

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2515

THE CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

AT REYNOLDS, GA., ON

AUGUST 8, 1941

SUMMARY

Railroad: Central of Georgia
Date: August 8, 1941
Location: Reynolds, Ga.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: First 34 : Second 34
Engine numbers: 771 : 774
Consist: 48 cars, 2 cabooses; 29 cars, caboose
Speed: Standing : 15-20 m.p.h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders; yard limits
Track: Single; tangent; 0.21 percent ascending
grade eastward
Weather: Cloudy
Time: 5:35 p.m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured
Cause: Accident caused by failure properly to
control speed of following train mov-
ing within yard limits.

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2515

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

THE CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY COMPANY

September 25, 1941

Accident at Reynolds, Ga., on August 8, 1941, caused by failure
properly to control speed of following train moving
within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 8, 1941, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Central of Georgia Railway at Reynolds, Ga., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of one employee.

¹Under 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.

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Macon Division designated as the Columbus District, which extends between Columbus and Wolf Valley, Ga., a distance of 71.4 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. The accident occurred on the main track within yard limits at a point 2,418 feet west of the station at Reynolds. As the point of accident is approached from the west there are, in succession, a tangent 7,427 feet in length, a 1°30' curve to the right 2,200 feet, and a tangent 740 feet to the point of accident and 2,364 feet beyond. The grade for east-bound trains is, successively, 0.95 percent descending 3,100 feet, 0.40 percent descending 600 feet, 1.10 percent descending 1,000 feet, 0.74 percent descending 3,400 feet, level 250 feet, 0.59 percent ascending 700 feet, and 0.21 percent ascending 177 feet to the point of accident.

The west yard-limit sign is located 6,172 feet west of the station. The accident occurred at a point 3,744 feet east of this sign.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

93. Within yard limits the main track may be used, protecting against first class trains.

Second and third class trains and extra trains must move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 35 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

First 34, an east-bound second-class freight train, consisted of engine 771, 48 loaded cars and 2 cabooses. This train departed from Columbus, 58 miles west of Reynolds, at 3:10 p.m., according to the train sheet, 1 hour 55 minutes late, passed Howard, 17.5 miles west of Reynolds, at 4:50 p.m., 1 hour 54 minutes late, and stopped on the main track at Reynolds at 5:20 p.m. to perform switching. The caboose stood 3,744 feet east of the west yard-limit sign. The conductor and the flagman went forward immediately and about 15 minutes later the caboose was struck by Second 34.

Second 34, an east-bound second-class freight train, consisted of engine 774, 29 loaded cars and a caboose. This train departed from Columbus at 3:45 p.m., according to the train sheet, 2 hours 30 minutes late, passed the west yard-limit sign at Reynolds and while moving at a speed estimated as from 15 to 20 miles per hour it collided with the rear end of First 34. The brakes of Second 34 had functioned properly en route and a brake-pipe pressure of 70 pounds had been maintained.

The two cabooses of First 34 were demolished. The rear car was badly damaged and its rear truck was derailed. The car immediately ahead of the rear car was not derailed but was considerably damaged. Engine 774 was derailed. It moved in an upright position a distance of about 125 feet, turned over on its left side and stopped parallel to the track. The engine truck, the cab and the trailer truck were demolished. All appurtenances on the left side of the engine were torn off or damaged. The tender remained coupled to the engine and stopped, badly damaged, on its left side. Both tender trucks were detached and destroyed. The first car was derailed and stopped on its right side opposite the engine and leaned to the south at an angle of 30 degrees. This car was badly damaged. The second car was derailed and stopped on its right side at the rear of the tender and crosswise of the track. This car was practically demolished. The third car was slightly damaged and its front truck was derailed. A coupler yoke of the ninth car was broken.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred at 5:35 p.m.

The employee killed was the front brakeman of Second 34 and the employee injured was the fireman of Second 34.

Discussion

The rules governing operation within yard limits provide that trains may use the main track but must protect against first-class trains, and that second-class and third-class and extra trains must move prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear. The preceding train was not required to provide flag protection as there was no first-class train due for several hours. The following train was required to move prepared to stop. All surviving employees involved understood these requirements.

The investigation disclosed that the weather was cloudy but visibility was unrestricted. The rear end of the preceding train could be seen from the right side of the engine of the following train a distance of 6,188 feet. According to

the statement of the engineman of the following train, three brake-pipe reductions were made on the descending grade west of the west yard-limit sign. When the engine was about 2,800 feet west of the west yard-limit sign the brakes were released. The fireman and the front brakeman were engaged in measuring the supply of water in the cistern and the engineman was looking to the rear to determine if sufficient water was available. When the engineman again looked ahead the train had attained considerable speed and the engineman observed the caboose of the preceding train about 735 feet distant. He made a heavy service application of the brakes. He then realized that the speed of the train was too great to stop short of the train ahead and he applied the brakes in emergency and opened the sander valve. The fireman saw the caboose of the preceding train a distance of about 1,800 feet but he did not inform the engineman of that fact. The engineman said that because of the previous brake-pipe reductions and the release, the brake pipe was not fully recharged and the emergency application was not effective. He thought he could have stopped his train short of the caboose of the preceding train if the brake pipe had been fully charged when he first saw the caboose.

The investigation disclosed that it had not been customary to operate trains within the yard limits at Reynolds at excessive speed and that frequently freight trains had been stopped within these yard limits by preceding trains occupying the main track without furnishing flag protection.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D.C., this twenty-fifth day of September, 1941.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.