

framed it was considered safer to be well within the home signal than to be close up to it?—Yes; but you forget that to be “well within the home signal” means that they must be well clear of the main line. You must be well clear of the main line on getting into the siding.

72. Any through siding is still a main line, is it not?—Read the rule on to (b), taking it as a whole.

73. There are two main lines where trains cross?—Not necessarily.

74. That was a through siding there?—It was at New Lynn.

75. My point is this: in the regulation there is a certain amount of stress placed on the fact that an engine or train should be placed as far as possible within the home signal?—Quite so; but, as I explained, the train must be a long distance from the home signal to get into a siding clear. The rules must be read together to follow out the general meaning.

76. That loop line at New Lynn that No. 5 does now pull into to cross No. 6 is a main line, is it not?—That is a main line for crossing purposes, yes.

77. *Mr. Dickson.*] When you got the reports in about the accident from the tablet-porter, did you write and ask for a second report from either of the tablet-porters?—The report was made to my office. I happened to be away at the time, and I gave directions that the tablet-porter who was on duty that morning was to be suspended. I took no further action.

78. You did not ask for a second report?—No. I left the matter for the inquiry.

79. I mean, before the inquiry took place?—No, I have no recollection of asking for a second report.

80. You would not say you did not ask?—I would not say positively, but I am almost certain. The general practice in case of any serious irregularity is that the man is suspended, and the district officer takes no further action in the matter pending an inquiry; and I think I followed that practice.

81. *Mr. Green.*] Is it not a fact that the porter who is supposed to be off duty is in reality on duty twenty-four hours in twenty-four hours, owing to the fact that he may be called upon at any time to do fog-signalling duty, even now?—Every railway man is expected to come on duty for emergencies. He works regular hours every day, and although not tied beyond the working-hours, if he happens to be about he may be called upon to carry out any special duty.

82. Under the present regulations is it not a fact that the porter off duty cannot leave New Lynn without a permit from the Department?—I am not aware that such is the case. He is not expected to stay there day and night.

83. Supposing he had been there all night till 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and had just gone to bed, and a fog arose through the valley just before the approach of the Henderson train, could you expect that man to attend to the fog-signal at both ends of the station at one and the same time?—I may perhaps enlighten the Committee to this extent: every railway man may be called out to work all sorts of hours on emergencies. I myself have had to work many long hours. But I do not call upon the staff to work beyond the ordinary hours unless there is something very exceptional. In the case that *Mr. Green* speaks of, if this man, after having gone to bed in the morning at, say, 3 o'clock when they changed shifts, was required out a little later to assist the tablet-porter on duty, then he would come out; but to say that this man is tied there and cannot get away in the twenty-four hours is entirely erroneous.

84. *The Chairman.*] In other words, he is not supposed to come back unless he is notified?—Certainly not.

85. *Mr. Green.*] In the event of a fog being all over New Lynn so that both the Auckland signal and the northern signal are obscured from proper view, is there any other emergency man to be got to assist this one tablet-porter to work that station when two trains are crossing?—Yes, if he likes he can call upon any one who is handy. In England it is the practice to call upon farm labourers or anybody who may be about if they are short-handed, and it was quite open for the tablet-porter to do the same here if necessary.

86. Some of the requirements have been pointed out by the New Lynn Town Board: have you any of the letters?—I have no recollection of any letter from the New Lynn people regarding the matter.

87. You previously stated that through the agitation of some persons at Mount Eden the conditions of shunting had been altered?—I mean to say that these matters were talked about. I said nothing about any communication whatever. The matter appeared in the *Auckland Star*.

88. *Mr. Hine.*] In case of a dense fog it would not be necessary to hold up both ends at the same time, would it?—No.

89. Therefore it would be unnecessary to have detonators at both ends?—It is a matter in which one has to be guided entirely by circumstances and the locality of the station. To lay down a hard-and-fast rule that each station is to do this or that is impracticable.

90. As long as precautions were taken to ensure that one train should stop it would be sufficient protection for the public?—If in any case the officer in charge deems it advisable to put out fog-signals at one end where he is crossing trains he can do so. It must be left to the officer in charge.

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THOMAS AUGUSTUS FOWERAKER sworn and examined. (No. 25.)

1. *Mr. McVilly.*] You are Traffic Inspector on the Auckland Section?—Yes.

2. Your duty is to travel over the section and see that the members of the service comply with the rules and generally carry out their business efficiently?—Yes.

3. You report direct to the Traffic Manager if any irregularities come under your notice?—Yes.