

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3137
NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT SUNNY, N. DAK., ON
OCTOBER 16, 1947

SUMMARY

Railroad: Northern Pacific
Date: October 16, 1947
Location: Sunny, N. Dak.
Kind of accident: Side collision
Equipment involved: Engine with cars : Freight
Train number: : Extra 5011 East
Engine numbers: Diesel-electric : 5011
117
Consists: 10 cars : 42 cars, caboose
Estimated speeds: Standing : 12 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable, train orders and
automatic block-signal system;
yard limits
Track: Single; tangent; 0.087 percent
descending grade eastward
Weather: Foggy
Time: 4:20 a. m.
Casualties: 4 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control speed
of train moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3137

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

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

November 28, 1947

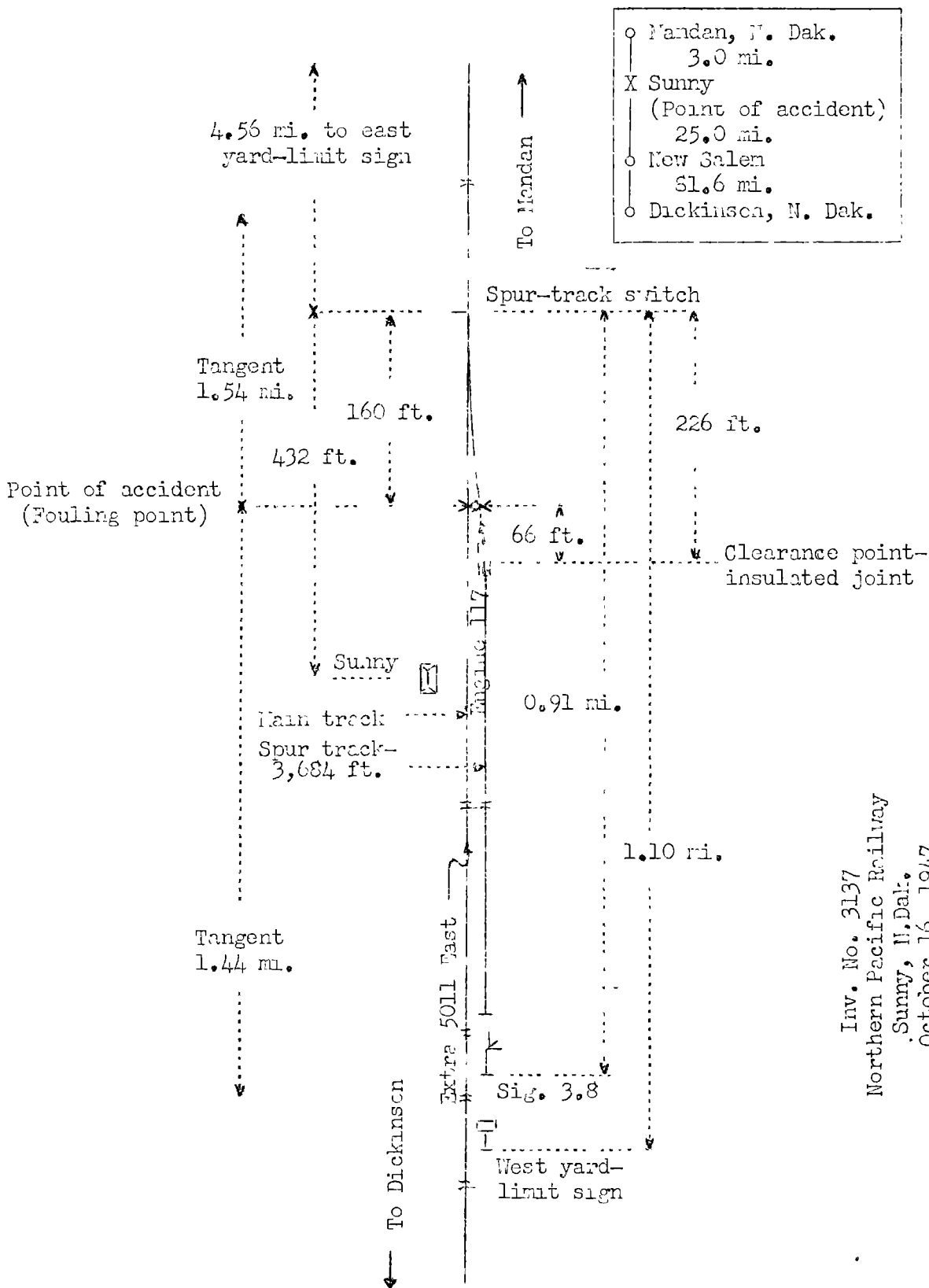
Accident at Sunny, N. Dak., on October 16, 1947, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of a train
moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On October 16, 1947, there was a side collision
between a freight train and an engine with cars on the
Northern Pacific Railway at Sunny, N. Dak., which
resulted in the injury of 4 employees.

