

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2848
THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR DUNDALK, MD., ON
DECEMBER 2, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Pennsylvania
Date: December 2, 1944
Location: Dundalk, Md.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Engine and cars : Engine and cars
Engine numbers: 3597 : 1222
Consist: 58 cars, caboose : 25 cars, caboose
Estimated speed: Standing : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Operating rules
Track: Two; tangent; 0.22 percent
descending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 6:20 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured
Cause: Failure of the Pennsylvania Railroad
Company to provide adequate protec-
tion for movements on the line
involved
Recommendation: That the carrier establish and
maintain a method of operation
on its Sparrow's Point Branch
that will provide adequate pro-
tection for movements over said
branch

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2848

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

THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD COMPANY

February 20, 1945.

Accident near Dundalk, Md., on December 2, 1944, caused
by failure of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company to
provide adequate protection for movements on the
line involved.

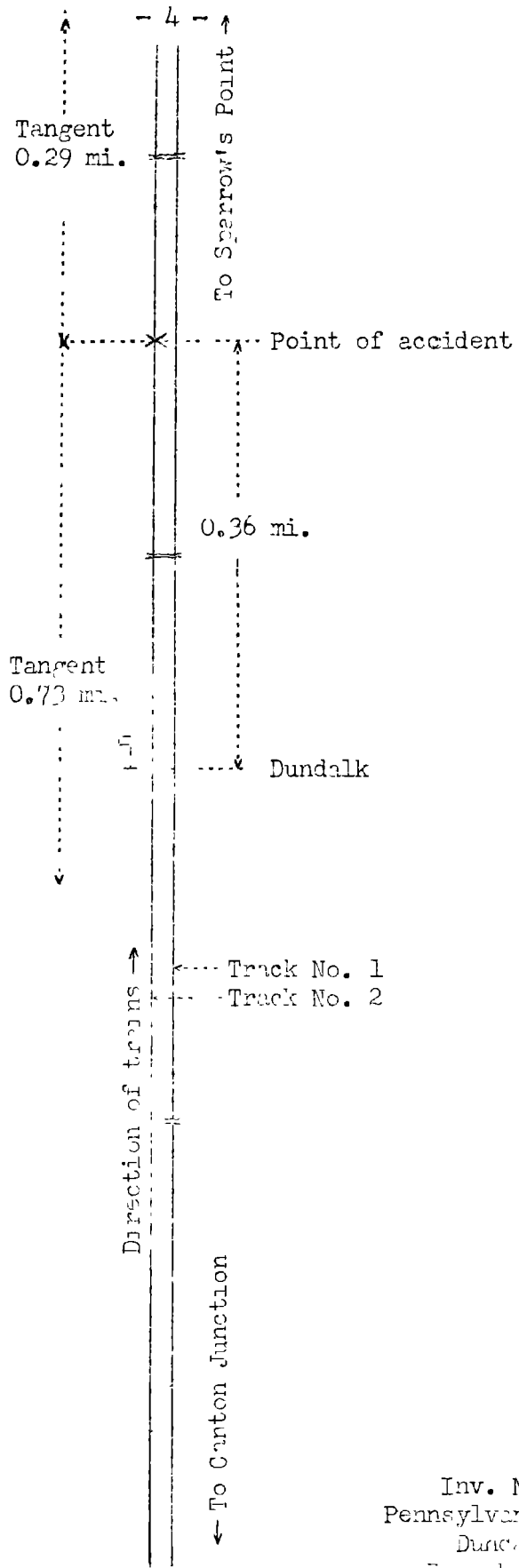
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On December 2, 1944, there was a rear-end collision
between two engines pulling cars on the Pennsylvania Rail-
road near Dundalk, Md., which resulted in the death of one
employee and the injury of one employee.

