SAWMILL AT WHANGAROA.

Railway Accidents.

HOW TO TAKE THE STING OUT OF THEM

A DESIRE to minimise accidents in future is the first feeling that takes possession of the average human breast when the news of some great railway disaster is published. It is the feeling with which thousands in this country are to-day looking at the pictures of the two engines which rammed each other the other day near Rakaia. The accident appears to have inspired the same feeling in the Glasgow community, where a prominent railway man was interviewed on the subject and responded to some purpose. He said —

"My candid opinion is that the Board of Trade will step in some day and compel us to run a specially designed vehicle at the front of the train next the engine, and also at the end behind the guard's van. The intention is, of course, that these vehicles should, by means of strong springs, or otherwise, take up most of the force delivered as the result of one train crashing into another. One thing that militates against the project is the unprofitableness of running stock of this sort. Now this seems to shunt the proposal into the background altogether. But it does not. A way out of the difficulty will be found, and I may mention something I heard of recently. Everybody acquainted with Glasgow stations is aware that at some of them hydraulic buffers are placed at the ends of the platforms to reduce the force of a collision in the event of a train coming in too fast These long buffers, of, say, nine feet or so, are driven into their sockets against an accumulation of water, which acts the part of cushion until the weight of metal acting against it has forced the water to escape from its containing chamber. An application of this principle is suggested for all trains in the following manner:—Each train to carry, as already described, a vehicle at the front and at the rear end. The said vehicle is to have the shape and form of a van, but to be strongly built and to contain water, lying on the top of which would be coverings of a collapsible nature ready to fall with the decrease of water, but not to rise with any pressure of the same unless it be when the van is getting re-filled at a station water tank. Such vans could permit of a certain proportion of their contents being available for the engines, and in this manner the abnormally large tenders on express trains at present in use could be dispensed with in favour of a smaller type. The vans being of a collapsible and telescopic order, both in body and frame underneath, would, in the event of a collision, help to save the fearful effects, as such an arrangement would permit the water to make an excellent cushion. It, of course, would pour out through the valves provided for the purpose under the heavy weight of a colliding train, but it is hoped that with such a van on each of the trains involved, the safety of the passengers would be assured."

WAITING TO LOAD AT NORTHERN WAIROA.

England's Failures.

The record of the year's failures is the reverse of favourable, says St. James's Budget. The total number of failures appears, it is true, at 10,231, as against 10,240 in the year 1904; but any comfort we may derive from that fact is more than nullified by the increase in the number recorded for the wholesale trade—916, as against 883. Thus, though the aggregate of failures is less, the actual loss without a doubt, has been greater. In this connection, it may be noted, that the total for 1904, was £9,371,780, showing an advance of upwards of £2,000,000 on that of 1903. As regards the retail trade, it is of interest to remark that the grocers and provision dealers contribute the greatest number of failures, with a total of 1114, while builders and architects, 600; farmers 522; publicans 447; and bakers, 258; figure high up on the list. Not a single banker, discount or bill broker, or sugar refiner has been compelled to appeal to his creditors.

A Three League Boot.

After the motor-car comes the motor-boot. M. Constantini has invented a pair, and has careered on or in them through the streets of Paris at the rate of 25 miles an hour. The invention consists of tiny motor-cars fitted to Wellington boots, fifteen inches long. Each boot has four wheels. Power is derived from 1¼ h.p. motors, and accumulators are carried in a belt connected by wires to the motors. The cost of a pair of motor-boots is about £20. They are capable, it is said, of a speed of thirty five miles an hour.

Record Whaling.

The last whaling season was a particularly good one for English boats, every ship having done much more than paid its way. In several instances the shareholders would receive handsome dividends. One of the boats, the "Snowdrop," is only a fishing lugger fitted with a motor. But she captured a whale worth at least £2,000. Another obtained a cargo of the value of about £25,000.