

THE NORWALK CALAMITY.

The Continuation of the Coroner's Inquest.

INTERESTING EVIDENCE.

INDIGNATION MASS MEETING AT NORWALK.

EXPRESSION OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT.

THE LEGISLATURE REMEMORIALIZED, &c., &c., &c.

All the bodies which were lying at the depot at Norwalk have been removed. The body of the unknown man, marked No. 6, has been recognized as that of Michael Beards, who was on his way to Charlestown.

There have been no more bodies recovered from the wreck, but a portion of the cars has been removed, and a derrick will soon be put in operation to extricate the engine and tender.

The body of Mrs. Harley—remarkably beautiful even after such a death—has been enclosed in an airtight metallic coffin, and is to be sent to Boston to-day.

Several distinguished clergymen of the Baptist Church arrived in the morning cars, to visit Mr. Onckes, who is gradually improving.

The two most dangerous cars of injury—those of Mrs. Gen. Harvey and Miss Emily Griswold—present no more marked changes, though Mrs. Harvey was declared somewhat worse this morning.

Joseph B. Babbe, captain of the Pacific, being sworn, said—When I saw the train it was about one hundred yards from the drop; the ball was down from ten to fifteen minutes before the train ran off.

James A. Benard, sworn, testified as follows—I am engineer of the Pacific; as we passed the draw the distance of 150 feet; I heard a whistle, a single whistle, which drew my attention, and I stepped right back upon the guard; the locomotive then came on to the bridge; I still followed the motion of it till it went off; it struck on the opposite side before it fell into the water; it went right across, and when it fell the baggage car fell upon it; the distance from the bridge to the surface of the water is 12 feet from high water mark, as near as could be judged; the second baggage car was under water, covered up by the first passenger car; all the windows of the first passenger car were under water; the second passenger car landed on top of the first and then came over; one row of seats was entirely under water; the car was partly smashed; about two-thirds of it were out of water; the cars remained in this position till the bodies were taken off.

A—Going at the rate of 30 miles the hour, he would then have one minute to lose the signal and go back ready to move the draw; I noticed the time it took him to do this this morning; it took him one minute from the time he dropped the ball till he commenced opening the draw.

To a Juror—it is a matter of chance whether a train could go over the bridge safely when the wedges which keep the bridge in its place were out, and before the bridge is moved.

W. H. Church, sworn, said—I reside in New York; I am a physician; I attended upon the front platform of the cars of the train coming into Norwalk this morning; I discovered the signal before it was pointed out to me; I marked the point with my eye, and watched the signal till I lost sight of it; I also marked that point with my eye; then counted the rails; calculated the distance at eighteen feet to the rail; I first discovered the signal at a distance of 3,312 feet from the draw; I saw the signal at a distance of 1,314 feet; I then lost sight of it, and that was at a distance of 1,998 feet from the draw.

The testimony of this witness was intended as a corroborator of the Coroner's report.

T. B. Griffith—I was in my own store the morning of the accident; my place of business is from 125 to 150 feet from the track, and 150 yards from the bridge; I should judge the usual speed of the express train is 25 miles per hour; I think I have seen it going faster than that at the rate of twenty miles; the speed was not so fast; I heard the whistle, but I can't tell whether there was one or two whistles; the whistle was almost instantaneous with the crash I heard; they usually ring the bell when passing the crossing.

Q.—By a juror—Do you think that the rules were inefficient to guard against an accident?

A—I think there can be no doubt of it; other trains generally turn the curve at the rate of five miles an hour; I was among the first at the scene of the accident; I have no doubt that they were all taken out of the cars; I have known instances where the train having stopped at Norwalk, and proceeded towards the bridge has been stopped again, when it was observed that the draw was open; I don't recollect any time when a train was within a few feet of the open draw; if that express train which ran off, had stopped at the depot, the speed would not have run off; I have observed the practices of the train four or five years. I have often thought that after regulations could have been made; I think an accident of this kind was frequently predicted by the people living in Norwalk, in relation to the express trains.

