

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO 2837
THE DULUTH, MISSABE & IRON RANGE RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT BIWABIK, MINN., ON
OCTOBER 23, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range
Date: October 23, 1944
Location: Eiwabik, Minn.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: Extra 221 South : Extra 1210 South
Engine numbers: 221 : 1210
Consist: 90 cars, caboose : 2 cabooses
Estimated speed: Standing : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Train orders; yard limits
Track: Double; 5° curve; 0.70 percent
descending grade southward
Weather: Clear
Time: 5:45 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 4 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control
speed of following train
moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2837

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

THE DULUTH, MISSABE & IRON RANGE RAILWAY COMPANY

November 25, 1944.

Accident at Biwabik, Minn., on October 23, 1944, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of the
following train moving within yard limits.

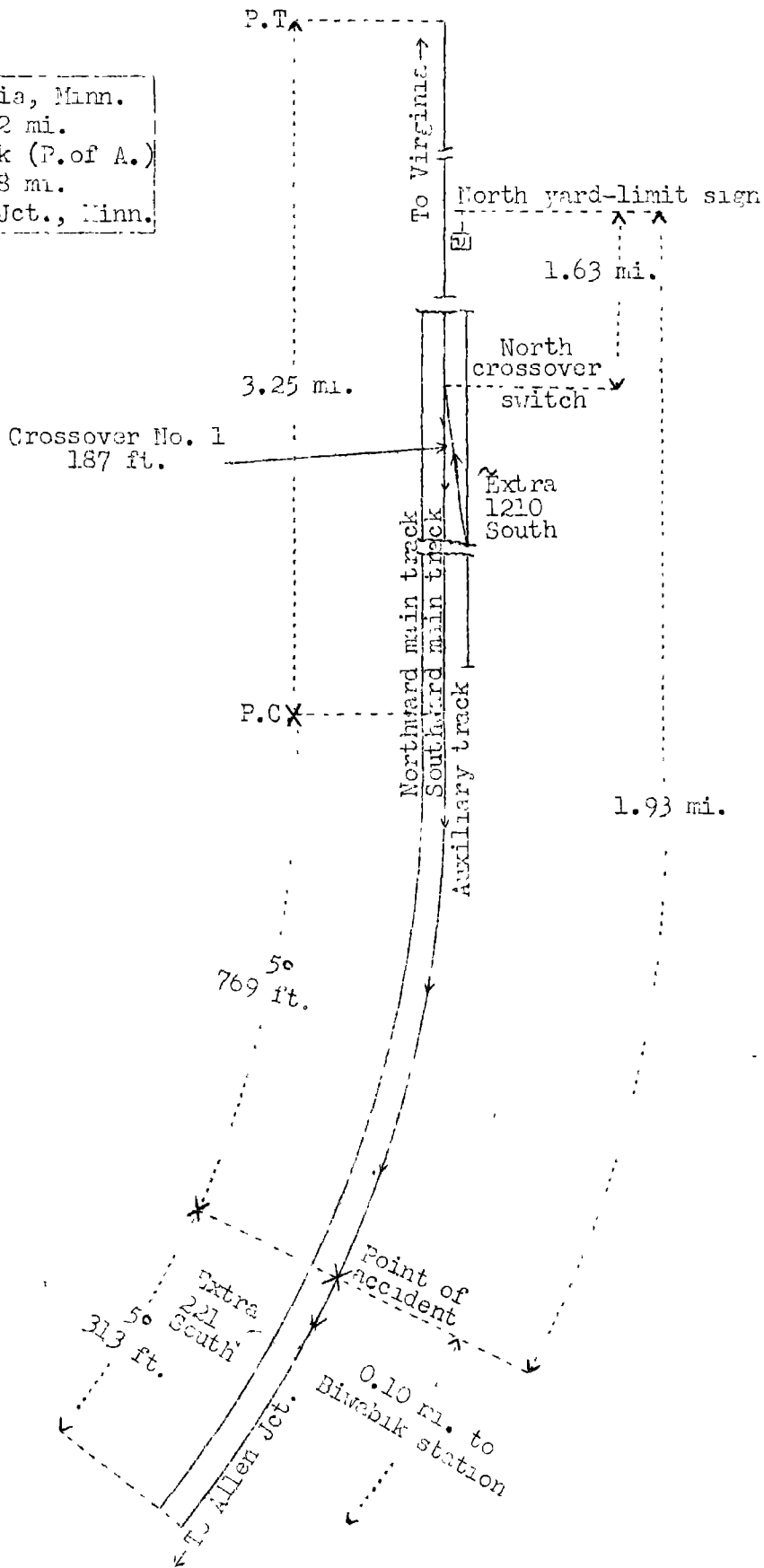
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On October 23, 1944, there was a rear-end collision
between two freight trains on the Duluth, Missabe & Iron
Range Railway at Biwabik, Minn., which resulted in the
death of one employee, and the injury of four employees.

