

1902.  
NEW ZEALAND.

ACCIDENTS TO TRAINS, DUNEDIN DISTRICT  
(CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO).

*Laid on the Table of the House by Leave.*

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS.

Railway Department, Head Office, Wellington, 16th July, 1902.

IN compliance with your instructions, I have referred the papers relative to the recent accidents which have occurred on the southern portion of the Hurunui-Bluff Railways to a Board, consisting of Messrs. Coom, Beattie, and Gaw, as representing the Maintenance, Locomotive, and Traffic Branches respectively.

I attach their report, which deals with each accident in the order in which it occurred.

The conclusions arrived at by the Board have my full indorsement.

Personally, should the Government consider further inquiry necessary, I court the fullest investigation.

T. RONAYNE,  
General Manager.

MEMORANDUM for GENERAL MANAGER.

New Zealand Government Railways, Chief Engineer's Office,  
Wellington, 15th July, 1902.

*Train Accidents, Dunedin District.*

IN accordance with the Hon. the Minister's request, we submit herewith the following remarks on the series of accidents which have occurred in the Dunedin district during the current year, and the frequency of which has called for criticism from both the public and the Press.

The accidents referred to are as follows :—

1. 21st April, 1902.—Collision and derailment at Hindon.
2. 7th May, " Collision at Port Chalmers yard.
3. 20th May, " Train parting on Crichton grade.
4. 21st May, " Derailment at Totara.
5. 26th May, " Derailment at Hillgrove.
6. 17th June, " Derailment at Sawyer's Bay.
7. 2nd July, " Derailment at Seacliff.

And we offer the following remarks in explanation :—

1. *Collision at Hindon.*—This accident was due to the men of the train from Dunedin neglecting to remain at Hindon to cross a goods-train from Ida Valley. An official inquiry was held, and it was conclusively shown that the accident was due to the failure of the train-men to carry out their instructions. Instructions as to the crossing of these trains were issued to both driver and guard. The men admitted that their instructions were perfectly clear, but that they had been overlooked.

The installation of the train tablet would have prevented this accident.

2. *Collision at Port Chalmers Yard.*—This was due to two causes—1st, driver overrunning the platform; 2nd, the shunter having left two wagons foul of the cross-over road.

The Westinghouse brake would have prevented this.

No official inquiry was held, as the cause was evident.

3. *Train parting on Crichton Grade.*—A heavy goods-train was being taken up the Crichton grade in two parts. The engine with the first part was proceeding up the grade when it ran into a bullock; the recoil of the train broke a coupling, allowing twenty-three wagons to run back and collide with the second portion, which had been left standing on the grade. The broken hook showed a crystalline fracture, but there was nothing to indicate that the iron was of inferior quality.

Although the Westinghouse brake would not have prevented the parting of the train, it would have immediately come into action, and prevented wagons running down the grade.

No official inquiry was held, as the cause of the accident was clear.