

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY CONCERNING AN
ACCIDENT ON THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY NEAR WAYNE,
IND., ON NOVEMBER 23, 1933.

January 30, 1934.

To the Commission:

On November 23, 1933, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway near Wayne, Ind., which resulted in the injury of one employee.

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on the Miami Sub-division of the Chicago Division, extending between Cheviot, Ohio, and Peru, Ind., a distance of 155.1 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by time table, train orders, and a manual block-signal system. The accident occurred at a point 2,124 feet west of mile post 66 or 1.33 miles east of Wayne; approaching this point from the east, there is a 1°45' curve to the right 280 feet in length and 1,575 feet of tangent track followed by a 30° curve to the left 2,011 feet in length, the accident occurring on this curve at a point about 1,063 feet from its eastern end. The grade for west-bound trains is 0.99 percent ascending for approximately 1 mile approaching the point of accident. The speed for freight trains is restricted by speed boards to 15 miles per hour from Richmond to a point 1,713 feet east of mile post 65, where the limit is increased to 25 miles per hour; the resume-speed board for the regular speed of 35 miles per hour for freight trains is located near mile post 66. An 8-foot cut 323 feet in length, with a wire fence along the top of it, is located on the eastern end of the curve, the western end of the cut being about 750 feet east of the point of accident; this cut and fence restrict the range of vision of the fireman of a west-bound train. Due to the curve to the left the engineman's view is very limited.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 7:30 a.m.

Description

West-bound third-class freight train no. 93 consisted of 68 cars and a caboose, hauled by engines 1135 and 1178, and was in charge of Conductor Pence and Engineman Fuqua and Moore. This train left Richmond, the last open telegraph office, 3.17 miles east of the point of accident, at 7:03 a.m., 3 hours and 58 minutes late, and was approaching Wayne at a speed estimated to have been 6 or 8 miles per hour when its rear end was struck by train no. 53.

To Wayne

2°
2,011 ft.

Point of accident

750 ft.

1066 ft.

End of cut

323 ft.

Beginning of cut

1,575 ft.

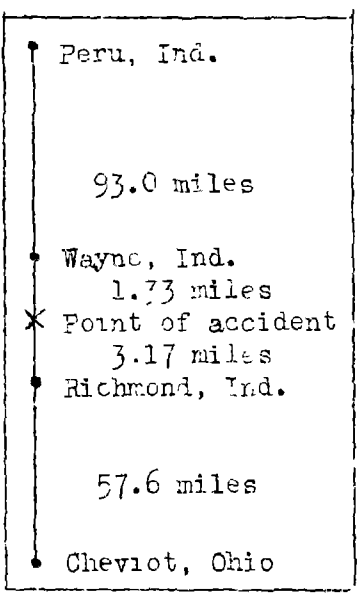
Speed limit board



Mile post 66



1045'
280 ft.



Inv. No. 1863
Chesapeake and Ohio Ry.
Wayne, Ind.
Nov. 23, 1933

West-bound fifth-class freight train no. 53 consisted of two cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 978, and was in charge of Conductor Mosshammer and Engineman Meserve. At Richmond, the initial terminal, the crew received their orders, together with a clearance card, Form B, giving them authority to pass the stop signal and proceed at restricted speed, and also advising them that train no. 93 entered the block at 7:03 a.m. Train no. 53 left Richmond at 7:20 a.m. 20 minutes late, and collided with the rear end of train no. 93 while traveling at a speed variously estimated to have been from 5 to 30 miles per hour.

The caboose in train no. 93 was telescoped by the car ahead of it approximately two-thirds its length, and by engine 978 at its rear end for a short distance, resulting in the caboose being destroyed. Engine 978 was partially derailed but was not materially damaged. The employee injured was the head brakeman of train no. 93.

Summary of evidence

Engineman Fuqua, of the lead engine of train no. 93, stated that his train was traveling at a speed of 6 or 8 miles per hour on the ascending grade known as Richmond Hill when the train stopped as a result of an emergency application of the brakes. His train has passed out of the low-speed territory, but he said he thought his speed had been from 4 to 12 miles per hour all the way from Richmond to the point of accident, saying that the weather was misty and the rail was bad, making it necessary to use sand, while the second engine had slipped a little, although it was not slipping at the time of the accident. The statements of Fireman Fisher of the lead engine and Engineman Moore and Fireman Daniels of the second engine, practically corroborated those of Engineman Fuqua; they also stated that the train seemed to pull harder than usual.

Conductor Pence, of train no. 93, stated that they were making ordinary speed for a tonnage train, the tonnage being 4189 tons, and that the speed did not exceed 10 miles per hour after leaving Richmond and was about 8 miles per hour at the time of the accident. He was riding in the cupola of the caboose, looking back occasionally, the last time being just before Head Brakeman Landgrave dropped back and boarded the caboose near mile post 36; while talking to the brakeman he heard the whistle of a following train and on looking back again he saw the approaching train several car lengths back traveling at a speed of about 25 miles per hour; he realized a collision was imminent, called a warning to the others in the caboose, and got off. The visibility was good and he thought he could have seen back a distance of about 25 car lengths at the point of accident. Conductor Pence further stated that he did not think it was necessary to provide protection for the rear of his train, as it was making the ordinary speed for that type of train, although he knew it was on the time

of train no. 53 and he had seen the engine of that train at Richmond; subsequently he admitted that a fusee should have been thrown off on the straight track preceding the curve on which the accident occurred. Conductor Pence was unable to explain the presence of a dog in the caboose but said there was not any one playing with the dog at the time of the accident.

