

Flashlight Signalling

A SYSTEM IN PRACTICE IN SWEDEN WHEREBY SPECIAL SIGNALS ARE UNMISTAKABLY IDENTIFIED BY ENGINE-DRIVERS



ALTHOUGH the British railway signalling system is conceded to be as near perfection as is humanly possible, and certainly is superior to that found in any other part of the world, whether considered from the points of efficiency, simplicity, or reliability, it is admitted that modern railway conditions demand improvements to safeguard high speed travelling at night. Railway signalling engineers admit this necessity, but the searching question is as to how it can be consummated to the best advantage.

In the British night signalling system the driver is dependent upon the character of one of two lights. Red denotes "danger"; green indicates "line clear." In some countries a third light, violet, is introduced to convey a different intimation, while in other instances the "line clear" is shown by a white light. The latter labours under one serious objection. A white light may be shown when the red disc of the spectacle glass is broken. In that event, the driver would be correct in surmising that everything was all right, and if an accident ensued he could not be blamed. Upon the British railways if a driver saw a white light shown by a signal, he would pull up, whether the line was clear or otherwise, as he would know that something was amiss with the signal. Another disadvantage of the white light is that in busy centres it is apt to be confused with lights which have nothing to do with the railway.

But when one recalls the vast array of signals which are displayed to guard busy junction, one will realise that the selec-

tion of his particular signal light is by no means an easy task for the driver. The issue becomes complicated when running round a curve, since as the junction is approached the signal lights may change their relative positions. For instance, a signal which the driver picks out as his own may be seen to the extreme right of the others when entering the curve, but when the latter has been rounded it may have shifted its position to the extreme left.

Again, one must remember that on the



A DISTANT SIGNAL ON THE DANISH STATE RAILWAY, FITTED WITH THE AGA FLASHING LIGHT.