

May 27, 1915.

~~April 28, 1941~~

No. 267

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED
ON THE LAKE SHORE ELECTRIC RAILWAY,
NEAR FREMONT, OHIO, ON
APRIL 29, 1915.

On April 29, 1915, there was a head-end collision on the Lake Shore Electric Railway near Fremont, Ohio, which resulted in the injury of 33 passengers and 4 employees. After investigation of this accident the Chief of the Division of Safety reports as follows:

The trains involved in this accident were east-bound train No. 110 and westbound train No. 211, each consisting of 1 motor passenger car. Westbound train No. 211 was en route from Norwalk, Ohio, to Toledo, Ohio, in charge of Conductor Trueman and Motorman Kaiser. It left Norwalk at 2:15 p.m., 23 minutes late, and on reaching Monroeville, about 5 miles distant, the crew in charge received a copy of train order No. 35, reading as follows:

"To C.& M. train 211 at Monroeville.
Train 211, motor 144 will meet
train 1st and 2nd 12, motor 32 and 20 at Youngs,
train 110, motor Unk at Flora."

This order was made complete at 2:15 p.m., having been signed for by the agent at Monroeville. After receiving this order from the agent at that point, train No. 211 proceeded and at 2:58 p.m. collided with eastbound train No. 110 at a point 1.4 miles east of Flora, the speed at the time of the collision being estimated to have been 20 miles per hour, having been reduced from 40 or 45 miles per hour.

Eastbound train No. 110 was in charge of Conductor Weyle and Motorman Sandwisch and was en route from Fremont to Norwalk. It left Fremont at 2.40 p.m., on time, and on reaching Fifth Street received a copy of train order No. 35, reading as follows:

"To C. & M. train 110-210 at Fifth Street.
Train 211, motor 144 will meet
train 110, motor 142 at Flory's
train 210, motor 151 at Sandy Junction.

After receiving this order, the train proceeded toward Flora, butpassed that point without stopping and collided with train No. 211 a short distance beyond. The speed of this train prior to the accident had been in the neighborhood of 40 miles per hour, while witnesses disagree as to whether or not it had stopped when the collision occurred, some saying that it had, while others claimed that it was moving at the rate of 10 or 12 miles per hour.

The cars did not telescope but both vestibules were badly crushed. Immediately following the collision the electric wires in the cars became short circuited and set the cars on fire, both being burned.

This part of the Lake Shore Electric Railway is a single track electric line. No block signal system is in use, trains being operated by train orders and time-card rights, train dispatching being done by telephone. Machines containing train order blanks are located in the various telephone booths where train orders are received by trainmen.

The conductor receives and writes the train order and reads it to the dispatcher, by whom it is made complete, the conductor then removing two copies of the order, leaving a third copy in the machine. He then repeats the order to the motorman and delivers a copy to him. At points where agents are stationed the orders are signed for by the agent and by him delivered to the conductor of the train to whom the order is addressed.

The accident occurred on straight track, 235 feet east of a curve of 1 degree 36 minutes, slightly over 100 feet in length. The poles carrying the electric feed wires are on the inside of this curve and materially obscure the vision. Approaching the point of accident from the east the vision is limited to about 800 feet, while from the opposite direction the view is limited to about 1100 feet. The weather was clear.

Motorman Sandwich, of train No. 110, stated that at the stop at Fifth Street, in Fremont, Conductor Weyle gave him a copy of train order No. 35, directing his train to meet train No. 211 at Flora. The conductor read the order to him and he fully understood its contents. Motorman Sandwich stated that he ran his train past Flora, the meeting point with train No. 211 named in the order, admitting that he entirely overlooked train order No. 35. When he first saw train No. 211 approaching, it was about 1,100 feet

distant and he at once applied the air brakes and reversed the power, and stated that he had brought the train to a stop before the collision occurred.

Conductor Weyle stated that before Flora was reached his attention was occupied in collecting fares and explaining various matters to passengers, and when he realized where the train was, it had passed Flora. He at once thought of stopping the car, but about that time the motorman applied the air brakes and on looking ahead, he saw train No. 211 approaching. Prior to this the speed of the train had been from 40 to 45 miles per hour and he stated that the train had been brought to a stop when the collision occurred.

At the time of the accident several employees were deadheading on train No. 110 and they stated that when the collision occurred the train was moving at a speed of about 10 or 12 miles per hour.

This accident was caused by the failure of the conductor and motorman of train No. 110 to obey and be governed by train order No. 35, resulting in their running their train past Flora, the meeting point with train No. 211. Both of the employees at fault had had many years experience, both in steam and electric service. At the time of the accident they had been on duty about 7½ hours, after a period off duty of more than 12 hours.

In several previous accident investigation reports, attention has been called to the dangers attendant upon the operation of trains under the train order system. The advantages of the block signal system over the train order system are universally recognized, and while the block system in itself is not perfect, yet if properly installed and operated, it affords much less opportunity for the occurrence of errors which may result in such accidents as this.