

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

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REPORT NO. 3742

FORT WORTH AND DENVER RAILWAY COMPANY

IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR CLARENDON, TEX., ON

APRIL 1, 1957

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## SUMMARY

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Date: April 1, 1957

Railroad: Fort Worth and Denver

Location: Clarendon, Tex.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Freight

Train numbers: Extra 701D North : Extra 824 North

Locomotive numbers: Diesel-electric units 701D, 701C, 702B, and 702A : Diesel-electric units 824 and 829

Consists: 64 cars, caboose : 21 cars, caboose

Speeds: Standing : Undetermined

Operation: Timetable and train orders

Track: Single; tangent; 0.83 percent ascending grade northward

Weather: Clear

Time: 2:46 a. m.

Casualties: 2 injured

Cause: Failure to provide adequate protection for preceding train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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REPORT NO. 3742

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

FORT WORTH AND DENVER RAILWAY COMPANY

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May 27, 1957

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Accident near Clarendon, Tex., on April 1, 1957, caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the preceding train.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

TUGGLE, Commissioner:

On April 1, 1957, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Fort Worth and Denver Railway near Clarendon, Tex., which resulted in the injury of two train-service employees.

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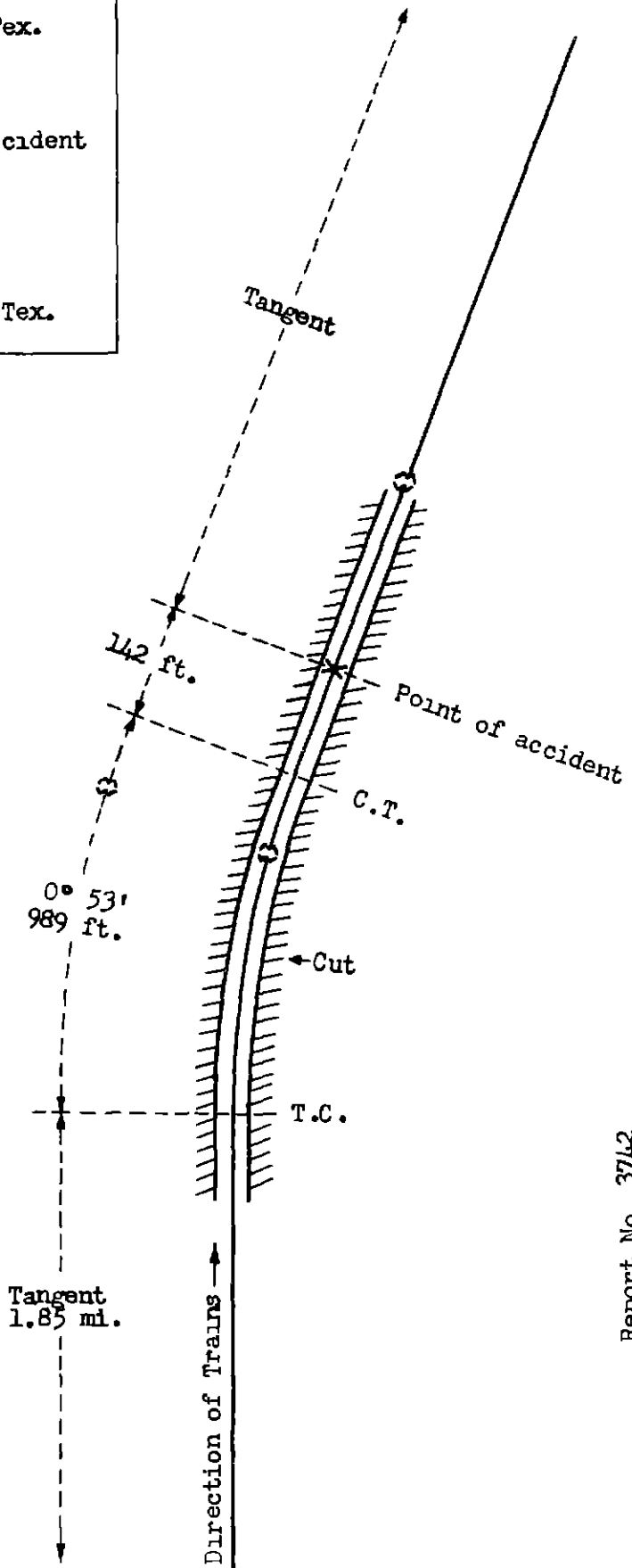
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Under authority of Section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Tuggle for consideration and disposition.

To Amarillo —→

← To Childress

- Amarillo, Tex.  
57.8 mi.
- Clarendon  
1.8 mi.
- X Point of Accident  
25.3 mi.
- Memphis  
13.8 mi.
- Plains Jct.  
16.8 mi.
- Childress, Tex.



