have enabled the train to safely negotiate the curve instead of jumping the rails as it did. This may seem to be rather rough on the driver. Still, I am strongly of opinion that he could have caught the runaway train, and the only excuse I can see for him is that he was afraid to open up his engine to enable it to gain speed enough to catch up to the runaway train, being afraid he would bump into it; but the fact of the train running at a high rate of speed, and the spring buffers between each vehicle, would have prevented any bump or damage being done. If an engine can couple on to the rear of an express train going at the rate of sixty miles an hour, surely it could have been done in this case, as no suggestion has yet been made that the runaway train attained that rate of speed. Another thing I cannot understand is this: Had the Westinghouse brake been properly applied to the whole train prior to the engine being uncoupled, it was impossible for the train to move an inch, because to release the Westinghouse brake without the engine you have to pull a wire underneath each vehicle which is connected to the reservoir of each vehicle. This wire is attached to a valve (I am speaking of fifteen years ago, when I passed my examination on the Westinghouse brake prior to my promotion as a passenger guard), which when opened releases the brakes. This has to be done individually to each vehicle before the brake can be released throughout the whole train. To release the Westinghouse brake at once throughout the whole train requires the engine to be attached, as that can be done only by the engine. Again, on the other hand, say that the Westinghouse brake was not applied when the engines were uncoupled, the guard of the train can operate the Westinghouse brake from his van in so far that he could apply the brake to the whole train at once, and thus bring it to a stop, but could not release it again except in the manner I have already indicated. Again, say that the Westinghouse brake was applied prior to the engines being uncoupled, it was impossible for the brakes to release themselves—that is to say, if all the mechanism was in proper working-order. Now, any one conversant with the working of a train, or shunting-work of any description, would naturally infer that the Westinghouse brake was not applied prior to the engines being uncoupled, from the very fact that the driver of the engine, when he saw the train moving, whistled to the guard to apply the brake by giving the usual whistle which is meant to