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U.S. INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION,
 WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3151
 GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY
 REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
 AT MORRIS, MINN., ON
 DECEMBER 23, 1947

SUMMARY

Railroad: Great Northern
Date: December 23, 1947
Location: Morris, Minn.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: Third 430 : First 410
Engine numbers: 2110 : 3375
Consists: 72 cars, caboose : 79 cars, caboose
Speeds: Standing : 12 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable, train orders and
automatic block-signal system;
yard limits
Track: Single; tangent; 0.255 percent
descending grade eastward
Weather: Foggy
Time: 6:30 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 2 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control speed
of following train moving within
yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3151

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

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

January 26, 1948

Accident at Morris, Minn., on December 23, 1947, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of the
following train moving within yard limits.

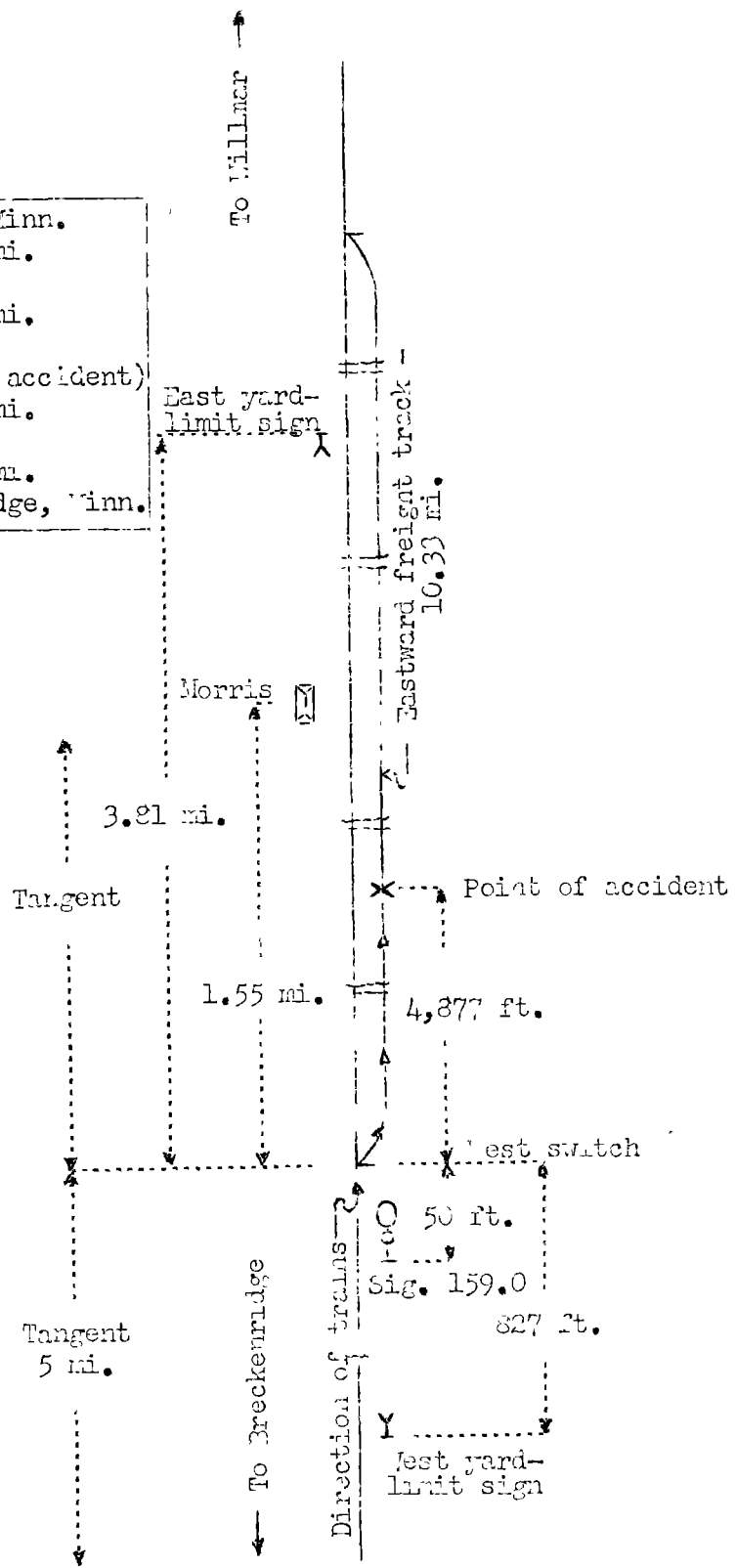
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On December 23, 1947, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Great Northern Railway at Morris, Minn., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of two employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Minnesota Railroad and Warehouse Commission.

