

ENGINEER BACKED IN TRAIN TRAGEDY

Penn Central Says He Had
Cut Speed Before Killing 2

A spokesman for the Penn Central Railroad said yesterday that the train that killed two persons and injured five others who were in a crowd waiting on the tracks in Elizabeth, N. J., to view the Robert F. Kennedy funeral train Saturday was traveling at reduced speed of about 30 miles an hour.

David E. Smucker, vice president in charge of operations for the Penn Central, said that in addition to coming in at reduced speed, the motorman kept sounding the locomotive horn and the train bell to warn the crowd of his approach.

The company statement was made in Philadelphia in response to report that the train had been traveling at high speed. Mayor Thomas G. Dunn of Elizabeth had said Saturday that in view of the crowds it had been absurd "to send a train at such speed."

The Mayor was not available last night for comment on Mr. Smucker's statement.

Train Came From Chicago

The train that struck the seven persons was "The Admiral," en route to New York from Chicago. It was moving in the opposite direction from the Kennedy train, which was going to Washington.

Mr. Smucker said that the railroad and the police at all stations along the New York-to-Washington route had in effect "maximum security procedures used when trains carry the President and other high officials."

Discussing the precautionary measures he said had been taken by the railroad, Mr. Smucker declared that "he [the engineer] had been cautioned by two-way radio by a control tower operator when his train was more than a mile from the Elizabeth station."

"The engineer was advised that the Kennedy funeral train was approaching and that the areas beside the tracks at Elizabeth were crowded," Mr. Smucker said.

"In response, he had reduced the speed with which he proceeded around the S-curve from the allowable rate of 55 miles per hour to approximately 30 miles per hour, and he was re-

peatedly sounding the locomotive horn and the train bell. The locomotive light also was on.

Tried to Stop Train

"The engineer told the railroad officials that he began applying more brake pressure as he came out of the curve and saw that people had surged out on the two northbound

tracks in order to get closer to the southbound funeral train.

"He said he immediately applied full emergency when he saw the people crossing the tracks in order to get back to the platform on the northbound side of the station. The train was coming to a halt when it struck the people, who because

of the press of the crowd, apparently could not get out of the way."

Mr. Smucker said the brakes of the four cars and the locomotive had been tested when the train arrived in New York and were found to be "in excellent working condition."