

about 3 ft. from side of van. I did not see any signal given. I had been busy in the office writing, and only went out at last minute to see Lowe about the tail-lamp. With the aid of a lamp on a dark night it is quite possible to see the brake-blocks released from the wheel. There is a proper brake-test. The driver is signalled to apply the brakes and release them. Usually during the test Guard Lowe stood by his van while the brakes were tested. On one occasion the porter signalled to apply the brakes, and Guard Lowe interfered saying he would see to that himself. I saw Porter Tyer go along the train and turn his light upon each vehicle as he passed. I am not positive it was Tyer, but I think it was he. That was done before the brake-test was applied. While this inspection was made Guard Lowe was standing alongside the guard's van. The porter who made the inspection made no report to Guard Lowe. The fact that he made none signified the train was in good order. I did not see the porter go the whole length of the train. When I noticed him he was at the portion nearest the guard's van. I judge he inspected about fifteen vehicles while I saw him. When he reached the van the test of Westinghouse brake was made. During this time I was walking from my office to guard's van, and also standing at the van. Half a minute after the porter reached rear end of train the test of brakes was made. All I saw was a brake-block on the van was moved. It could not have moved without force from the engine. I am Stationmaster at Putaruru, but have to do with about nineteen other stations which entails about sixteen hours' work a day, and hard work too. I do not know if any one was inside the guard's van at the time I was speaking to Lowe. The Westinghouse brake can be operated from the guard's van. It was the Westinghouse brake-block I saw move. It was the brake-block on inside of rear bogie-wheels—on the front of one wheel and rear of another wheel. I do not think those brakes can be operated on by hand-brakes; it may be so, but I was quite unaware of it if it is so. It is news to me. It follows that what I saw might have been caused by the operation of unscrewing the hand-brake in guard's van. We had no tail-light, and instead we tied on a porter's lamp. It is a new service, and we had not yet obtained an extra tail-lamp. We could have got one from front van, but left it alone as she would want it on her return journey. Porter Tyer supplied the lamp. I was the first to receive official notice of the accident. The weight of train was approximately about 230 tons. I should have a record of everything that was put on that train—that is, as to the wagons that were put on at Putaruru. Porter Skeen should know in what order the wagons were marshalled. I think there were five trucks put on at Putaruru that night. All the wagons on the train were loaded. The custom is to arrange the wagons in the order in which they would be dropped at the various stations. Cooper's engine had come from Frankton that day. His engine was T 102. Putaruru is the home of that engine. She had left there that morning. She had worked that day between Putaruru and Frankton. She had only started the day before. She was new to us. Her load is not yet specified on our time-tables. I had seen that engine before about twenty years ago at Dunedin. I know nothing about her capabilities. We have a scale of loads for various engines, and the scale gives 100 tons for the T engine. Engine T 102 had been up the Mamaku the day before, taking a load by herself of 120 tons. I would describe the load that night for the two engines as a medium load—certainly not a heavy load. I would have taken the responsibility of putting another 20 tons on to the two engines. Guard Lowe was thoroughly conversant with the track over which he was running that night. He had been on the line about two years and a half. Cooper had to return that night from Mamaku to Putaruru in the ordinary course of events. After his arrival at Putaruru neither he nor the other officials were anxious to get away. They were ten minutes late, but they could not get away before their appointed time, 7 p.m. Even as it was, they were ten minutes late in getting away. More expedition than usual was required that night. Our yard was full of wagons. Shunting operations were congested, and we had a busy time. There was not necessarily a rush. We were exceptionally busy throughout the whole day. All our hands were full.

*Court:* The engines watered at Putaruru every night. Both engines watered on this night. To the best of my belief both engines watered that night. It was the duty of the engine-driver to see to their supply of water. I did not actually see them take water. Whether they take water at Ngatira, eight miles distant, depends on their load and the state of the rails. It is about five miles from Ngatira to where the engines were uncoupled, and from the uncoupling to where the train ran over the bank is about ten miles. So far as I know the Engine-drivers Cooper and Taylor are steady men; also Guard Lowe and the porters were steady reliable men. That night I saw the guard and the porter but not the locomotive men. They were in good health, and in every way fit to do their work. Guard Lowe was the only guard. Dwyer was only acting-guard. The latter had only been appointed to my station the day before. The guards carry sprags in their vans. The Traffic Inspectors and the Stationmaster at Rotorua have as part of their duty to see that the vans had sprags. I know the incline. Supposing the train standing there had not had Westinghouse brakes the hand-brakes would hold her, supposing she had come to a dead stop. Sprags would be an additional precaution. After the accident I was the first to get official intimation. I am not aware that any examination was made of the wreckage. I never saw the scene of the wreck. From what I saw of the wreckage brought to my station you could not judge of the original position of the wagons or brakes on the cocks. I gave evidence at the inquest on body of Lowe. It was read over to me and I signed every page. That produced is my evidence (pages 96 to 107, inclusive), and it is all true. I have not heard of anything likely to help in arriving at a conclusion as to cause of accident. I have disclosed everything I know. I am at a total loss to understand how the train got away. I have had twenty-two years' railway experience. I have no personal knowledge of the Westinghouse brake failing. I have not heard of any failure. If anything goes wrong the fault is reported through us to Locomotive Department. It would have been Guard Lowe's duty to report the circumstances of the accident to me. Both the driver and the guard would each have to report to their respective heads. The leading driver is in charge of the second engine. I have a copy of the Rules and Regulations, Appendix to Working Time-table, and