

Statement by Mr. J. VALENTINE, Car and Wagon Inspector, stationed at Wanganui.

I have been Car and Wagon Inspector at Wanganui for about two years, and in such position examine all vehicles before leaving the workshops. I am also responsible for the safe condition of the rolling-stock as defined in Loco. Instruction No. 328.

So far as I am aware in my district there is no vehicle in service which is in an unsafe or dangerous condition. The instructions *re* upkeep of condition of rolling-stock affecting safety have not in any way been amended or relaxed during the last three years. No vehicles have ever been allowed by me to remain in service in an unsafe condition. I have never been debarred from sending vehicles to the workshops for repairs when necessary. I have a perfectly free hand in the matter.

With regard to spares, there has been a shortage of draw-bar springs lately, and I have had to use two pieces on wagon draw-bars. No cars or bogie wagons have been fitted with two pieces of spring or draw-bars except a few cars on short-distance runs. No bogies whatever have had broken springs fitted in.

I recognize my responsibility on the matter of safety to the public, and always impress upon my staff the necessity of paying strict attention to the running and draw-gear of all vehicles. I am satisfied that my staff is reliable and carry out their duties faithfully.

I consider that the upkeep of the rolling-stock has in no way deteriorated during recent years. I consider that there are no grounds for the statement made in Parliament.

So far as I am aware there have not been any alterations in the design of rolling-stock to in any way interfere with its safety. I consider that it is a perfectly safe practice to use two pieces of springs on draw-bars of wagons, provided that the spring is left long enough to compress. This practice has been in use for many years whenever a shortage of springs takes place.

J. VALENTINE,

20th July, 1916.

Car and Wagon Inspector, Wanganui.

Statement of Mr. W. KYDD, Workshop Manager at East Town Workshops.

I have been twelve years in charge of East Town Railway Workshops. During recent years repairs to rolling-stock have been kept up to safe and efficient working-order, and in no case have vehicles been allowed to leave East Town Workshops unless they were in safe running-condition.

I have never noticed a vehicle sent in for repairs to be in really unsafe running-condition, excepting, of course, vehicles which have been damaged by shunting or through an accident.

It is incorrect to say that a number of carriages and bogie stock in daily use are unsafe, and I can safely say that no car or bogie wagon or other vehicle has left East Town Workshops in unsafe running-condition. I have a first-class staff of lifters, in whom I have every confidence, and they would not allow anything defective to leave their hands.

After my staff have finished repairing, vehicles are, before finally leaving workshops, inspected by the Car and Wagon Inspector, whose inspection is very rigid.

So far as spares are concerned, there has occasionally been a shortage of draw-bar springs, but nothing else, and on wagon stock we have had to use two half-springs, which is not in any way unsafe or detrimental to the stock. No half-springs have been used on cars or bogie wagons. To my knowledge half-springs have been used on wagons for many years.

In my opinion there has not been any alteration in the design of rolling-stock which would in any way interfere with its safety.

So far as I am aware the instructions *re* upkeep of rolling-stock affecting safety have not been amended or relaxed during the last three years.

19th July, 1916.

W. KYDD,

Workshop Manager.

Locomotive Engineer's Office, Newmarket, 19th July, 1916.

Chief Mechanical Engineer.

*Condition of Rolling-stock.*

I HAVE perused the copy of memo. from General Manager attached to your above-quoted memo., and have to report as follows :—

The statement that underframes and running-gear of vehicles in use on this division have not been kept up to the usual standard of efficiency during the past two or three years is absolutely incorrect, and I am not aware of any ground for such statement.

The instructions *re* upkeep of condition of rolling-stock affecting safety have not been in any way amended or relaxed during the last three years.

We have not experienced any difficulty in getting the necessary spares to maintain all rolling-stock in thorough safe and efficient running-order.

The first consideration of any Railway officer connected with the repairs and upkeep of rolling-stock is the safety of running-gear, and I am certainly not aware of any vehicles running in an unsafe condition, and feel quite sure that none of the officers of this branch would allow such a state of affairs to exist.

The condition and upkeep of rolling-stock has not in any way gone back, and is as good as it was at any time during my experience.

I do not know of any alteration in the design of rolling-stock which would in any way interfere with its safety.

Statements from Workshop Manager, Workshop Foreman, and Car and Wagon Inspector attached.

F. T. MURISON,

Locomotive Engineer