

46. Could you not have explained yourself without questions being put to you, like Mr. Taylor's? Could you not have explained yourself to the Royal Commission as you have done to the Committee?—I hardly understood the way you wanted the questions or what details you wanted me to go into.

47. At the time of the Rakaiia accident were the rails wet?—I should say very bad. Not only that; the water was flooding over the tops of some of them.

48. Supposing your brakes had acted with the wet rails could you have prevented an accident?—I could have stopped twice at the same distance where I shut off.

49. Would not the wheels have skidded on the rails if they were wet?—That would have been the only danger.

50. It was a down train?—Yes; but still I allowed for a stop quite comfortably outside the station-limits, and if the brake had acted as before I would not have had any trouble in stopping. I know every inch of the ground. I could run over it blindfolded and stop at places.

51. Was there not fog and rain? Did not that interfere so that you thought that you were further away than you were?—There was nothing to be seen ahead.

52. Supposing you did not know exactly where you were. The distance being so short with wet rails would not the wheels have skidded, so you would have run into the train even if the brake had acted?—No; I shut off in plenty of time for being able to stop at the outside limits, but the brake did not act, and the man with the lamp was not sent out far enough. Had he been on the top of the rise and shown me the red light I would have seen him a lot sooner, and would have stopped. We did not see the light until we got close on to the van of the other train; it was a very miserable light too. The dark night was one of the worst I have ever witnessed in my life. It was blowing a fair gale, and the water rose like a mist. There were hardly any objects to be seen.

53. Would you tell the Committee, Mr. Carter, what were your qualifications as an engineer before you joined the service? Had you any knowledge of general engineering before you joined the service as a driver?—Not in the fitting-shops. I have worked at Anderson's years ago, and I have done a lot of fitting with thrashing-engines and combines. I used to frequently work amongst them for something like four or five years before I came to the railways.

54. Would you be competent now to take charge of an engine—say, a dredge?—Oh, yes; I could take charge of pretty well anything in the line of engine-work.

55. There are openings in Otago for taking charge of dredges, which you might think of?—I can do all my own necessary work on an engine.

56. *Mr. J. W. Thomson.*] You spoke of Mr. Beattie trying whether the brake would act. You say it would not act.—Yes.

57. Was that before or after?—It was before the accident, in the shops.

58. Was it the same kind of a brake?—The same engine. This brake was a tender-brake; an air-brake.

59. What I mean is, the brake would not act. You must have been very anxious?—But the brake that I spoke to Mr. Beattie about in the shops was altered in the shops, and made so that it would work afterwards. It would not act when I took the engine to Addington. I tried this brake before I went to Addington. I could not get the down-brake to work at all, and we tried it in front of Mr. Beattie, and he could see for himself that it would not work.

60. *Mr. Morrison.*] You said, in reply to Mr. Allen, that you had had some experience in fixing up threshers and combines?—I used to work for Mr. Bailey, and Mr. Jeff, and Mr. Dalmayne, and lots of other work I have done in the winter time in repairing both threshing-engines and combines. I always do my own repairing; I never waste any time.

61. You have not served your time to the engineering or fitting?—No.

62. Any experience you have got in fitting has been acquired at Anderson's?—I was working at Anderson's, but not for very long.

63. You said that, when you appeared before the Royal Commissioners, you asked them if you would be allowed counsel, and they said No; you were simply there as an ordinary witness?—Yes, simply as an ordinary witness.

64. Are you aware that the Royal Commission examined a very large number of witnesses in connection with this Rakaiia accident?—Well, not a great many.

65. Did they examine a number of witnesses?—Yes, a good few.

66. You could not give us an idea of the number?—No.

67. It was an exhaustive inquiry into the cause that led up to this accident?—It was what I call a one-sided affair on me. It was all on me, and on nobody else; I was the only one suspended.

68. You say the whole of the inquiry seemed to be in the direction of bringing out evidence to convict you?—That is so.

69. How long did this Commission sit?—Not very long; only for three or four hours.

70. Altogether?—It might have been more, but I do not think it was. It was all finished early in the afternoon.

71. *Mr. J. W. Thomson.*] Only one day?—Only one day.

72. *Mr. Morrison.*] The whole enquiry finished in one day?—Only the first day they sat in chambers for a little time, and then went away and viewed the scene of the accident. It was only for a few minutes the first day. That was the day that I went and asked the Commissioners how I was going to be dealt with, and then they went away to view the spot where the accident occurred, and the next day they sat and were finished early in the afternoon.

73. Were you present all the time?—Yes.

74. And were you at full liberty to put any questions you thought necessary?—Yes, but only through the Commissioners. The Commissioners asked Gardiner, the driver, "Did not his brake fail?" and Gardiner said, "Yes," and immediately Mr. Rotherham put his hand on his shoulder and stopped him making any further statement.