A. B. Beard, sworn—I reside about ninety rods from the bridge; I have seen some of the trains stop after they got past the curve, and before they came to the bridge, without any apparent difficulty; my attention was attracted to this train by two hurried blows, so close together, that they were evidently done in great haste; from the time I heard the whistle, till the crash came, about three or four seconds elapsed; the rate of speed of an express train, going by the curve, I have supposed at about twenty miles the hour; I think if that express train stopped at the depot, the accident would not have happened; I have often heard it said that on account of this rate of speed there would be an accident at the crossing; I think the train went slowly past the depot; it could be stopped after turning the curve, and it came to the bridge; I went immediately to the scene of the accident, and gave my time in rendering assistance; I have no doubt that the persons came to their death by that accident; I took charge of the effects, and numbered them, as also the bodies; I think the accident was caused by the carelessness of the engineer; when the ball was lowered, the train must have been below the Darien depot, which is three and a-half miles from the Norwalk depot; I never heard any complaint on the part of the engineer, or any one, that he could not see the ball.

Hon. Thomas B. Butler, of Norwalk, sworn, testified as follows—The ball is first visible at the northeast end of the east-protection wall at the depot, and that point is 847 feet from the west end of the draw; the ball remains distinctly visible at a distance of three hundred feet, coming towards the depot; it is then partially obscured by trees for a distance of a hundred feet; it then becomes distinctly visible, and continues so for three hundred feet; it is then partially obscured again by trees for a distance of one hundred feet; it then becomes distinctly visible for a distance of four hundred feet; it is then partially obscured by a tree or trees for one hundred feet; it is then totally obscured by buildings for a distance of one thousand two hundred and fifty feet, and until you come upon the highway north of the depot it is then visible again for about fifty feet; it is then obscured again by buildings for a distance of three hundred and twenty five feet, and at that point you come in sight of the ball and draw; this point is 664 feet from the opening of the draw; the north end of the draw, when it is open, may be seen fifty feet further off; the west corner of the brick potter is 369 feet from the draw; the well is 310 feet from the draw; the west buttment of the bridge is 153 feet from the draw; the curve commences 1,070 feet from the draw; we measured those distances on the rail with fifty feet chains; I was upon a train when it stopped near the draw, and when the draw was open, but I am not prepared to say there was any neglect on the part of those in charge of the train.

G. B. Simonds, of New Haven, sworn, said—I am Superintendent of the motive power on the New Haven Railroad; the Superintendent of the road, Mr. Whistler, furnishes me with the instructions, and I give them to my engineers; I receive all printed notices and instructions from him; I could not say positively that I gave this engineer the time table, but I am certain he has had them; I think he told me that he had a time table; I often caution the men about crossing the draw; the time tables contain the instructions; the engineer, Edward Tucker, has been two months on the road the last time; I have known him the last eight years by reputation, and three years personally; I cautioned him at different times, and particularly about a month or six weeks ago, in relation to the bridge; he was an extra man; we always keep on the best men for extra men; I have been an engineer; I have run engines about ten years; it is difficult to stop a train when the track is wet and slippery; from ten to twelve miles an hour would be a safe rate of speed to run round the curve; if the train was running at ten or twelve miles, I don't think the train could be stopped before going over the bridge with a bad track; with a good dry track it could; I think a train could be stopped at 500 feet if the men were all at the brakes; 1,000 feet would be required in ordinary cases; a train could not be stopped at a distance of two and a-half miles, and while proceeding at a rate of fifteen miles an hour; the brakemen would have to work hard at the brakes while it was going at that rate; my opinion is that the engine was reversed before it went into the draw, the fireman said it was reversed; I think the cause of the accident was some neglect on the part of the engineer; it is not the duty of the conductor to look out for signals, although they sometimes do so; a man running behind time is liable to be excited in his place; and he is behind time he is liable to get excited in his endeavors to make it up; if the train does not go past a certain point, if the engineer and conductor would not hold responsibility; I should think the usual rate of speed was twenty miles per hour.

Mass Meeting at Norwalk. PUBLIC MEETING IN REFERENCE TO THE LATE CALAMITY MEMORIAL TO THE LEGISLATURE, &c., &c.

