

63. How far were you away from the scene of the accident when it took place?—I was at my own home—I heard the crash.

64. Do you know what fog-signals are?—Yes, to draw the attention of the driver to danger ahead.

65. You know that the Railway Department has provided in the regulations that in case of fog those signals are to be used?—If they do not they ought to.

66. Do you consider that if fog-signals had been placed on the rail in advance of the semaphore signal that morning it would have prevented the collision at New Lynn?—Oh, yes, there would have been less danger, because the driver would have been warned of the danger.

67. You think if they had been used on this occasion they would have prevented the accident?—I do not say it would. There may have been other mishaps, such as the brakes not working.

68. *Mr. McDermott.*] You said that train No. 5 is put into the siding since the accident?—Yes, she never gets forward to the tank at all till she is put into the siding.

69. Are you aware whether there were any instructions issued?—I know nothing at all about the instructions.

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HENRY GREEN sworn and examined. (No. 3.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A labourer, and I live at New Lynn, on the Hetana Hamlet. I should like to say at the commencement that a resolution was passed by the people whom we represent asking that a copy of the whole of the evidence given before this inquiry should be handed to those of us who are appearing before the Committee at the conclusion of the inquiry. Mr. Grandison forgot to mention that. In dealing with the question now before this Committee, I do not desire to condemn any individual or the Department as a whole for the accident that occurred, but I desire to condemn the system that exists for running the railway at New Lynn. The system that was in use at the time of the accident was, to my mind, not of the kind required—that is, in regard to the handling of traffic—for the purpose of ensuring absolute safety to the travelling public. One of the previous witnesses confined his remarks to New Lynn, but I understood this was an inquiry into the causes that led up to the accident. First, I wish to refer to the tablet system that is in use in connection with the Henderson train that leaves Henderson at 6.35 a.m. The driver of the train gets his tablet denoting a clear line to New Lynn. He has to stop at Waikume for passengers, and there is no porter or official there to time him in or out of the station. He leaves the station and comes down a steep incline with several heavy curves. Now, coming into the New Lynn Station there is a very nasty curve; also one just above the signal—I would call it an “S” curve, and I should say there is 30 ft. of a curve between the nose of the crossing and the line opposite the signal. Now, between the points on the loop there is a bridge which is within this “S” curve, and that is dangerous, for this reason: that a train which has to back on to the loop line under those conditions cannot get much way or speed on sufficient to get out of immediate danger. The result is that when shunting back into the loop the weight is practically in the middle of the “S” curve, and when the collision took place that was the weakest part of the train. Now, there is the danger which I have pointed out in regard to the shunting being done at the northern end of the station when there is a train coming from that direction which is not always running to time or timed when leaving the last station. The accident was not altogether a thing that would not occur in the minds of many people—it was only a question of when it would happen considering the manner in which the traffic was being handled. Passengers could very often see the state of affairs that existed. I could mention the names of many people who drew the attention of the train being stopped, and some had the intention of getting on the train and then stopped because of the shunting operations. I could get affidavits from those people to the effect that they were more or less in fear as to when an accident would happen. The tablet porter is a junior servant to the guard, and when the northern-bound train has been on the main line I have heard the porter remark to more than one guard, “Come on, get out of the way as soon as you can with your train, as the other train will be here before you shift”; and the reply he has got has been, “Oh, don’t worry, there is plenty of time yet.” That has occurred on many occasions, and I could bring evidence to substantiate it. I have seen the mixed train go ahead to shunt when the other train has had to stop, thereby losing time. Now, as to the mixed train getting water at the northern end of the station, I would suggest that the mixed trains should go on to the loop line, and if water is required the engine should be uncoupled and then go out from the siding, and then afterwards go on to the main line to get water. If this had been done on the morning in question I believe there would not have been any accident. Now, as to the station equipment, there is no interlocking plant in use. If such plant was installed it would tend to assist the man in charge of the station, because at present he is overworked through having to run to the points to let the northern train through, or the other train through at the other end, while at the same time he has to attend to the passengers who are waiting for tickets. There is no question that the man is overworked in the extreme, and all credit is due to the men who have had charge of the place during the two years and a half I have resided in New Lynn. In reference to the fog-signalling apparatus, I believe it was inadequate before the accident, but even if it had been in use on the morning of the trouble I consider it would have tended to prevent the accident occurring. In the Old Country there are emergency men called upon in case a fog arises. There are not sufficient men in the length to attend to these requirements, and emergency men are called upon and put so many spaces apart if a signal cannot be seen. These men are under the control of the Stationmaster or signal-box man if a signal-box is in use, and the tablet porter or Stationmaster, as the case may be, is aware of the names of the emergency men in the event of a fog arising, and they have to comply with the Board of Trade regulations. They have to