¹Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Com-
merce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the
Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and dis-
position.

- o Virginia, Minn. 14.82 mi.
- X Biwabik (P. of A.) 14.48 mi.
- o Allen Jct., Minn.



Inv. No. 2837
 Duluth, Hibbs & Iron Range Railway
 Biwabik, Minn.
 October 23, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Iron Range Division extending southward from Virginia to Allen Jct., Minn., 29.30 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a double-track line over which trains were operated by train orders. There were no time-table schedules in effect, and there was no block system in use. The current of traffic was to the left. The accident occurred within yard limits on the southward main track at Biwabik, 14.82 miles south of Virginia, at a point 0.10 mile north of the station and 1.93 miles south of the north yard-limit sign. From the north the southward main track was tangent throughout a distance of 3.25 miles, then there was a 5° curve to the right 769 feet to the point of accident and 313 feet southward. The grade for south-bound trains was 0.70 percent descending.

An auxiliary track paralleled the southward main track on the east. The north switch of a crossover 187 feet long, hereinafter referred to as crossover No. 1, connected the auxiliary track and the southward main track, and was 1.63 miles south of the north yard-limit sign.

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.

* * *

93. * * *

Within yard limits the main track may be used without protecting against second and inferior class, extra trains and engines.

Second and inferior class, extra trains and engines must move within yard limits at restricted speed.

* * *

Description of Accident

Extra 221 South, a south-bound freight train, consisting of engine 221, 90 cars and a caboose, stopped on the southward main track at Biwabik at 3:42 a. m., with the rear end standing 1.93 miles south of the north yard-limit sign. About 3 minutes later the rear end was struck by Extra 1210 South.

Extra 1210 South, a yard engine headed northward and pushing two cabooses, entered the southward main track at crossover No. 1, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it struck the rear end of Extra 221 South.

The caboose of Extra 221 South was badly damaged and the rear car was slightly damaged. The two cabooses and the engine of Extra 1210 South were badly damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 3:45 a. m.

The fireman of Extra 1210 South was killed. The engineer, the conductor and the front brakeman of Extra 1210 South and a brakeman who was in the front caboose were injured.

Discussion

The rules of this carrier governing operation within yard limits provide that all trains except first-class trains must be operated prepared to stop short of a train or an obstruction. All the surviving employees concerned so understood.

About 3 minutes after Extra 221 South stopped, its rear end was struck by Extra 1210 South. The collision occurred within yard limits, and, under the rules, the speed of Extra 1210 South was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction.

Soon after Extra 221 South stopped, the conductor and the flagman proceeded toward the front end of their train. The marker lamps on the caboose were lighted and displayed red to the rear. The first the crew of Extra 221 South knew of anything being wrong was after the collision occurred.

As Extra 1210 South was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 10 miles per hour. The conductor was in the front caboose, the flagman was on the front steps on the left side of the front caboose and the front brakeman and the enginemen were on the engine. The flagman said he saw the red marker lamps of the preceding train when his train entered the curve on which the accident occurred, but he

thought the preceding train was occupying a track adjacent to the southward main track. When his train reached a point about 100 feet north of the point where the accident occurred he realized the preceding train was occupying the southward main track, and he gave stop signals with a lighted white lantern. The engineer and the front brakeman said that they and the fireman were maintaining a lookout ahead. Because of the curve to the right, the view of the track ahead had by the engineer and the front brakeman was materially restricted. They did not see any warning signals immediately prior to the collision, and the first they knew of anything being wrong was when the accident occurred. It could not be determined when the fireman first became aware of anything being wrong as he was killed in the accident.

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 November, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.