

HE

17.6

A-11

11.1

11.1

U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission.

Investigation of an accident on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad at Dividing Ridge, Ky., on May 6, 1924.

1051

1051

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN RE
INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE
LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE RAILROAD AT DIVIDING RIDGE,
KY., ON MAY 6, 1924.

May 23, 1924

To the Commission.

On May 6, 1924, there was a side collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad at Dividing Ridge, Ky., resulting in the death of 1 employee, and the injury of 39 passengers, 1 express messenger and 1 employee.

Location and method of operation.

This accident occurred on that part of the Louisville Division extending between Bowling Green and Lebanon Junction, Ky., a distance of 83.9 miles, in the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by time-table and train orders, no block-signal system being in use. The accident occurred at a point 90 feet north of the south switch of the west passing track at Dividing Ridge, this is a facing-point switch for northbound trains and leads off the main track through a No. 10 turnout to the west. This passing track parallels the main track and is 3,354 feet in length, the station is situated east of the main track and 1,545 feet south of the north switch. Approaching the point of accident from the north the track is tangent for more than 1 mile, the accident occurring on this tangent at a point 133 feet from its southern end. Approaching from the south there is a $3^{\circ} 06'$ curve to the left 716 feet in length, extending to within 45 feet of the south switch, followed by the tangent on which the accident occurred. The grade for southbound trains is 0.56 per cent ascending to about the south clearance point of the passing track, from which point it is 0.67 per cent descending. Owing to a cut the view from the cab of a northbound engine is restricted to less than 750 feet. The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at about 7 18 a.m.

Dept. of Transportation

JUL 09 1926

Library

Description.

Southbound freight train first No. 111 consisted of 25 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 1243, and was in charge of Conductor Haynes and Engineman Gehring. This train left Bonnieville, 3 miles north of Dividing Ridge, at 7.02 a.m., and headed in at the north switch of the passing track at Dividing Ridge for the purpose of meeting train No. 10. On passing the station at a low rate of speed, en route to the south clearance point of the passing track, Engineman Gehring received a copy of a train order changing a meeting point with a freight train. About halfway between the telegraph office and the south switch he started to read this order, continuing to work a little steam owing to the grade, passed the south clearance point of the passing track, and had stopped, fouling the main track, when the engine was struck by train No. 10.

Northbound passenger train No. 10 consisted of two baggage cars and two coaches, in the order named, hauled by engine 318, and was in charge of Conductor Neighbors and Engineman Bain. The second car was of wooden construction while the rest were of steel-underframe construction. This train left Rowletts, 6.7 miles south of Dividing Ridge, at 7.07 a.m. 12 minutes late, and collided with train first No. 111 while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 40 miles an hour.

Both engines were derailed and badly damaged, but they remained upright on the roadbed. The second car in train No. 10 was practically demolished, while the others were only slightly damaged. The first five cars in train first No. 111 were derailed, the second car being demolished. The employee killed was the flagman of train No. 10.

Summary of evidence.

In addition to reading the orders received at Dividing Ridge, Engineman Gehring, of train first No. 111, stated that when nearing the southern end of the passing track he again looked at his orders to ascertain the number of the engine on a train which he was to meet, and when he again looked out he saw that the front end of the engine was just about at the clearance point; he immediately applied the air brakes in emergency and placed the engine in reverse, but just about the time the train got stopped and before he could release the brakes, train No. 10 came around the curve. He sounded the whistle and was endeavoring to back into clear when the accident occurred. Engineman Gehring thought his train moved about a car length after he applied the brakes, and said he did not have time to flag train No. 10

Fireman Gritton, of train first No. 111, stated he understood they were to remain in clear for train No. 10 at Dividing Ridge, but that he was working on the fire at the time the clearance point was passed. The first knowledge he had of anything wrong was when the whistle was sounded, and when he looked out train No. 10 was about 200 feet away. His train moved about 20 or 25 feet after the air brakes were applied and the pilot of the engine stopped just about over the switch-frog, the switch not being run through.

Conductor Haynes, of train first No. 111, stated that he was on the rear platform of the caboose watching for the engine number of train No. 10. On definitely ascertaining that the engine of his train was not going to be brought to a stop into clear he made an attempt to apply the air brakes from the rear, but before this was accomplished the brakes were applied from the head end. Conductor Haynes estimated the speed of his train to have been 5 or 6 miles an hour while moving through the siding.

Fireman Rennert, of train No. 10, stated that while rounding the curve at a speed of about 40 miles an hour he saw the engine of train No. 111, when about 300 feet distant, fouling the main track, he shouted to the engineer and the air brakes were immediately applied in emergency, reducing the speed to about 25 or 30 miles an hour at the time of the accident. No statement was obtained from the engineer of train No. 10, on account of the injuries he sustained, and also because his statement was not thought to have any great importance in determining responsibility for this accident.

Conductor Neighbors, of train No. 10, stated the first intimation he had of anything wrong was when the accident occurred. He estimated the speed to have been about 45 miles an hour when the air brakes were applied, and said the accident occurred at 7.18 a.m.

Division Superintendent Sheridan stated that derrails are not installed in sidings used for the meeting and passing of trains, except when cars are stored on such sidings and are apt to run away.

Conclusions.

This accident was caused by train first No. 111 running by the south clearance point of the west passing-track switch and fouling the main track just as train No. 10 approached, for which Engineman Gehring is responsible

Had Engineman Gehring used due care in operating his train between the train-order office and the clearance point or had this siding been equipped with a derail at the proper location this accident would not have occurred.

All of the employees involved, with the exception of Fireman Gritton, of train first No. 111, were experienced men. At the time of the accident none of them had been on duty in violation of any of the provisions of the hours of service laws.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. BORLAND

Director