

*Baume:* I have never followed up the train-examiner or guard to see he does his work. I take their report. All Stationmasters take the report of their officers, as they cannot do the work themselves. I cannot see with my own eyes what kind of examination the officer makes. The rules are not carried out in their entirety, but for all practical purposes they are carried out. We send fifty or sixty trains from Auckland each day. I could not send away more than half that if I had the duty of personally examining brakes and couplings and cocks. A train-examiner could not examine all the couplings, and joints, and cocks in less than twenty minutes on a train of ordinary length. The guard can see by the application of the brake that it goes on the last vehicle, and in practice that is all that is done. By walking along you can see if the cocks are open or shut. If, when the brake is applied, the brake goes on to the last carriage on the train, he has every reason to be satisfied. I endeavour to comply with Rule 203 by getting a signal from the guard or train-examiner that everything is all right.

*Court:* At the terminal station it is the practice that each vehicle is examined, and all the couplings and brake apparatus is examined. I am of opinion the greatest care or vigilance ought to be demanded by those whose duty it is to see to these things.

W. CROMBIE.

Taken and sworn at Auckland, this 29th day of August, 1907, before me—CHAS. C. KETTLE, D.J.

ROBERT SIMPSON'S examination continued:—

*Baume:* I put in a report as to examination of wreckage. I stated therein that I did not find any wheel showing signs of skidding. It is impossible from the condition in which I saw the wreckage to say whether any of the brakes were on or off at the time the train started from the incline. I found two cocks closed—one on L 3497 and one on 7778. The one on 7778 had some dirt about it, and it is possible it might have been driven closed in consequence of the accident, but there was no such appearance on L 3497. Its appearance was consistent with it being closed before the accident. None of the trucks were cut out when I saw them. The handles were all in working-position.

ROBERT SIMPSON.

Taken and sworn at Auckland, this 29th day of August, 1907, before me—CHAS. C. KETTLE, D.J.

This deponent, LOUIS HILL, being sworn, saith:—

I am a train-examiner. I have been about nineteen years in the service. I have been train-examiner about six years in Auckland Station. I know the rules regulating my duties. I know the "General Instructions to Trainmen." When train marshalled ready to start and engine coupled on, I go to the engine-driver and tell him to apply the brakes. Previous to that, when train brought to station by the shunters, I examine that train in all the Westinghouse couplings and taps, and the chains and hooks. When engine put on I ask driver to apply his brakes. He does so, and I go from vehicle to vehicle to see if the brakes are on or if there are any leaks. I go right to end of train. I give the driver or fireman the signal to release the brakes, and then I go right to the engine again, examining each vehicle to see if the brakes are off. I then inform the driver if the brakes are all right. I do not always report to the Stationmaster. The driver should not leave unless the brakes are all right. Sometimes the Stationmaster is there and sometimes not. As a rule the train-examiner and driver are responsible for the Westinghouse brakes being right. If the Stationmaster is there I give him a signal. Trains sometimes leave without my signalling the Stationmaster. If I finish five minutes before the train starts and another train is on other side waiting, I go and attend to that train without reporting to Stationmaster or guard. When I am in attendance the guard does not do anything at all with regard to the brakes. He has no responsibility. If I am not in attendance the driver would not go—unless his brakes are tested by an examiner. If there is no examiner it is the guard's duty. It is the guard's duty to do exactly as I do at the station here. To examine a train of twenty-two vehicles would take the guard about half a minute a vehicle or less than that—that is, to examine the couplings and taps. I consider such an examination is a necessary one, and a necessary precaution to take. In my experience I have discovered leaks of Westinghouse brakes. They are readily discoverable. Part of my examination includes examination of the dial on the engine. It is not part of my duty to see it, but I frequently do see it. I do not go into van and see what reduction made. The cocks will always retain their position. They will not shake down. They would if they were loose enough. They are made stiff enough to prevent their being put out of position by vibration or jarring of train. Hanging a heavy overcoat on the cock would probably bring the handle down. I have never known them to be interfered with. On a dark night a person might easily turn one down without his being noticed.

*Prendergast:* We always notify the driver or some responsible officer of the result of examination of brakes.

*Baume:* I cannot tell you how many trains a day I examine. I do nothing else but examine trains. I suppose I send away about ten or fourteen trains a day. There are other trains I examine. I examine all the trains that go out of Auckland during my shift. I examine the incoming trains as well. My shift is from 4 to 12. I do not always devote half a minute to each carriage. It all depends on the length of the train. I devote about fifteen seconds to each carriage. A carriage is about 47 ft. long. I suppose it would take me five seconds to walk that. As I walk along I examine the vehicle. It might take me fifteen seconds to walk along the vehicle examining. I spend very little time between vehicles. You can tell at a glance whether your taps are down and your couplings coupled. If they are out of order you know instantly. You look. There is a difference between a look and a glance. You stand and look at it. I can see without standing. Directly I start to examine a train I am practically walking along all the time. There is no need to examine with a hammer. On incoming trains I use the hammer. It would take me about ten