INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2531

THE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

AT HOLLY, LA., ON

SEPTEMBER 28, 1941

SUMMARY

Railroad:	Kansas City Southern		
Date:	September 28, 1941		
Location:	Holly, La.		
Kind of accident:	Side collision		
Trains involved:	Freight	:	Passenger
Train numbers:	Extra 751 North	:	15
Engine numbers:	751	:	802
Consist:	55 cars, caboose	:	6 cars
Estimated speed:	5-6 m. p. h.	:	30-40 m. p. h.
Operation:	Timetable and train orders		
Track:	Single; tangent; 0.67 percent descending grade southward		
Weather:	Clear		
Time:	2:37 p. m.		
Casualties:	11 injured		
Cause:	Accident caused by failure to obey a wait order		
Recommendation:	That the Kansas City Southern Railway Company establish an adequate block system on the line involved in this accident		

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2531

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 6, 1910.

THE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

November 18, 1941.

Accident at Holly, La., on September 28, 1941, caused by failure to obey a wait order.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION[1]

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On September 28, 1941, there was a side collision between a freight train and a passenger train on the Kansas City Southern Railway at Holly, La., which resulted in the injury of eight passengers, one employee off duty, and two train-service employees.

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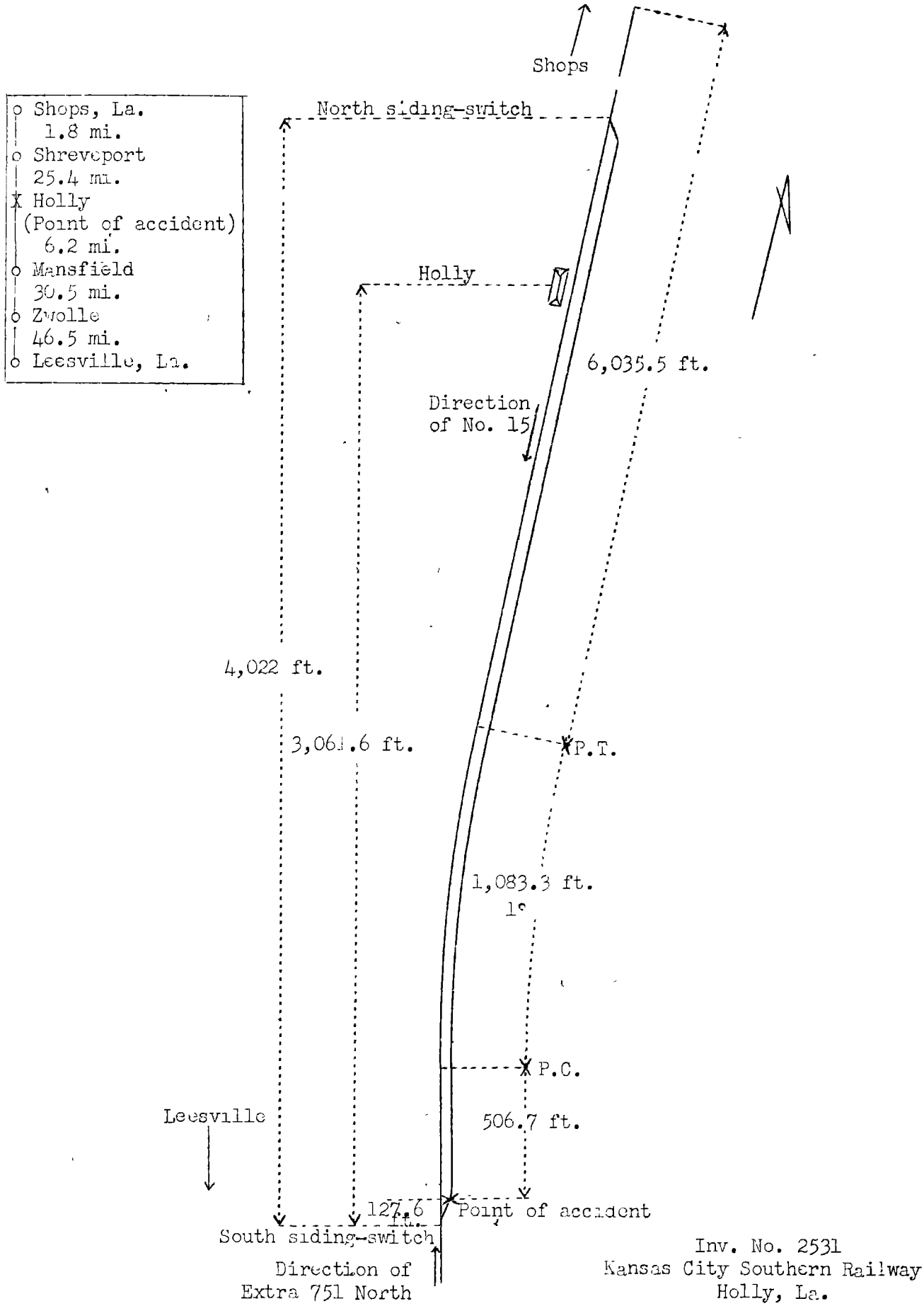
[1]Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and disposition.



