

that will cost you ten times more than an island platform will." That man's prophecy has come true. In view of all this I really think the Department should do something to minimize the existing dangers at New Lynn. A tank has been placed at the south end of the station: this is since the accident. I am not in a position to say whether it was the intention of the Department to place the tank there before the accident, but it looks as though, as soon as the accident occurred, the Department could see clearly where the danger existed. As a result of the tank having now been placed at the south end of the station the danger will certainly be minimized and the facilities will be better. With regard to the embankment that has been so much talked about, the view is really obscured more than one would gather from this plan. This picture in the illustrated paper shows the embankment. It is a very dangerous embankment. The bridge is practically at the foot of a very steep grade. Then we have a sharp curve, which appears to me to be very much sharper than is shown on the plan. [Witness pointed out on the map the position of the train when the accident occurred.]

3. *Hon. Mr. Herries.* What do you blame the Department for?—For not acceding to the request of the Town Board.

4. What were those requests?—The last request was for a Stationmaster to be appointed.

5. If there had been a Stationmaster there do you say there would have been no accident?—I do not say there would have been no accident; but if there had been a Stationmaster in charge of New Lynn Station better discipline would have prevailed, so I think there is a chance that the accident would not have happened. I do not think a Stationmaster would have allowed that train to go forward into the danger zone as it did when the other train was about due.

6. You mean to say that a Stationmaster would be a better man than a tablet porter?—I say that a Stationmaster would be more desirable than a tablet porter, because a Stationmaster is a man with some authority.

7. You said, I think, that the island platform would not have made any difference?—The island platform would not have made any difference, because the accident occurred before the train got to the platform.

8. The only request that you or the Town Board made that might have had an effect on the accident is the request about a Stationmaster?—No.

9. What are the other ones?—I said that the Town Board had pointed out the cramped state of the station and the cramped manner in which the goods and the traffic of the station had to be handled, and they requested, to facilitate matters, that an island platform be provided so that the trains could cross without going forward, as at present.

10. Those are the only two requests that you say have not been granted—the Stationmaster and the island platform?—Yes, those have not been granted.

11. Do you mean to say that if the Department had granted those requests there would have been no accident?—I mean to say that the Town Board pointed out the dangers that existed when the train went to the tank.

12. When did they do that?—I have the communication here and I have the answer.

13. Whom did they write to?—It was to the Railway Department at Auckland, under date 4th March—two months prior to the accident.

14. To whom was that addressed?—The Traffic Manager at Auckland. They mentioned particularly the matter of the tank.

15. Did you bring that before Mr. Millar?—Yes. There is another danger regarding this tank, and it is a very serious one indeed. When the trains are approaching New Lynn Station from town they take water at the tank. On arriving at the station, instead of stopping for the passengers to alight, they stop where they can reach the tank, and should they be a little bit short of it they pull forward with a sudden jerk, with the result that nearly everybody there is sometimes precipitated either on to the broad of his back or sent out on to the platform. This is a very serious matter, as I can show you in a case that happened not many months ago. On the 13th February, 1913, the train should have stopped, but did not do so, and in the next month application was made for a Stationmaster to be appointed. We are here to talk matters over with a view to preventing any further accidents and to further the interests of the travelling public, and this is what happened: a little lad named Morris, about ten years old, had been to Avondale on an errand. On arrival at New Lynn the train attempted to stop and then went forward. The lad was walking out of the carriage when the train jolted suddenly, with the result that the lad was thrown between the carriages. A wheel of the carriage passed over his foot and nearly severed it. The boy was laid up in the hospital for some time and had his foot removed, and is now to be seen toddling about New Lynn on crutches. That is a matter that needs to be looked into by the Department to see whether something cannot be done to put a stop to that practice of the train pulling up suddenly and jolting the passengers about. Of course, every one is wise after an event, but I can say, gentlemen, that this accident was really expected at any time. I do not wish to throw discredit on any one, but I say that the officials have had the existing conditions pointed out to them on more occasions than one; but the officials have ignored the demands made upon them by the people of New Lynn and the local authority of that district. That is a point I wish to emphasize, because I have some written statements here signed by the persons who made them to this effect: "I hereby declare that to my own personal knowledge and observation collisions have been only narrowly averted on a number of occasions at New Lynn Station owing to the shunting of the train from Auckland out on to the main line in the case of the incoming train, as on the morning of the accident on 28th May last." That statement is signed by Mr. S. Jones before a Justice of the Peace. I have four statements of a similar nature, and I will put them before the Committee. I think all members of the Committee will agree that the danger has existed, and I hope something will be done to prevent a recurrence of what has already taken place.