

32. Did you at any time notice the fire that started after the express passed?—No.
33. Do you mean to say it is impossible for sparks to come out of the chimney of an engine such as you were driving?—The engine we were on was a compound. I have never seen it throw sparks all the time I have been on it.
34. I suppose if the engine were emitting black smoke you could then see the sparks, if there were any, notwithstanding that it was a bright day?—I do not see how one could see them.
35. If they were in the black smoke you would see them against the smoke, would you not?—Yes, but the more black smoke there is it is the surest sign the engine would not throw sparks.
36. It would not be good driving to so work your fires with a light train as to cause sparks to be emitted?—No; but I fail to see how it could throw sparks, owing to the lightness of the train.
37. Have you any special places for stoking-up the fires on the south lines? Do you not generally stoke-up at Rakaia?—We very seldom stoke-up when standing at a station.
38. You generally do it after starting?—It depends on how things are going.
39. You have no particular rule or regulation about it?—No; we keep up a uniform fire.
40. Did you see anybody on this occasion throw a match or a cigarette from a carriage?—No.
41. As a rule, you are not looking back much?—It is part of my duty.
42. You have to keep an eye on the guard's van?—Yes.
43. Do you remember this day particularly?—Yes. I took note of it myself.
44. There is a broad strip of grass land, now in stubble, between the actual line and the fence?—Yes.
45. More than a chain?—I would not be sure about the distance. It would be about that.
46. Was that in grass two years ago?—I do not remember.

## WALTER EDWARD STREET, SWORN.

47. *Mr. Poynton.*] What are you, Mr. Street?—Manager of Mr. White's farm.
48. Were you manager when the damage took place?—Yes.
49. And you wish to give evidence as to the damage?—Yes.
50. Can you state how the fire occurred?—No.
51. What do you estimate is the damage done to Mr. White's farm?—I estimate the damage done to the farm by the fire in this way: 46 acres of plantation, at £6 an acre; 260 chains of fencing, at 10s.; and about 100 acres of grass, at 5s.
52. *Mr. Stringer.*] What sort of a fence was it?—A gorse fence, except about 6 chains of posts and rails.
53. Was the fence in good condition?—Yes, in very good condition.
54. Do you know Mr. Coster?—Yes.
55. He is a very experienced man?—Yes.
56. And knows the country?—Yes.
57. He estimates the fencing at much lower than you do. I think he puts it at 3s. 3d. a chain. How do you explain the discrepancy between 3s. 3d. and 10s.?—Well, you could not put the fences up for 10s. I would rather have the fence as it was before the fire than a fence at 10s. a chain.
58. Why?—Because sometimes it does a gorse fence good to burn it, but when everything is dry it is burnt clean out by the roots. We have been unable to get it up since. The posts were burnt right down to the ground, and the bank is all tumbling away.
59. What have you done with regard to fencing?—We are going to put a wire on the fence and a wire on each side.
60. What has it cost you to do what you have done?—I could not say exactly. I could not give the price per chain.
61. But you have reinstated the fence?—Oh no, it is nothing like it was before.
62. But you have done what you consider necessary to make your fences effective?—We have, and we have not; because what we have done we did until the gorse would grow, as we thought it would, but the gorse has not grown to be a good fence.
63. Has the grass grown at all?—In patches.
64. What have you expended on the fence per chain already?—From memory I could not say.
65. Have you expended 1s. a chain?—Yes, it has cost more than that. It would cost 3s. a chain at the least to do what we have already done to the fences.
66. And you will have to do more on account of the gorse not coming?—Yes.
67. What will you have to do?—We will have to bank on the south-west side for the whole length at 2s. 6d. a chain, and then the gorse will have to grow.
68. And you estimate the grass at 5s. an acre?—Yes.
69. Mr. Coster put it at 2s. 6d.?—I think that is too little.
70. How do you calculate 5s.?—Feed was very scarce, and the feed in the paddock was good. It was quite a foot high, and was worth 5s. for the stock. It was a good paddock. It would not have burnt readily if there had not been feed on it.
71. *Mr. Macandrew.*] What was the nature of the feed?—Mixed ryegrass and clover.
72. *Mr. Stringer.*] Was it ploughed and properly laid down in grass?—Yes.
73. How long have you been manager of the farm?—Ten or eleven years.

## GEORGE HANMER, SWORN.

74. *Mr. Stringer.*] What are you?—A licensed surveyor.
75. I think you made a survey of the country affected by the fire?—Yes.
76. I refer to the fire that took place at Rakaia on the 2nd January, 1897?—Yes.
77. This is the plan you made?—Yes.