Inv. No. 2531
Kansas City Southern Railway
Holly, La.
September 28, 1941.

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Southern Division designated as the Sixth District, which extends between Shops and Leesville, La., a distance of 110.4 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders; there is no block system in use. At Holly a siding 4,022 feet in length parallels the main track on the east; its south switch is 3,061.6 feet south of the station. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 126.6 feet north of the south siding-switch, at the fouling point of the turnout. As the point of accident is approached from the south there is a tangent a distance of about 2 miles to the point where the accident occurred. As the point of accident is approached from the north there are, in succession, a tangent 6,035.5 feet in length, a 1° curve to the right 1,083.3 feet, and a tangent 506.7 feet to the point of accident. The grade for south-bound trains varies between 0.26 percent and 0.67 percent descending a distance of 1.69 miles and is 0.67 percent at the point of accident.

On the curve north of the point where the accident occurred the track is laid in a cut. The walls of this cut rise to a height of about 10 feet. On top of the west wall there is a grove of trees.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

14. Engine and Motor Whistle Signals.

Note.-The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "___" for longer sounds. * * *

SOUND	INDICATION
* * *	* * *
(m) ___	Approaching stations, * * *.
(n) ___ ___ o	Approaching meeting or passing points and as prescribed by Rule 36.
* * *	* * *

16. COMMUNICATING SIGNALS

SOUND	INDICATION
* * *	* * *
(j) Two long followed by one short sound.	Approaching meeting or passing points and as prescribed by Rule 36.
* * *	* * *

36. The engineman will give signal 14 (n) immediately after the station whistle before reaching * * * a point where by train order the train is to meet or wait for a train. On a train equipped with communicating signals the conductor will give signal 16 (j) at least one mile before reaching such a point. Should engineman fail to give signal 14 (n) as above prescribed, immediate steps must be taken to stop the train.

87. * * *

Extra trains must clear the time of opposing regular trains not less than five minutes unless otherwise provided, * * *

90. * * *

Trains must stop clear of the switch used by the train to be met in going on the siding.

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

* * *

Form E. Time Orders.

* * *

EXAMPLES

* * *

(3) No 1 eng 603 wait at "H" until 10 05 a m for No 2 eng 602

* * *

* * *

Under (3), the train first named must not pass the designated point before the time given, unless the other train has arrived. * * *

In the vicinity of the point of accident the maximum authorized speed for passenger trains is 50 miles per hour, and for freight trains, 30 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 751 North, a north-bound freight train, consisted of engine 751, of the 2-8-8-0 type, 1 auxiliary water car, 37 loaded and 17 empty cars and a caboose. This train departed from Leesville, 83.2 miles south of Holly, at 9:05 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains. At Zwolle, 36.7 miles south of Holly, the crew received copies of train order No. 47, Form 19, reading as follows:

No 15 Eng 802 wait at Holly until 2 45 pm
Mansfield until 2 57 pm for Extra 751 North

This train departed from Zwolle at 1:05 p. m., passed Mansfield, 6.2 miles south of Holly and the last open office, at 2:24 p. m., and when it was entering the south siding-switch at Holly and moving at a speed estimated as 5 or 6 miles per hour the engine was struck by No. 15.

No. 15, a south-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 802, one baggage-express car, one mail-baggage-express car, three coaches and one dining-lounge car, in the order named. The first four cars were of steel underframe construction and had wooden superstructures covered with steel sheathing; the last two cars were of all-steel construction. At Shreveport, 25.4 miles north of Holly, the crew received, among others, copies of train order No. 47, Form 19, previously quoted. After an air-brake test which consisted only of observing the application and release of the brake on the rear car, this train departed from Shreveport Union Depot at 1:54 p. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, 24 minutes late. Soon afterward a running test of the brakes was made, and the brakes controlled the speed properly at all points where used en route. This train passed the fouling point of the south siding-switch at Holly, where it was required to wait until 2:45 p. m. unless Extra 751 North was in the clear on the siding, and while moving at a speed estimated as 30 or 40 miles per hour it collided with Extra 751 North at the fouling point of this switch.

Because of the cut, the track curvature and trees on the embankment, the view of the point of accident from the right side of a south-bound engine was restricted to a distance of 1,500 feet.

