

and his fireman in the cab, and my fireman in his cab. I went and cut off between the front van and the tender (as shown by red cross on plan). I crossed over the couplings to other side before I uncoupled. I did so, as it put me in a handier position to operate. The other way seems left-handed to me. I shut both cocks that cut off communication with the engine as regards the brake. Then I uncoupled the hose. The brake-connection was then completely severed. I uncoupled the side chains. I do not know whether I did that first or afterwards. The hook was stretched tight. I called to my fireman to release the brakes and ease up. I called out "Release the brakes and ease up, Howe." I do not remember the exact words. He released the brakes and eased up, and I lifted the hook. I am sure I had uncoupled the brake before I asked him to ease up. If I were wrong in that, the fireman would have released the brakes on the whole train. I am certain the hook operation was the last. He eased up, and there was no bump that I remember. I took the hook off. If I were mistaken and the fireman released the brakes and eased up before I uncoupled, the accident would be accounted for. The guard would be able to apply the brake at rear of train if my operation was complete. When I gave fireman the direction to release brakes and ease up, he simply did it, and did not say anything. I was on left-hand side of train. My engines were free then. I gave no warning to the guard that I intended to uncouple. I took no steps before uncoupling to put on the hand-brakes or screw brakes. I did not think it necessary to warn the guard. We were only leaving for a very short time, and not going very far away. After uncoupling and before I went ahead I went along to put three hand-brakes on. I missed one truck because the brake was not on that side. I put two hand-brakes on left side and one on right side. I put the brakes on three different wagons. I thought the Westinghouse alone was sufficient, but I put three brakes on as an extra precaution. I was thinking what would be sufficient, and I thought three were sufficient. I pressed the brakes down with my hand and put the catch on. As I was leaving, before putting the truck-brakes on, I saw Cooper getting in at the door where I uncoupled. He knew I was going to uncouple and I should think he would hear the hose go. He went in at front door of van. When I came back I saw Cooper on the track on right side of his engine. I told him I had put down three hand-brakes, and he told me he had screwed the van-brake on. He said "We'll move ahead slowly." I told my fireman to move slowly ahead. Both Cooper and I remained on the track so that we could watch his engine. Cooper told his fireman the same. I know Rule 213, page 87. I complied with that rule. We drew away very slowly about 10 ft. We had the engine in the position we wanted, and I called out to my fireman to stop, and he did so. I was on the right-hand side. Cooper and I followed up watching her movements. I could not see anything wrong with the engine. I glanced back at the train, and it was to all appearance stationary. It was a starry night—very still. There was nothing to influence the train except its own weight. There was a light turned low in the front van. We decided to go a little further. One of us—I think, Cooper—suggested we should move a little further ahead and watch her movements. I instructed my fireman to shut off as soon as we got moving and leave the second engine to do the pushing, so that we might hear her beat. The engines moved, and Cooper and I intently watched her movements. We went 60 yards or 70 yards and found nothing wrong and stopped then. I think it was between six and eight minutes from the time we uncoupled until we finally stopped. Cooper looked round and drew my attention to the fact that the train was moving. I looked round. He jumped on to his engine and I jumped on to mine. I should think the leading van was then 200 yards from us. It must have been travelling some little time before we noticed it. When the guard found the train moving backwards he had no way of communicating with us except his hand-whistle. We had no signal from him. Cooper said, "The train's away," or words to that effect. It was a moment of excitement. Cooper said, "We'll chase her," and we both jumped on our engines. The train was a good way down the straight. We were on a curve. We saw the train in the distance. When we actually started I suppose she was 250 yards away. Had it not been for the light on leading van we would not have known so soon. I did my best to catch her. I put steam on, and we were going forty miles an hour at times. I saw a light on Cooper's cowcatcher. We did not catch the train and could not catch her, and did our best to do so. An engine would run down a hill as free as a wagon. At Ngatira we were stopped by a platelayer who said he had heard a crash. We stopped, and I got on Cooper's engine and told him to take charge of the brake. We reached scene of wreck. Next day I looked at the brake-blocks with the Coroner's jury. I only examined them to see if they were on or not. A lot of the Westinghouse brakes were on. I thought it was not necessarily a proof that they were put on by the brake-appliances. They might have been pressed on in the general crash. I did not see the indicator in guard's van. I saw nothing to give any indication as to why the train ran away. I did not examine the wheels of wagons or guard's van. The wheels may or may not have shown signs of the brakes being down. With the pressure I applied to hand-brakes I do not think the wheels would skid—not loaded wagons. I should say it is quite possible for some one to interfere with the cocks between the time of testing the brakes at Putaruru and the stop at Ngatira. If a cock was turned off near the engine the brakes would not operate behind that. I know Dwyer stated the guard's gauge showed 30 and was down to zero three minutes afterwards. I have never known such a reduction in such a short space of time without the brake being operated on from the engine or van. If the gauge was down to zero it would indicate there was no air in the train. If the brakes were applied there would still be air in the cylinders, but if there was no air in the train the brakes would not be on. If such a reduction as from 30 lb. to zero within three minutes was made it would apply the brakes. I know in my experience a train has been held with the Westinghouse brake on that incline. I knew of a train standing there for ten minutes without any backward movement. I do not know of any case where the Westinghouse brake failed in New Zealand. Firing and driving, I have been acquainted with it six years, and always found it reliable. As far as I know, the Westinghouse brake was in good working-order on my train. We would have had to go two miles and a quarter further on before getting on a