The citizens of Norwalk and vicinity are requested to meet on the bank near the west end of the railroad bridge, where the recent terrible calamity took place, on MONDAY AFTERNOON, the 9th inst., at 6 o'clock, for the purpose of expressing the sympathies of the citizens of Norwalk with the friends and relatives of the deceased, and of adopting a memorial to be presented to the General Assembly of this State, now in session, for a stringent law to prevent the recurrence of similar accidents in future.

Edwin Hall, Jr., of Norwalk, was standing on the bridge when the draw was open; I saw the train coming, but was so frightened that I did not see it go in; I saw two jumps of the train before they came to the bridge.

Wm. C. Street, of Norwalk, sworn—I went on the track yesterday morning to see at what points I could observe the signal; I thought I could see the signal about half a mile from the bridge, but found that I had mistaken a tree for it; it was cloudy at the time, but a short time after, when it was clear, I could see the signal from the same point; my conclusion is that the signal is not high enough to be seen except from a few points along the road; at the time it was erected it may have been high enough, but the trees have grown up since; I do not think the regulations of the road are sufficient for the safety of passengers if the train was going at a great rate of speed; if the train had stopped at the depot, I don't think the accident would have occurred.

Nathan Roberts, of Norwalk, sworn—I was on the dock, about fifteen rods from the bridge, and saw the train stop at the rate of twenty miles; the speed was not so fast; I heard the whistle, but I can't tell whether there was one or two whistles; the whistle was almost instantaneous with the crash I heard; they usually ring the bell when passing the crossing.

Q.—By a juror—Do you think that the rules were inefficient to guard against an accident?

A—I think there can be no doubt of it; other trains generally turn the curve at the rate of five miles an hour; I was among the first at the scene of the accident; I have no doubt that they were all taken out of the cars; I have known instances where the train having stopped at Norwalk, and proceeded towards the bridge has been stopped again, when it was observed that the draw was open; I don't recollect any time when a train was within a few feet of the open draw; if that express train which ran off, had stopped at the depot, the speed would not have run off; I have observed the practices of the train four or five years. I have often thought that after regulations could have been made; I think an accident of this kind was frequently predicted by the people living in Norwalk, in relation to the express trains.

I never was on more than one train on which the engine was reversed; I apprehended danger when I heard the whistle and knew we were approaching the draw.

Whitman E. Worthen, sworn, testified as follows—I reside in New York; I am a civil engineer; this morning I got out at Darien and got on the engine, to see how far the signal could be seen from the draw; as the signal came in sight, the engineer called my attention to it, and I noticed the place; I then kept my eye upon the signal until I lost sight of it; I then rode beyond the depot till I came in sight again; I then noted the point at which we lost the view of it; I got off the engine, went to the draw, measured by counting the rails, length of each rail being eighteen feet, and I found the distance as follows—It is 184 lengths of rail, or 3,312 feet from where the signal is first seen up to the draw; the signal is then in sight from that point, 1,314 feet; we then rode eight feet till we come to the crossing, which is 804 feet distant from the draw; it is then in view for a distance of 110 feet; you then come in sight of the signal and the bridge, at a distance of 664 feet from the bridge or draw; all this was measured by length of rail; the starting point is 300 feet from the draw; at this distance the signal is so plain that a man could not mistake it for anything else; the first object that obscures it in running the 1,300 feet, is a chimney of a white house; the rails being wet makes it difficult to stop a train; I think this fact would have no effect in making a train run off the track; if the signal had been observed at the crossing, he could have stepped the engine at a distance of 800 feet from the draw, if it had been going at the rate of ten miles the hour; I think it would be possible, after you came in sight of the draw, to stop the train if every brake was on; I think fifteen miles would be a safe rate of speed, turning the curve; I have had no experience in the running of an engine, I have been able to judge the distance at which a train could be stopped, from experiment, every brakeman being at his post.

Questioned by Mr. Whistler, Superintendent of the road. Q.—I want to know whether, from your experience, after the man had seen the signal 3,300 feet from the draw when it is first seen, that ball could be dropped and the draw moved out of place, or opened, before the train reached it.

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