

In regard to Mr. Paterson's report, may I make one observation about the draw-bar springs. It has been said that at times draw-bar springs have been broken, and instead of putting new ones in two or three pieces of draw-bar springs have been used. In the case of draw-bar springs that does not affect the safety in any way. It has always been the practice, I understand, to use pieces of draw-bar springs so long as the pieces fit properly. However, that is a question upon which a good deal of evidence will be given. That observation does not apply to passenger-carriages, although, as I say, the question of safety is not involved, but the question of comfort may be involved. The practice to which I have referred has been adopted in respect of wagons, but not in respect of carriages, except possibly in a few cases of carriages which have been used merely on short-distance runs.

Statement of Mr. W. J. WATSON, Workshop Manager at Addington.

1. I do not consider that the designing of rolling-stock during the last three years has in any way decreased the safe running of rolling-stock.
2. I consider that the underframes and running-gear of all new stock built under my control are in every way safe to carry the vehicles for which they are built.
3. I have not received any instruction not to thoroughly carry out the repairs to the underframes or running-gear of any car, brake-van, or wagon sent into the shops for repairs.
4. I have not received any instructions not to supply any spares for rolling-stock repairs. I have supplied them according to the orders received from the Car and Wagon Inspector.
5. Whenever cars, wagons, or brake-vans are sent to shops for repairs they are thoroughly overhauled and repaired before being returned to traffic. The Car and Wagon Inspector is very particular in seeing that this is done.
6. I consider that the state of the rolling-stock has improved during the last three years. Improved standardization has been steadily proceeding all the time.
7. The strictest economy has been practised, but in no direction whatever has the safety of the rolling-stock suffered.
8. Nothing has been cut out of the necessary repairs to keep down expenditure, full attention being paid to the efficiency of the rolling-stock.
9. The instructions *re* the upkeep of rolling-stock have certainly not been relaxed during the last three years, but on the other hand amendments of considerable importance have been made, such as heavier axles, extra springs, improved axle-boxes, and improvements in draw-gear.
10. I do not consider that there are any grounds for the statement that the state of rolling-stock has deteriorated in any way, nor has there been a shortage of spares even since the war has been running.

20th July, 1916.

W. J. WATSON,  
Workshop Manager, Addington.

Statement of Mr. J. CARSON, Workshop Manager, Hillside.

1. I have never received any instructions not to carry out the repairs to underframes or running-gear of any car, brake-van, or wagon sent to Hillside Workshops for repairs.
2. When a car, brake-van, or wagon is sent to workshops for repairs it is thoroughly overhauled and repaired before being sent into traffic. Before a car, brake-van, or wagon is sent out of shops after repairs have been effected it has to be passed by the Car and Wagon Inspector, who makes a thorough inspection of it.
3. I consider the rolling-stock at the present time is just as efficient as it was three years ago, and improvements have been steadily going on.
4. The instructions for the upkeep of rolling-stock have not relaxed during the last three years. On the other hand, I am of opinion that the instructions have been more rigid for the efficiency of the rolling-stock.
5. The designing of rolling-stock has not in any way decreased the safe running of rolling-stock during the last three years.
6. I consider that the underframes and running-gear of all new rolling-stock built under my control are in every particular safe and strong to carry the vehicles for which they are built.
7. The efficiency of the rolling-stock has not been impaired in any respect, although the strictest economy has been exercised.
8. I have not allowed any repairs to stand over to keep down expenditure.
9. I have never received any instructions not to supply spares for rolling-stock either to Car and Wagon Inspector or Locomotive Foreman.

26th July, 1916.

J. CARSON,  
Workshop Manager, Hillside.

Chief Mechanical Engineer, Wellington.

Locomotive Branch, Wanganui, 20th July, 1916.

*Condition of Rolling-stock.*

STATEMENTS as asked for are attached. Copies have been forwarded to the Locomotive Engineer, Petone.

E. E. GILLON,  
Locomotive Engineer.

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,  
Car and Wagon Inspector, Wanganui.

20th July, 1916.