Engine 751 and its tender, remaining coupled, were derailed and stopped on their right sides east of the turnout, with the front end of the engine 13 feet north of the point of accident. The left side of the engine was badly damaged. The low-pressure cylinder on the left side was broken, the high-pressure cylinder and the valve chamber were broken off and the cab was crushed. The tender frame was broken and the cistern was punctured. The auxiliary water car was demolished. The front end of the second car was crushed inward. Engine 802 and its tender, remaining coupled, were derailed to the west and stopped on their right sides. The front end of the engine was 167 feet south of the point of accident and 56 feet west of the center-line of the main track and the rear end was 29 feet west of the center-line of the track. The left end of the pilot beam, the left cylinder and the valve chamber were broken off. The cab was badly damaged. The front and rear ends of the tender frame were broken. The first car was derailed to the west and stopped, badly damaged, at an angle of 35 degrees to the main track and leaned against the rear end of the tender at an angle of 45 degrees. The second car was derailed to the west, remained upright, and stopped, slightly damaged, with the front end about 15 feet west of the main track and the rear end on the track structure.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 2:37 p. m.

The employees injured were the engineer and the fireman of No. 15.

Data

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 8.53 trains.

Discussion

The crew of No. 15, a south-bound first-class train, and the crew of Extra 751 North held copies of a train order which required No. 15 to wait at the south siding-switch at Holly until 2:45 p. m. for Extra 751. All members of both crews understood the provisions of this order. Extra 751 was required to be into clear at Holly not later than 2:40 p. m. This train

arrived at the south siding-switch at 2:35 p. m., then started to enter the siding. The speed was about 6 miles per hour and the engine was on the turnout when it was struck by the engine of No. 15 at 2:37 p. m.

All members of the crew of No. 15 had read train order No. 47 and understood that their train was required not to pass the fouling point at the south siding-switch before 2:45 p. m., unless Extra 751 was into clear on the siding. According to the statement of the engineer of No. 15, as his train was approaching Holly, because of a truck closely approaching a highway crossing at grade, he made a brake-pipe reduction and then released. He sounded the station whistle-signal but did not sound the meeting-point whistle-signal. As his train was approaching the south siding-switch the speed was about 50 miles per hour, the throttle was open, and the fireman and he were maintaining a lookout ahead. The first he knew of anything being wrong was when he observed, from a distance of about 1,400 feet, Extra 751 entering the south siding-switch. He immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position and closed the throttle, but the distance was not sufficient for stopping short of the fouling point. He said that he forgot the requirements of train order No. 47. He did not hear the meeting-point signal sounded on the train air-signal whistle; if it had been sounded he would have been reminded of the wait order. The fireman said that he failed to observe the time; therefore, he did not caution the engineer concerning the requirements of the wait order. The conductor said he did not sound the meeting-point signal on the train air-signal system. North of the station at Holly he felt the brakes being applied and thought the engineer was taking action to stop short of the fouling point. He was busy with clerical duties and failed to observe if Extra 751 was on the siding, or if his train was being operated prepared to stop. The flagman heard the engine whistle being sounded north of the station at Holly and thought the meeting-point signal was being sounded. He did not sound the meeting-point signal on the train air-signal nor did he inquire if the conductor had done so. The flagman said that he did not operate the train air-signal unless he was instructed by the conductor to do so. No member of the crew on No. 15 had been on duty more than 1 hour 42 minutes when the accident occurred. If any member of this crew had not depended on the other members to comply with the provisions of the wait order, this accident could have been averted.

A trainmaster was in the rear car of No. 15 but he had not read the train orders, nor questioned any member of the crew concerning orders held by them. He said that it was not customary on his part to read train orders held by crews of trains on which he was riding. If the trainmaster had informed himself concerning the requirements of the orders held by the crew

of No. 15 and had taken proper action he could have prevented the accident.

The investigation disclosed that after the train was assembled and the engine and the crews were changed at Shreveport a proper train-brake test was not conducted. The test made was only to determine if the brake on the rear car applied and released; however, there was no evidence that the brakes did not function properly.

On the line involved trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. If an adequate block system had been in use on this line, this accident would not have occurred. On August 18, 41 days before the occurrence of the accident here under discussion, there was a rear-end collision between a freight train and a passenger train on this line at Shoreline, La., about 52 miles north of Holly. In order to prevent a recurrence of a similar accident, the Commission's report covering that accident carried a recommendation that this carrier establish an adequate block-signal system, and submit to the Commission for approval rules and instructions for the proper maintenance and operation of such block-signal system. During this 41-day period no action was taken by the carrier to provide additional protection for operating its trains under the timetable and train-order method of operation. The circumstances under which these accidents occurred require immediate corrective action.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey a wait order.

Recommendation

That the Kansas City Southern Railway Company establish an adequate block-signal system on the line involved in this accident. An order to show cause why it should not do so will be served on said carrier.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this eighteenth day of November, 1941.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.