

Safety on Railways.

Q. I mean from anything you have heard. I know there are very few accidents on your road.—A. We read of accidents occurring that way.

Q. Were you at St. Thomas when the London and Port Stanley train met with the accident there? Was it not caused by the failure of the air brakes to work?—A. It was supposed to have been caused by the engineer and conductor not testing the air brakes.

Q. Was it not given in evidence that they tested them and yet that they failed to work?—A. Well, it was so stated.

Q. But you don't believe they tested them?—A. I don't believe they tested the air brakes at all.

Q. Do you believe that if tested before starting it is a sufficient protection?—A. Yes. Our mode is that the conductor tests from the rear end of the train. The middle and rear brakemen take their places in the centre, and the head brakeman at the head of a train, and when released at the rear, it is followed right through the centre and head to the engine. The brakes are tested two or three times. The engineer can readily see if the air is passing through by the gauge on his engine.

Q. How often are they tested?—A. At every division point where we make up trains.

Q. How far apart are they?—A. From 110 to 115 miles, and we also test every time we cut trains in or out.

Q. You use the Westinghouse air brake?—A. Yes.

Q. Is it impossible for it to get out of order between the test points?—A. No; for the smallest leak in any part would cause a leakage of air which would stop the train gradually, and if the hose broke it would stop the train instantaneously in so many car lengths, according to the speed the train was going at.

Q. Is it not possible for it to get out of order by the cock shutting?—A. No; for if the air brakes work on five cars, but not on the sixth, there is something wrong with the sixth. We have a rule that we throw straight air through that to the next and we could always tell if the brakes would not take effect back of this car.

Q. You would not know till you tried the brakes whether they were working?—A. We would know when we tested them.

Q. But suppose your train between stations, say between London and St. Thomas, might not something have occurred in that 44 miles to put the brakes out of order without the engineer's knowledge?—A. I don't know of any such case.

Q. Can't you imagine?—A. No.

Q. Could not a tramp get in and put the brakes out of order?—A. No; for the reason that the air cock is well back under the buffer, and when open it is in line with the train pipe. I don't think that anything could hit it and knock it out of order. It could not be hit by a tramp or anything else. In the first place, a tramp could not get down between the draw-heads and reach around to get hold of the cock as he would put himself in danger of being squeezed by the draw-heads. In that case (between stations) our rule is, and it is always observed to test the air every half mile after leaving stations. As the speed is often from 15 to 20 miles an hour the engineer could tell by his air gauge if the brakes were all right. I have never known an engineer fail to do this.

Q. Now we come to box freight cars. I want to ask your reasons for suggesting the change mentioned in your statement?—A. Well, you say in that bill, "all box cars." There are many other kinds of cars, such as stock cars, refrigerator cars, furniture cars, and there are those refrigerator cars which are built very high for the purpose of carrying meat in halves through Canada and from the point of slaughter to tide-water.

Q. Then your object in making this amendment is to leave the size of the ordinary freight cars as provided by the Master Car Builders' Association, and allow other cars to be used of all heights, as needed?—A. That is the idea, because the large commodities we carry have to be arranged for. You have seen in furniture cars, for instance, large bedsteads that cannot be thrown down.

Q. I don't think I have ever seen such big bedsteads.—A. I have seen them eight feet. We have had them with us that they could not get them into the car easily.