

# BLAME NOT PLACED FOR BIG WRECK

## Coroner's Jury Returns Verdict at Moncks Corner Regarding Deaths of Railroad Men

### HEARING IS COMPLETED

#### Engineers and Firemen Are Killed When Trains Crash

in Head-on Collision

on December 24

Moncks Corner, Jan. 5.—Special: Blame for the death of Engineers H. T. Parrish and J. E. Cummings, and Firemen C. A. Baxter and W. R. Williams which resulted from the collision of two Atlantic Coast Line trains on the morning of December 24, about two miles south of Moncks Corner was not placed by the jury which resumed the inquest here this afternoon before Acting Coroner H. W. Harvey, Jr., in the office of Octavus Cohen.

After a hearing which lasted for more than two hours the jury brought in the following verdict after being out but a few minutes:

"That the said H. T. Parrish, J. E. Cummings, C. A. Baxter and W. R. Williams came to their death by a head-on collision at Jones' Mill about two miles south of Moncks Corner, S. C., between train No. 85 and Train No. 76 operated by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company on the morning of December 24, 1925."

The State was represented by Mayor Thomas P. Stoney, of Charleston, who conducted the examination of all witnesses and went into detail as to the cause of the collision which resulted in the death of the four men and the injuring of many others. Mayor Stoney was requested to represent the State by Solicitor A. J. Hydrick, of Orangeburg, solicitor of the first circuit.

#### Points Brought Out.

It was brought out in the testimony that train No. 85 ran by a stop signal at Moncks Corner and crashed head-on with north-bound train No. 76 which had a right of way from Ashley Junction to Moncks Corner on the south-bound track, the south-bound track being used for trains going in both directions because of a freight train wreck on the north-bound track about where the collision occurred.

It was also brought out in the testimony that the train crew of No. 85 had not been notified a wreck had occurred on the north-bound track and that any north-bound train was being detoured over the south-bound track.

According to the testimony it was also brought out that no other means than the red semaphore light was used to stop train No. 85 at Moncks Corner which is a day station and Mayor Stoney asked several of the witnesses if it were not true that the regulations of the company required extraordinary precaution when orders were issued from a day station which had been opened at night in case of an emergency? They replied in the affirmative.

Those testifying at the inquest were L. E. Carn, train dispatcher at Charleston on duty at the time of the wreck; H. W. Lathrop, conductor on train No. 85; K. N. McTeer, station agent at Moncks Corner; J. W. Edgerton, conductor of train No. 76; William Folk, signal maintenance man at Moncks Corner; W. W. Willingham, section master; F. A. Miller, student operator, and H. G. Gorse, night watchman at a barrel factory at Moncks Corner.

Following is the personnel of the coroner's jury: J. Russell Williams, foreman; James H. Harvey, C. A. Jones, W. E. Bates, R. D. Guilds and G. E. McCormick.

Russell McGowan and J. D. E. Meyer, of Charleston, assisted Mayor Stoney while Simeon Hyde represented the Atlantic Coast Line. Mr. Hyde made objections to many of the questions asked by Mayor Stoney but his objections were overruled by Acting Coroner Harvey and the examination continued.

#### Mr. Carn on Stand.

Mr. Carn, train dispatcher, was the first witness called and said he reported for duty at Charleston at midnight of December 23 and that Mr. Miller was on duty at Moncks Corner, Mr. Carn's predecessor having had the office there, held open on account of the freight wreck. This was Mr. Miller's first time on duty, he said. Usually the Moncks Corner operator goes off duty about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Carn stated.

Mr. Carn testified as to giving orders for northbound train No. 76 to have the right of way as far as Moncks Corner on the southbound track, when it was due to switch on to the northbound track again.

Mr. Carn said he talked with Mr. McTeer at Moncks Corner about 5:30 o'clock and asked him to examine the semaphore and to see if the red light was burning. He admitted that no orders regarding the stopping of No. 85 at Moncks Corner had been issued at Lanes or other stations, nor had notice been given to the crew there of a wreck on the northbound track. No other order than the red semaphore at Moncks Corner was issued as to the stopping of train No. 85, the dispatcher testified.

He talked with Mr. McTeer, who told him that No. 85 had failed to stop and a few minutes later he knew the trains had collided when the wires went down. As soon as the wires broke the office at Charleston called the hospital and had aid sent to the scene of the wreck.

Mr. Carn testified he told Parrish of No. 76 of the freight wreck and gave him the right