Report No. 3742  
 Fort Worth and Denver Railway  
 Clarendon, Tex.  
 April 1, 1957

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Amarillo Division extending between Childress and Amarillo, Tex., 115.5 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 at a point 56.0 miles north of Childress and 1.8 miles south of the station at Clarendon. From the south there are, in succession, a tangent 1.85 miles in length, a  $0^{\circ}53'$  curve to the right 989 feet, and a tangent 142 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance northward. Throughout a distance of 4,825 feet immediately south of the point of accident the grade varies between 0.83 percent and 1.15 percent ascending northward, and it is 0.83 percent ascending northward at that point.

Between points 1,425 feet south and 575 feet north of the point of accident the track is laid in a cut. The walls of the cut rise to a maximum height of approximately 20 feet.

This carrier's operating rules read in part as follows:

91. Unless some form of block system is used, trains in the same direction must keep not less than ten minutes apart except in closing up at stations.

99. When a train is moving under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must drop lighted fuses at proper intervals and take such other action as may be necessary to insure full protection.

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 fuses. \* \* \*

Bulletin special instructions provide that torpedoes and red fuses will be used as night signals by flagmen.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains in the vicinity of the point of accident is 49 miles per hour.

### Description of Accident

Extra 701D North, a north-bound freight train, consisted of C.& S. Diesel-electric units 701D, 701C, 702B, and 702A, coupled in multiple-unit control, 64 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Childress at 12:30 a. m., passed Memphis, 27.1 miles south of Clarendon, the last open office, at 1:51 a. m., and stopped on the main track with the rear end 1.8 miles south of the station at Clarendon at 2:40 a. m. About 6 minutes later the rear end was struck by Extra 824 North.

Extra 824 North, a north-bound freight train, consisted of C.& S. Diesel-electric units 824 and 829, coupled in multiple-unit control, 21 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Childress at 1:10 a. m. The office at Memphis was closed at the time this train passed. While the train was moving at an undetermined speed it struck the rear end of Extra 701D North.

Extra 824 North stopped with the front of the locomotive 186 feet north of the point of accident. The caboose and the rear four cars of Extra 701D North were derailed and stopped in various positions on and near the track. The caboose was destroyed, three of the derailed cars of Extra 701D North and the first Diesel-electric unit of Extra 824 North were badly damaged, and the other derailed car was somewhat damaged.

The engineer and the fireman of Extra 824 North were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 2:46 a. m.

The Diesel-electric units of Extra 824 North were of the road-switcher type.

### Discussion

When Extra 701D North stopped at Clarendon the enginemen and the front brakeman were on the locomotive. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The conductor said that the train stopped at 2:40 a. m. After the train stopped, the front brakeman detached the locomotive for the purpose of adding two cars to the train. The conductor and the flagman said that the flagman immediately proceeded southward to provide protection. The flagman had not dropped off fuses before the train stopped. The flagman said that when he reached a point about 400 feet south of the caboose he saw

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the headlight of Extra 824 North. He immediately lighted a red fusee and ran toward the approaching train giving stop signals. He said that the red oscillating signal light on the locomotive of Extra 824 North became illuminated when the locomotive of that train was about 1,200 feet south of the caboose.

As Extra 824 North was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from the control compartment of the first Diesel-electric unit, the front brakeman was in the control compartment of the second Diesel-electric unit, and the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The headlight and the oscillating white light on the locomotive were lighted. The brakes of the train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The engineer said that the speed was 47 miles per hour as the train approached the curve immediately south of the point of accident. He said that as the locomotive approached this curve he saw stop signals being given with a lighted fusee and then saw the marker lights on the caboose of Extra 701D North. He immediately made an emergency application of the brakes, and the red oscillating signal light on the locomotive became illuminated. He could not estimate the distance at which he first saw the markers or the distance between the flagman and the caboose. Both the engineer and the fireman alighted before the collision occurred, and neither of them could estimate the speed at the time of the collision. The conductor said that the train stopped at 2:46 a. m.

Because of curvature of the track and the walls of the cut in the vicinity of the point of accident, the view of the track ahead from a north-bound locomotive is considerably restricted. After the accident occurred it was found that the west marker of a caboose standing at the point of accident would first become visible from the control compartment of a north-bound locomotive at a distance of approximately 2,300 feet. These observations were made during the day time and from the ground.

In this territory trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. The only provision for spacing following trains is by the time-interval method enforced by operators at open stations, and by flagman's signals. The rules require that a following train must be spaced at least 10 minutes behind a preceding train. Between Childress and Plaines Jct., 16.8 miles north of Childress, trains are operated by signal indications. Extra 701D North passed Plaines Jct. at 1:30 a. m., and Extra 824 North passed at 1:54 a. m., 24 minutes later. After 2 a. m. there are no open offices between Plaines Jct. and the point where the accident occurred.

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Cause

This accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the preceding train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-seventh day of May, 1957.

By the Commission, Commissioner Tuggle.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,

Secretary.