

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2854
THE COLORADO AND SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR DENVER, COLO., ON
DECEMBER 28, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Colorado and Southern
Date: December 28, 1944
Location: Denver, Colo.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: D. & R. G. W. : C. & S.
passenger passenger
Train numbers: 34 : 30
Engine numbers: 1524 : 350
Consist: 7 cars : 8 cars
Estimated speed: Standing : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Operating rules and special
instructions
Track: Double; 6°30' curve; level
Weather: Foggy
Time: About 7:13 a. m.
Casualties: 18 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control speed
of following train moving in
restricted-speed territory

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2854

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

THE COLORADO AND SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

February 12, 1945.

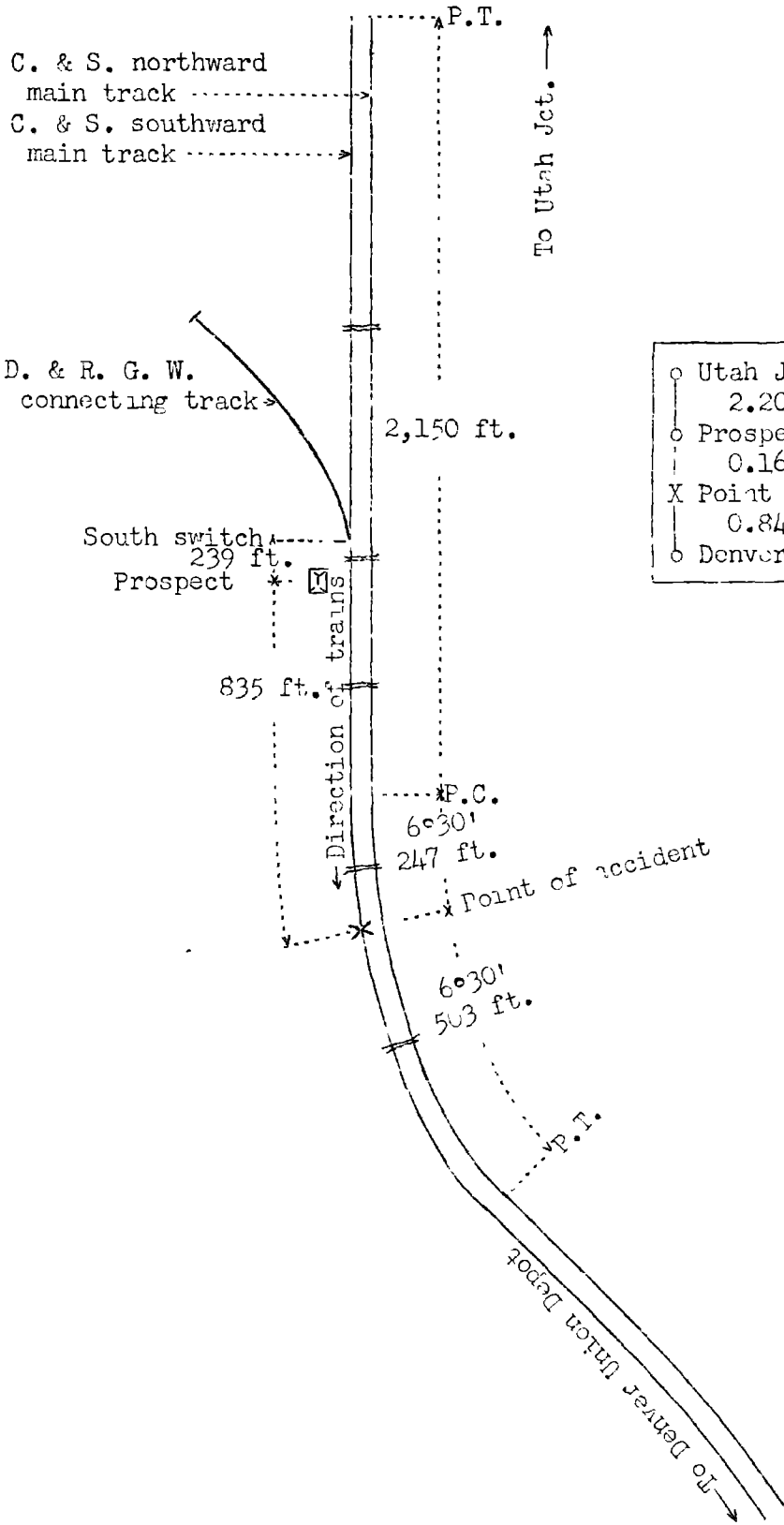
Accident near Denver, Colo., on December 28, 1944, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of the fol-
lowing train moving in restricted-speed territory.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On December 28, 1944, there was a rear-end collision between a Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad passenger train and a Colorado and Southern Railway passenger train near Denver, Colo., which resulted in the injury of 15 passengers, 2 railway-mail clerks and 1 train-service employee off duty.