¹ Under 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.

- Willmar, Minn. 46.49 mi.
- Hancock 8.85 mi.
- X Morris (Point of accident) 18.68 mi.
- Herman 33.65 mi.
- Breckenridge, Minn.



Inv. No. 3151
 Great Northern Railway
 Morris, Minn.
 December 23, 1947

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Willmar Division extending between Breckenridge and Willmar, Minn., 112.67 miles, a single-track line in the vicinity of the point of accident, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. Between Morris and Hancock, respectively, 57.33 miles and 66.18 miles east of Breckenridge, an auxiliary track 10.33 miles long and designated as the eastward freight track, parallels the main track on the south. The west switch of this track is 827 feet east of the west yard-limit sign, 1.55 miles west of the station and 3.81 miles west of the east yard-limit sign. Entry to the eastward freight track is made through a No. 15 turnout. The accident occurred within yard limits on the eastward freight track at a point 4,877 feet east of the west switch. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of about 5 miles west of the west switch of the eastward freight track and a considerable distance eastward. From the west switch to the point of accident the gradient on the eastward freight track varies from 0.136 percent to 0.255 percent descending for east-bound trains, and it is 0.255 percent at the point of accident.

Semi-automatic signal 159.0, governing east-bound movements entering the turnout of the west switch of the eastward freight track, is 50 feet west of the switch. The involved aspect and corresponding indication and name of this signal are as follows:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
Red-over-yellow	Proceed on secondary route.	Secondary route signal.

Signal 159.0 and the west switch of the eastward freight track are controlled from the station at Morris.

This carrier's 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.

Within yard limits second and inferior class, extra trains and engines must move at restricted speed.

* * *

101 (C). Trains must run carefully * * * under conditions of dense fog or stormy weather when visibility is restricted.

Time-table special instructions read in part as follows:

6. Track south of main track between Hancock and * * * Morris * * * known as EASTWARD FREIGHT TRACK and must be used by eastward trains only, except first class, unless otherwise instructed by train order. * * *

* * *

Description of Accident

Third 430, an east-bound second-class freight train consisting of engine 2110, 72 cars and a caboose, stopped on the eastward freight track at Morris about 6:17 a. m., with the rear end standing 4,877 feet east of the west switch. About 13 minutes later the rear end was struck by First 410.

First 410, an east-bound second-class freight train consisting of engine 3375, 79 cars and a caboose, departed from Herman, 18.68 miles west of Morris, at 6:01 a. m., passed the west yard-limit sign at Morris, passed signal 159.0, which displayed proceed-on-secondary-route, entered the eastward freight track at the west switch, and while moving at an estimated speed of 12 miles per hour it collided with Third 430.

The caboose and the rear three cars of Third 430, and the engine and the first five cars of First 410 were derailed and damaged.

The conductor of Third 430 was killed. The fireman and the front brakeman of First 410 were injured.

Day was breaking and it was foggy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6:30 a. m.

Discussion

The west switch of the eastward freight track at Morris was lined for Third 430 and First 410 to proceed eastward on the eastward freight track. Third 430 stopped on the eastward freight track about 6:17 a. m., with its rear end 1.08 miles east of the west yard-limit sign and 4,877 feet east of the west switch. It was struck by First 410 about 6:30 a. m.

Soon after Third 430 stopped at Morris the engine and the first 30 cars were moved eastward some distance to supply the engine with water and to separate the train in the vicinity of a street grade crossing. When the accident occurred the front portion of this train was being moved westward to recouple to the train. The enginemen were on the engine, the front brakeman was in the vicinity of the engine and the flagman was in the vicinity of the street crossing. The conductor was in the caboose, and was killed in the accident. The first the surviving members of the crew of Third 430 knew of anything being wrong was when the collision occurred.

As First 410 was approaching signal 159.0, in the immediate vicinity of the west switch of the eastward freight track, the speed was about 15 miles per hour. Signal 159.0 displayed proceed-on-secondary-route, and the route was lined for First 410 to enter the eastward freight track. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the enginemen and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead. There was no condition of the engine which distracted the attention of these employees or obscured their view of the track ahead. A fog which prevailed in this vicinity somewhat restricted visibility. The first the employees on the engine knew of anything being wrong was when they saw the lighted marker lamps and the caboose of the preceding train about 200 feet distant, then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of First 410 was about 12 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The accident occurred within yard limits and, under the rules, First 410 was required to be operated in such manner that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction.

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-sixth day of January, 1948.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.