

## Letters to the Editor

### Slow Speed vs. Restricted Speed

TO THE EDITOR:

The standard code of train rules (including the interlocking and signal rules) is under revision and it is but fitting and proper that those interested in signaling should give earnest consideration to the signal aspects and to the indications.

Some 30 years ago the code permitted a combination of aspects, we had one, two and three arm signals; all displaying red lights at night. These signals operating in but two positions could indicate only stop, and/or proceed, so that if it were desired to indicate the position of the signal in advance it was not uncommon to find a four-arm signal, the top being a home arm, the second a distant arm, the third a home and the lowest a distant.

To reduce the multiplicity of arms, indicators were resorted to so that at times one would observe a single arm signal with a number of indicators which would display the route set up with the signal in the clear position. This sort of signaling at the time was termed route signaling. Originally the top arm governed to the route farthest to the right, the next arm to the track next farthest and so on until there were no more arms, or, in the case of indicators, until there were no more indicators.

That system of signaling had its fault as a train proceeding on the route straight ahead would at one interlocking receive the top arm, at another the second arm and, perhaps, at another the third arm. This fault was recognized and eventually the system of signaling was changed so that at all interlockings the top arm governed the main route.

The present code is based upon speed signaling. Where but one route is involved there can be but one speed, not considering physical conditions, nor a movement which, at slow speed, can be made under a second arm, sometimes designated as a calling-on arm, so that all that is required is a single arm indicating proceed at normal speed.

Where we have two routes, the second ordinarily is a slow speed one, and two arms are required, the top governing to the high speed track, trains proceeding at normal speed and the bottom to the slow speed track and indicating "Proceed at slow speed prepared to stop short of train or obstruction."

This now brings us to a four track system where movements are made at normal speed in both directions on two adjacent tracks; for classification we will say eastward on tracks one and two and westward on tracks three and four. At interlockings on such a road crossovers are usually provided which will permit train movements at medium or restricted speed to be made eastward from track 1 to 2 or 2 to 1 and westward from track 3 to 4 or 4 to 3. Such movements heretofore have been termed restricted speed movements, the permissible miles per hour being specified in the time tables.

To provide for such restricted speed movement, an arm giving the indication "Proceed at restricted speed" must be had, so this brings us to the three-arm signal, the top arm indicating "Proceed at normal speed," the second "Proceed at restricted speed,"

and the third "Proceed at slow speed prepared to stop. Proceed at restricted speed has never been defined, neither has slow speed, except in the indication "Proceed at slow speed prepared to stop short of train or obstruction."

There seems to be a tendency to confuse slow speed and restricted speed and it has even been suggested that the definition of restricted speed be "Proceed at a speed prepared to stop short of train or obstruction." If such a definition is adopted roads now using the second arm for restricted speed movement will have to coin some term, possibly "medium speed."

Personally, I can see no good reason for the proposed change. Normal, restricted, and slow speeds are all that are required except that perhaps we may want to differentiate as between proceed at slow speed, and proceed at slow speed prepared to stop. If a definition is desired, let us define slow speed but leave restricted speed entirely alone.

Cleveland, Ohio.

F. B. WIEGAND,

Signal Engineer, New York Central, Lines West.

### Sudden Ravings

(Based on a more or less truthful Episode)

IN the early morn he shambled out to my stuccoed shack, asked if people ever gambled, on a second handed hack; Said "Jones had a car that rambled, like a racer on the track." With about three hundred berries, he could grab this speedy can; park at home the office worries, of a plodding inside man and go past the Jims and Jerries, in the Sunday Caravan.

So he coaxed me up the alley, to view this wondrous bus, said "I should sort o'tally" the things that Jones told us, and we picked up Tim O'Malley (a jovial Irish cuss). The car was deeply rooted, in an ancient white washed shed, where it recently recruited, a brush-marked coat of red and Jones steamed up and tooted "She has been a faithful sled." Then he stuck a chicken feather, in the moto-meter neat, next he bragged about the leather that covered up the seat and he said "in any weather, she will just burn up the street . . . So we backed her in the alley, with me sittin' at the wheel.

She wheezed and coughed and grunted, when I kicked the starter in and when in first I shunted, new rattles did begin and O'Malley said "You hunted—out a dam fine piece of tin." In a manner democratic, we ambled up the street, the Chassis was rheumatic and the car had gouty feet, while every noise but static echoed upwards from the seat. "Its a job that can be trusted" said Jones in accents wild. "She is sort o'set and rusted, but she'll loose up after while." "Oh I see the pump is busted" said O'Malley with a smile—"and the front wheel's get the wobbles: one headlight needs a glass, and the carburetor squabbles, when the 'mixture' tries to pass and that engine surely gobbles—she's a regular hog for gas. If she heats up any hotter, we'll get new and fancy squeaks, I see trickling streams of water, like little bubbly creeks—I have tried a piece of blotter, when my radiator leaks."

Then Jones hit Tim O'Malley, two wallops in the eye and before poor Tim could rally, other punches did apply; so we left them in the alley and decided not to buy. Later on he homeward shambled, from my little stuccoed shack, feeling glad he hadn't gambled, on a second handed hack and the junk that one time rambled, has one corner on a jack. This goes to show that kiddin', must have that finer touch, when we dig up things that's hidden and elaborate too much, otherwise we get to skiddin' and walk home with a crutch. W. H. F.