Flagman Bennett, of train no. 93, stated that when Brakeman Landgrave boarded the caboose the brakeman told them he dropped off to look the train over for sticking brakes and that he found a couple of the brakes sticking slightly, and about that time they heard the road crossing whistle signal of the following train. Flagman Bennett said that when he saw the train it was traveling at a speed of about 30 miles per hour and he had just time enough to get off before the collision; he had looked back occasionally but had not looked back for 3 or 4 minutes prior to the accident. He knew train no. 53 was due to leave Richmond when his own train passed that point but expected it to be following on a caution card and therefore did not think it was necessary for him to provide rear-end protection and consequently did not throw off any fusees, leaving the responsibility up to the following train; he also said that in the past under similar circumstances, with tonnage trains over heavy grades, he had never used fusees. At the same time, however, while he said it had not been customary to throw off fusees, he admitted that he should have done so.

Conductor Clark, who was deadheading in the caboose, heard a whistle and on looking back he saw train no. 53 about five or six car lengths distant, traveling at a speed between 25 and 30 miles per hour. He did not know what steps had been taken to provide protection but said that he could not have thought it necessary to throw off a fusee.

Engineman Meserve, of train no. 53, stated that the weather was misty and cloudy but the visibility was good and he operated his train in accordance with the restrictive card, not exceeding a speed of 25 miles per hour at any time. He was sounding the whistle signal for the road crossing located about 300 feet east of the point of accident when the fireman notified him of the train ahead and he immediately applied the air brakes in emergency, shut off his engine and opened the sanders, and estimated the speed of his train at the time of the accident to have been 10 miles per hour. The fireman had been working with the coal but on coming around the curve had gotten on his seat box and he then saw the train ahead. When asked if the brakes on his train had been applied before he operated the brake valve, Engineman Meserve said he felt the exhaust and that if the brakes had been applied the full effect had not been obtained.

Fireman Clickard, of train no. 53, stated that he read the restrictive card and knew that train no. 93 was in the block. He was experiencing trouble with the coal and found it necessary to break the lumps, and while not doing this he would watch the curves on his side. As they reached the curve on which the accident occurred he got on his seat box and at first was unable to see any distance ahead on account of the side of the cut at the eastern end of the curve. When he first saw the train ahead it was 10 car lengths distant and he immediately warned the engineman, who applied the brakes in emergency, and he said the speed had been reduced to 5 or more miles per hour at the time of the accident.

Conductor Mosshammer, of train no. 53, was riding in the cupola on the left side but due to the box car ahead being about 2 feet higher than the caboose he was unable to see out of the front window, but on coming around the curve on which the accident occurred he looked across and saw the head end of train no. 93, and said "there is 93 right ahead of us." Flagman Johnson came over to look and then opened the conductor's valve; Conductor Mosshammer heard the exhaust, but did not know whether the brakes had also been applied from the engine. The average speed of his train was about 25 miles per hour from Richmond to the point of accident and it had been reduced to 12 or 15 miles per hour at the time of the accident. Conductor Mosshammer further stated that he did not feel any alarm at the speed of his train even though they were traveling on a restrictive card; however, he admitted that their speed was not in compliance with the restricted-speed signs.

Flagman Johnson, of train no. 53, stated that the speed of their train approaching the point of accident was about 30 miles per hour. He was riding on the right side in the cupola and when the conductor said there was a train ahead he immediately reached for the conductor's valve and applied the brakes, but the speed had been reduced only slightly at the time of the accident; the brakes had not been applied by the engineman or he would not have had a response when he opened the conductor's valve.

Head Brakeman DeWys, of train no. 53, stated that he was riding in the caboose and that the average speed was about 30 miles per hour, and at the time of the collision about 20 miles per hour. The visibility was not very good and he said that he could not see for more than 10 or 12 car lengths.

Conclusions

This accident was caused by the failure of Engineman Reserve of train no. 53, to operate his train at restricted speed while running in an occupied block, and by the failure of Conductor Pence and Flagman Bennett, of train no. 93, to provide proper flag protection.

Engineman Meserve was in possession of a clearance card which required him to run at restricted speed when following a train in a block. He knew he was following train no. 93 and under such circumstances should have complied with the rule defining "restricted speed"; this rule reads as follows:

"Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train to be reduced".

Practical observance of this rule would have required Engineman Meserve to be prepared to stop within his range of vision, but the evidence indicates that the average speed of train no. 53 was between 25 and 30 miles per hour from Richmond to the point of accident and that no attempt was made to reduce the speed on rounding the curve on which the accident occurred where the engine-man's view was very materially restricted. The view had by the fireman was also limited, due to an embankment on the inside of the curve; he had been working on the fire but was on his seat box when they reached the curve, and had the train been operated at a lower rate of speed his warning would have enabled the engineman to stop. It further appears that the speed was not maintained in accordance with the restricted-speed boards limiting the speed to 15 miles per hour for freight trains from Richmond to a point about one-fourth mile east of mile post 65.

The rules further provide that when a train is moving under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must take such action as may be necessary to insure full protection. By night, or by day when the view is obscured, lighted fusees must be thrown off at proper intervals. Conductor Pence and Flagman Bennett were fully aware that they were on the time of train no. 53 and could expect that train at any time, and they should have thrown off fusees in view of the low rate of speed at which their train was traveling, it having averaged less than 8 miles per hour from Richmond depot to the point of accident. No attempt was made by Flagman Bennett to provide any protection, however, nor did Conductor Pence instruct him to do so or think any protection was necessary; in fact, the statements of these employees made it clear they were depending on the engineman of the following train. Attention is called to the fact that Flagman Bennett said it was not the custom to throw off fusees with tonnage trains on heavy grades and he did not think that it was necessary, Conductors Pence and Clark being of the same opinion. The statements of these employees indicate a lack of proper instruction as to the requirements of the flagging rule.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. BORLAND,

Director.