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.



- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------|
| o | Utah Jct., Colo. | 2.20 mi. |
| o | Prospect | 0.16 mi. |
| X | Point of accident | 0.84 mi. |
| o | Denver Union Depot, Colo. | |

Inv. No. 2854
 Colorado and Southern Railway
 Denver, Colo.
 December 28, 1914

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Denver Terminal Division extending southward from Utah Jct. to Denver Union Depot, Colo., 3.2 miles. This was a double-track line. Between Prospect, 2.2 miles south of Utah Jct., and Denver Union Depot movements with the current of traffic were authorized in accordance with operating rules and time-table special instructions. There was no block system in use. At Prospect a connecting track of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, hereinafter referred to as the D. & R. G. W., converged with the southward main track of the Colorado and Southern Railway, hereinafter referred to as the C. & S. The south switch of the connecting track was 239 feet north of the station, and was in the charge of the operator. Trains of the D. & R. G. W. were regularly operated over the C. & S. tracks between Prospect and Denver Union Depot. The accident occurred on the southward main track 0.84 mile north of Denver Union Depot. From the north on the C. & S. tracks there was a tangent 2,150 feet in length, which was followed by a 6°30' curve to the left 247 feet to the point of accident and 503 feet southward. The grade was level.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS

* * *

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

11. A train finding a fusee burning on or near its track must stop and extinguish the fusee, and then proceed at restricted speed.

35. The following signals will be used by flagmen:

* * *

Night signals--A red light,
A white light,
Torpedoes and
Fusees.

99. When a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals a sufficient distance to insure full protection, placing two torpedoes, and when necessary, in addition, displaying lighted fusees.

* * *

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 fuseses must be thrown off at proper intervals.

* * *

Time-table special instructions read in part as follows:

* * *

Trains have no time table superiority between * * * Denver Union Depot and Prospect, and must run at restricted speed expecting to find main track occupied by other trains or engines within these limits.

* * *

F. PROSPECT.--* * * trains or engines may pass through Junction switch or cross-over, if properly lined, at restricted speed, without stopping, provided the operator gives approaching train or engine a proceed signal with yellow flag by day or yellow light by night.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for the trains involved was 15 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 34, a south-bound D. & R. G. W. passenger train, consisted of engine 1524, three baggage cars, one baggage-mail car, one coach, one Pullman sleeping car and one baggage car, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. This train entered the C. & S. southward main track at Prospect at 7:08 a. m., 30 minutes late, and stopped about 7:12 a. m. with the rear end standing 835 feet south of the station at Prospect. About 1 minute later the rear end was struck by No. 30.

No. 30, a south-bound C. & S. passenger train, consisted of engine 350, two baggage cars, one baggage-mail car, two coaches, one Pullman sleeping car, one troop-sleeping car and one Pullman sleeping car, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. This train passed Prospect at 7:12 a. m., 4 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it struck No. 34.

The cars of No. 34 were damaged. The engine truck and the No. 1 pair of driving wheels of the engine of No. 30 were derailed, and the engine and the third car were damaged.

It was dark and foggy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 7:13 a. m.

Discussion

The rules governing operation in this territory required all trains to be operated prepared to stop short of a train or an obstruction, and flag protection for following trains was required.

About 7:12 a. m. No. 34 stopped on the C. & S. southward main track with the rear end standing 835 feet south of the station at Prospect. About 1 minute later the rear end of this train was struck by No. 30. Under the rules, flag protection was required for the preceding train and the speed of the following train was required to be controlled so that it could be stopped short of a preceding train. All the employees concerned so understood.

When No. 34 stopped, because the rear car was a baggage car, the flagman was on the east side of the rear platform of the second rear car. He said that he immediately proceeded northward to provide flag protection. Soon afterward he saw the reflection of the headlight of an approaching train about 200 feet distant. He was giving stop signals with a lighted red lantern from a point a few feet south of the rear of his train when the collision occurred. The flagman and the conductor of No. 34 thought the flag protection furnished their train was sufficient. The conductor said that, because all trains in this territory were required to be operated prepared to stop short of a preceding train, it had not been customary to drop off lighted fuses when a train was preparing to stop.

As No. 30 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 10 miles per hour. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the engineer and a student fireman were maintaining a lookout ahead. The fireman was on the deck of the engine. The brakes had been tested and had functioned properly at all points where used en route. Because of the sharp curve to the left, the view of the track ahead from the right side of the cab was materially restricted. When the engine reached a point a short distance north of the point where the accident occurred the fireman and the student fireman saw the lighted red marker lamps of the preceding train, and they called a warning to the engineer. The engineer immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the accident occurred before the train could be stopped. If the speed of

the following train had been properly controlled, in accordance with the rules, this accident would not have occurred.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train moving in restricted-speed territory.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twelfth day of February, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.