

NINTH VICTIM OF THE NEWARK DISASTER DEAD

Another Girl Pupil of High School Succumbs to Injuries.

Trolley Company Official Charges That Steam Road Broke Agreement to Place Safety Device.

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NEWARK, N. J., Feb. 20.—The ninth victim was added to-day to the list of lives lost in the disaster of yesterday morning, when a trolley car, crowded with High School pupils, slipped down the grade on Clifton Avenue and out on the tracks of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, where, running into an express train, it was dashed to pieces. This latest death was that of Jennie Estelle McClelland, sixteen years old, of 315 South Orange Avenue, who had received concussion of the brain and other injuries.

It is expected that no other deaths will result from the accident, although Peter Brady, the motorman, is unconscious with a fractured skull, and Eugene Barcliffe, the engineer of the express, is in St. Michael's Hospital with many injuries. These two men are considered to have about an even chance of recovering. The remaining five injured at the hospitals are not considered dangerously hurt, although there are broken legs and arms among them.

The funerals of the girl victims of the disaster will begin to-morrow. Memorial services will be held in the High School on Tuesday, when it will be reopened, and a member of the Faculty will attend each funeral. Some business houses will close out of respect for the dead.

The determination to fix absolutely the responsibility for the disaster, which, it is believed, would have been avoided with the very smallest amount of care and expense, was voiced in no uncertain manner to-day by city officials and private citizens. A committee consisting of five well-known Newark residents appointed by the Board of Trade met this morning behind closed doors, after which they called on County Prosecutor Riker, and remained in consultation with him for some time. The committee arranged to meet again on Tuesday next with a view to perfecting its plan of action.

Prosecutor Riker already has obtained a mass of evidence which he is engaged in putting into shape. After a conference this afternoon with County Physician McKenzie, it was decided to order an inquest before Coroner W. C. Hellman at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning. This will be the first Coroner's inquest held in Newark in many years. The case of Ernestina P. Miller has been selected for the inquiry. The members of the jury chosen are George W. Howe, a manufacturer of East Orange; James A. Cue, merchant; August Goertz, manufacturer; Max Sachs, manufacturer; Franklin Conklin, manufacturer; John Bea, manufacturer; Abram Staats, retired; Fred Stoutenberg, merchant, and Thomas Oakes, manufacturer of Bloomfield.

Mr. Riker said that one of the important questions of the inquiry was whether or not sand was available on the wrecked car, and if it was, whether it had been used on the slippery rails.

"My detectives hurried to the scene of the accident soon after it occurred," said Mr. Riker, "and, although they examined the rails thoroughly, they failed to find any sign of sand."

A meeting having to do with the accident was held before the Board of Works this afternoon. Chairman Garrison presided, but the leading parts in the proceedings were taken by Mayor Doremus and City Attorney Young. Vice President David Young, Superintendent Charles M. Shipman, and Trackmaster A. W. Pratt of the North Jersey Street Railroad Company, and ex-Chief Engineer McFarland of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad appeared.

Mr. Young, for the trolley company, produced a contract signed in June, 1898, by Superintendent Reasoner of the railroad company, in which it was agreed to co-operate with the trolley company in installing at the Clifton Avenue crossing a derailing device, to be locked automatically by electricity from the block signals of the Lackawanna whenever a train approached within 1,200 feet of the crossing. That would make it impossible, according to Mr. Young, for a trolley car to go within seventy-five feet of the tracks at this crossing until a train had passed, when the rails could be switched into place again. Mr. Young further stated that such a system had been installed at the Bloomfield Avenue crossing of the Lackawanna and the trolley line, and had worked well since 1899. The switches for the system, Mr. Young continued, had been hauled to the Clifton Avenue crossing, but Chief Engineer McFarland had refused to co-operate with the trolley company, and the system never was installed. The useless switches finally were hauled away.

Mr. McFarland denied that he had ever heard of such an agreement, and said that the device described could not be operated successfully where there were trains passing every few minutes throughout the day.

"When a signal showing that a trolley car was approaching was seen by our engineers," said Mr. McFarland, "they would heed it were the signals made not too frequently. But where they were there every few minutes, as at Clifton Avenue, the engineers soon would disregard the signals. They would simply say: 'Oh, that's only a trolley car; it will be across before I get there.'"

"Do you mean to say that your engineers would deliberately disregard a danger signal?" exclaimed Mayor Doremus, in amazement.

"Well, human nature is human nature," was the reply. "I don't believe in making the danger signal too common."

It was finally decided by the board that the steam and trolley railroad officials should confer and report at the board meeting on Tuesday a plan for installing a derailing system at the crossing immediately.

When asked after the meeting regarding the statements that no evidence of sanding could be found on the rails on which the trolley car had slipped to destruction, Superintendent Shipman said:

"The forward part of the car was smashed to pieces, and I cannot say of my own knowledge whether there was any sand in the sandbox at that end or not, but I do know that the sandbox at the rear end of the car was two-thirds full of sand, for I myself filled my hat with sand from that box after the accident, to put on the rails to enable the assisting car to haul it away. All our sand is heat dried, and runs freely from the box. Furthermore, I want to contradict the report that the car was fitted only with a handbrake. It was fitted with an electric brake of the latest pattern. There is not the slightest doubt but what the wheels of that car were locked and that it slid along as would a sled. No brake could stop it. Furthermore we not only have sand in our cars, but in bad weather we have special men stationed at bad declivities like that at Clifton Avenue whose business it is to keep the tracks sanded. We had a man there yesterday morning, and there was sand on the tracks."

Asked the name of this man, Mr. Shipman referred questioners to Trackmaster Pratt. Mr. Pratt said he did not remember the man's name, and did not know where he could be found, but that there was a man there with sand.

Vice President Young, in regard to the charge that there was overcrowding in the company's cars, said that the car following behind the car that was wrecked had not half a load of passengers.

"School children, and especially school girls," said Mr. Young, "are notoriously fond of going in crowds, and they all try to get on the same car. We run cars on two minutes' headway for them during school hours. But the overcrowding of the car did not cause this accident. The car weighed 30,000 pounds, and if it were full the added weight of the passengers would have had no effect, except perhaps on a very heavy grade. The grade at Clifton Avenue is not very heavy."

George M. Gould, the conductor on the trolley car, was released on \$2,000 bail this morning to await the action of the Grand Jury.