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



Inv. No. 3137
Northern Pacific Railway
Sunny, N. Dak.
October 16, 1947

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Yellowstone Division extending between Dickinson and Mandan, N. Dak., 109.6 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. Within yard limits at Sunny, 106.6 miles east of Dickinson, there is a spur track 3,684 feet in length on the south side of the main track. The switch is trailing-point for east-bound movements, and is 1.10 miles east of the west yard-limit sign, 432 feet east of the station, and 4.56 miles west of the east yard-limit sign. The accident occurred at the fouling point of the main track and the turnout of the spur-track switch, at a point 160 feet west of the switch points and 66 feet east of the clearance point. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 1.44 miles immediately west of the point of accident and 1.54 miles eastward. The grade is 0.087 percent descending eastward.

Automatic signal 3.8, governing east-bound movements, is 0.91 mile west of the spur-track switch. This signal is of the one-arm, three-indication, upper-quadrant, semaphore type, and is approach lighted. The involved night aspect and corresponding indication and name of this signal are as follows:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
Green	Proceed.	Clear signal.

The track circuit of the fouling section of the spur track extends 226 feet west of the switch.

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.

* * *

95. * * *

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.

* * *

Note.--Approach or proceed automatic block signal indications do not supersede the provisions of Rule 93.

Description of Accident

Engine 117, a Diesel-electric yard engine, headed east and pulling 10 cars eastward on the spur track, stopped about 4:18 a. m., with the engine and the first car fouling the main track on the turnout of the spur-track switch. About 2 minutes later the first car was struck by Extra 5011 East.

Extra 5011 East, an east-bound freight train, consisting of engine 5011, 42 cars and a caboose, departed from New Salem, the last open office, 25 miles west of Sunny, at 3 a. m., passed the west yard-limit sign at Sunny, passed signal 3.8, which displayed proceed, and while moving at an estimated speed of 12 miles per hour it collided with the most easterly car of the cut of cars being pulled by engine 117.

Engine 117 and the first car of the cut, and the engine and the first 12 cars of Extra 5011 East were derailed and damaged.

The engineer of engine 117, and the engineer, the fireman, and the front brakeman of Extra 5011 East were injured.

It was foggy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:20 a. m.

Discussion

About 4:18 a. m., engine 117, headed eastward and pulling a cut of 10 cars eastward on the spur track at Sunny, stopped on the turnout of the spur-track switch, with the engine and the first car fouling the main track. About 2 minutes later the first car was struck by Extra 5011 East.

Immediately before the accident occurred the engine foreman and the switchmen of engine 117 were in the vicinity of the west end of the cut of cars being pulled by the engine. The fireman was operating the engine, and the engineer was on the left side of the cab. The fireman said that it was not his intention to operate the engine on the main track east of the spur-track switch during the movement involved. Just before engine 117 entered the turnout of the spur-track switch the foreman and the switchman saw the reflection of the headlight of Extra 5011 East, and they gave signals for their engine to stop. These signals were not seen by the fireman of engine 117 until the engine had fouled the main track, then he moved the brake valve to application position. An attempt was being made to move the engine and cars into clear when the collision occurred.

As Extra 5011 East was approaching Sunny the speed was about 25 miles per hour. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The front brakeman was in the brakeman's booth on the tender. The conductor, the swing brakeman and the flagman were in the caboose. There was no condition of the engine that obscured the vision of the enginemen or distracted their attention. The engineer said that when the engine was in the immediate vicinity of the west yard-limit sign he made a 10-pound brake-pipe reduction and when the speed had been reduced to about 15 miles per hour he moved the brake valve to release position. Automatic signal 3.8, the last automatic signal which this train passed, displayed proceed. The engineer thought a speed of about 15 miles per hour was maintained until the engine was a short distance west of the spur-track switch. Then he saw the engine and car fouling the main track and he moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped.

The accident occurred within yard limits, and, under the rules, Extra 5011 East 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 a train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-eighth day of November, 1947.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(S. 11)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.