

Death Truck's Hand Brake Found Useless

The emergency brake of the Aero Mayflower moving van which killed seven persons last week was useless, State investigators learned yesterday.

Thus, investigations disclosed, the van may have been without two of its three braking facilities, for it was earlier established that a section of air hose leading to a rear wheel drive was broken, possibly before the huge truck catapulted uncontrolled down Clay Street.

The third braking system was on the van.

This is part of the testimony which is expected to be given today at an inquest into the tragedy.

BRAKE INOPERATIVE.

Andrew Brozik, an inspector for the State industrial safety division, disclosed yesterday that the fifteen and one half ton truck was without its hand emergency brake.

"At least it was not operative," said Brozik. "There was virtually no brake band, and a nut on the brake band was missing."

While experts have said that no brake or combination of brakes could have halted the huge truck-trailer once it reached high speed on the steep grade, an emergency brake may have been of help in the early stages of its rush.

Brozik said the section of air hose, which was found to be well worn in one spot, was tested by experts.

"It would not hold air," he said.

"This certainly could have been a major cause of the accident," Brozik added.

Asked if the braking equipment was old, he commented:

"It apparently wasn't maintained."

WITNESS SCHEDULED.

Brozik is one of a dozen or more witnesses scheduled to be examined by Coroner Henry Turkel at the 9:15 a. m. inquest.

Others include:

Patrolmen John O'Conner, John Daly and Walter Yarnell, who investigated the worst crash in San Francisco traffic history; Homicide Inspector Al Nelder, Tony Marez, 95 Fountain Street, and Richard Hill, Oakland, teamsters who first noticed that the truck apparently was losing air from its brakes; State Nar-

cotics Inspector John Lennon, whose auto was almost struck by the truck on Clay Street.

Harold Smythe, PG&E, a witness; Howard Gaston, a safety expert for the Interstate Commerce Commission; Robert L. Munson, safety expert for the State public utilities commission, and Curtis L. Fent, Municipal Railway safety division.

Wayne De Wolfe, a trucker who was riding in the ill-fated truck with driver William McCandless, and who leaped to safety, already has given his testimony. McCandless stayed with the truck striving to halt it, and was burned to death. Six pedestrians were killed.