

40. Can you say for certain what set it on fire?—No, I could not.

41. *Mr. Williams.*] From your knowledge of where the chimney was situated do you think it was possible for a spark from it to have set fire to the place where you put the fire out?—The engine had as big a show of setting fire to the place as the chimney had, and perhaps more so.

42. Do you think, from the direction the wind was blowing, that a spark from the chimney set fire to it?—I could not say that.

43. *Mr. McCredie.*] Why do you say the engine had as big a show, or more, to set fire to it? Do you think it had an equal show?—Oh, more so.

44. Of course, you know the engine would be further away than the chimney?—According to the way the engine throws the sparks.

GEORGE WILLIAMS, jun., sworn.

45. *Mr. Poynton.*] You are a son of the petitioner?—Yes.

46. What do you wish to say in this matter?—About three years ago I was working over in the bush, and I noticed the house burning. I ran over, and with the assistance of Mr. Eunson I put it out.

47. Was Mr. Eunson there before you?—No, he came along just after.

48. Did you notice the fire first?—Yes.

49. Had any one called your attention to it before you saw it?—No.

50. Could you say what set it on fire?—I could not say for certain.

51. What time of the day was it?—Between 2 and 3 o'clock.

52. Was it dry weather?—Yes.

53. I suppose there was fire in the house?—I could not say for certain.

54. *Mr. Williams.*] Was the fire all in one place?—In about six different places.

55. Was there any fire in the house or not?—I could not say for certain.

56. You got it out. Do you know the man who was there before Eunson?—He was working—surveying—about the line.

THOMAS DYKE, sworn.

57. *Mr. Poynton.*] What are you, Mr. Dyke?—Tally-clerk for the Pine Company at Woodend.

58. What can you tell us about this matter?—I cannot tell you anything about this matter—about the fire in question—because I never saw it.

59. *Mr. Williams.*] Do you know that it is possible for the engine to set fire to property beside the line?—Yes, I do.

60. Why do you think so?—Because she is continually setting fire to our sawdust heap at Woodend.

61. Can it throw out sparks enough to set a house on fire?—She sets up a good fire there very often.

62. You think it is that that causes the fire at Woodend yard?—We think so, but we cannot swear to it. Just directly after she passes we see the fire starting. We have to watch her in dry weather, and go and put the fires out. It is only when the train passes that there is fire.

63. *Mr. Poynton.*] How often does this happen?—Nearly daily in dry weather—in very dry weather.

64. How far is the sawmill bank from the line?—Only about a chain from the line—some of it is near the line.

65. Of course, sawdust in dry weather is very inflammable?—It is very inflammable.

66. *Mr. McCredie.*] How long has this sawdust been burning? Every day?—It is out for months, but when it gets a hold in summer it burns all the summer. In fine, dry weather we have to pay great attention to it.

ANTHONY BULMAN, sworn.

67. *Mr. Poynton.*] What are you, Mr. Bulman?—Sawmill labourer.

68. Can you tell us anything about this matter?—Not about this fire; only just the same as the last witness has said. For the last seven or eight years I have been working at Woodend. I am a member of the fire-brigade. In dry weather when the train passes the sawdust takes fire. We have to keep a lookout.

69. Are you quite sure it was the train?—Yes. We always look after the late train for a fire.

70. And this has been going on for how long?—Since I have been there—six or seven years—in the summer time.

71. *Mr. McCredie.*] Have you known sawdust to catch fire in other ways?—No; not in that part. We never expect it to catch fire from any other source.

HENRY KELLAND, sworn.

72. *Mr. Poynton.*] What are you, Mr. Kelland?—I am a settler at Woodend.

73. Do you know anything about this fire?—Nothing.

74. What have you to say about the matter in general?—I did not want to come here. I was subpoenaed to come. On Wednesday week, in the evening, after the 7 train had gone by, my children came in where I was. In consequence of something that was said I went out with some water to put on a fire. That was about twenty minutes or half an hour after the 7 train went up. I had a firewood-stack on the roadside. This fire was on the firewood.

75. What kind of firewood was it?—Just ordinary bush-wood.

76. Had it been long there?—A week or so.

77. How far was it off from the rails?—A quarter of a chain. It was right on the road at Woodend.