

WITNESSES HEARD ON PUTNAM WRECK

Coroner Bill Starts Inquiry —Conductor Asked to Explain Running Order.

(Special to The Courant.)

Putnam, April 24.

Coroner Arthur G. Bill of Danielson began his investigation of the railroad wreck, which occurred at Pomfret on the morning of April 10, in the superior court room this morning. The witnesses examined included Engineer Herbert Cook of the first engine on train A. B. 4 which ran into the special 3200, whose testimony was taken at the Day Kimball Hospital; Edward B. Lloyd, fireman on the second engine of A. B. 4; Joseph Hutter, fireman on Extra 3200; William J. Daniels, engineer on Extra 3200 and Leo Pritchard, conductor of A. B. 4.

Testimony developed that the extra left Willimantic about 1 o'clock. That its normal running time was fifteen miles an hour. That between Willimantic and Putnam there was no telegraph stations open nights and no block system in use. That the train stopped twice before getting to North Windham because the automatic stoker failed to work. The first stop was twenty minutes and the second ten minutes. That the stoker worked allright after the second stop. That about an hour was lost on the run.

That A. B. 4 left Willimantic at 2:05 and knew that there was another train ahead as it was operating under a closed order that there was another train in the block. That according to Engineer Cook, while there was nothing unusual to obstruct the view ahead on the night in question it was impossible on account of physical characteristics to see the train ahead and that he did not see it until within seven car lengths. It was estimated by the conductor of A. B. 4 that the train was running twenty to twenty-five miles an hour when the brakes were applied after the engineer saw the train ahead. Before that, brakes had been applied and between Abington and Pomfret the train was running at less than fifteen miles but it speeded up near Pomfret station to make the grade.

Coroner Bill stated that there were several more witnesses to be heard and that they could come to his office in Danielson any time this week.

The only person present at the hearing except the witnesses was J. G. Wilmot, claim adjuster of the "New Haven" road.

Conductor Pritchard was asked to explain the order he was running on. The conductor said it was a "close in" order with a caution card to his train that there was another train ahead in the block. In this instance the block was twenty-five miles, from Willimantic to Putnam. He said, in reply to a question, that it was customary when there are two engines pulling a train, for the engineers to arrange signals and that generally one whistle is blown by the first engine when an unexpected stop is to be made. He said that the engineer of the first engine controlled the stopping of the train.