¹Under 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.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------|
| o | Sparrow's Point, Md. | 2.40 mi. |
| o | Sollers | 1.74 mi. |
| X | Point of accident | 0.36 mi. |
| o | Dundalk | 1.70 mi. |
| o | 16th Street | 2.60 mi. |
| o | Canton Junction, Md. | |



Inv. No. 2848
 Pennsylvania Railroad
 Dundalk, Md.
 December 2, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Maryland Division designated as the Sparrow's Point Branch and extending northward from Canton Junction to Sparrow's Point, Md., 8.8 miles. Between 16th Street, 2.6 miles north of Canton Junction, and Sollers, 3.8 miles, this was a two-track line. The tracks were designated as secondary tracks, and are hereinafter referred to, from east to west, as track No. 1 and track No. 2. Movements in either direction on these tracks were authorized in accordance with operating rules applicable to secondary tracks and time-table special instructions. There were no time-table schedules in effect and there was no block system in use. The accident occurred 2.06 miles north of 16th Street on track No. 2, at a point 0.36 mile north of the station at Dundalk. The tracks were tangent throughout a distance of 0.73 mile south of this point and 0.29 mile northward. The grade was 0.22 percent descending northward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS

* * *

Reduced Speed---Prepared to stop short of train or obstruction.

* * *

Secondary Track---A designated track upon which trains and engines may be operated without time-table authority, train orders or block signals.

* * *

19. The following signals will be displayed, one on each side of the rear of every train, as markers, to indicate the rear of the train:

* * *

By night, on engines and cars, marker lamps lighted showing red to the rear except in manual block system territory when clear of main track, marker lamps lighted showing yellow to the rear.

19a. A train not equipped to display the markers prescribed by Rule 19, will display on rear of train, by day, a red flag; by night, a red light except in manual block system territory when clear of main track, a white light.

103. When cars are pushed by an engine and the conditions require, a trainman must take a conspicuous position on the leading car; under such circumstances if signals from the trainmen cannot be received by the engine crew, the movement must be stopped immediately unless a brake valve and an alarm whistle on the leading car are being used.

105a. Unless otherwise provided, trains and engines using a secondary track must proceed at reduced speed unless the track upon which the movement is to be made is seen or known to be clear and switches properly lined.

A secondary track upon which trains and engines are operated in both directions must not be used without permission of the employe in charge of such track. * * *

105b. Unless otherwise provided, trains and engines using a secondary track or a siding will not protect against following movements on such tracks.

Time-table special instructions read in part as follows:

2204. Secondary Tracks of No Assigned Direction.

Track	Between	And	Controlled by	* * *
* * *				
Sparrow's Point Branch Tracks	Canton Junction	Sparrow's Point	Sixteenth Street	* * *
* * *				

The maximum authorized speed for the movements involved was 30 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Engine 3597, proceeding northward but headed southward, pushing a caboose and pulling 58 cars, passed 16th Street, the last open office, at 5:53 p. m., and stopped on track No. 2 about 6:10 p. m., with the rear end standing 0.36 mile north of the station at Dundalk. About 10 minutes later the rear end was struck by the caboose which was being pushed by engine 1222.

Engine 1222, proceeding northward but headed southward, pushing a caboose and pulling 25 cars, passed 16th Street at

6:11 p. m., and while moving on track No. 2 at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it struck the rear car which was being pulled by engine 3597.

The caboose, the third and fourth cars and the front truck of the fifth car of engine 1222 were derailed. The engine and the first to the fourth cars, inclusive, were damaged. The rear car of engine 3597 was damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6:20 p. m.

The engineer of engine 1222 was killed, and the conductor of this engine was injured.

A brake valve and an alarm whistle were provided at each end of the caboose of engine 1222.

Discussion

Under the carrier's rules applicable to operation on secondary tracks, the crew of engine 3597 was not required to provide flag protection, and the speed of engine 1222 was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped short of the preceding movement. In addition, when cars were being pushed by an engine a member of the crew was required to take a conspicuous position on the leading car and use the brake valve to stop the movement when necessary. Operating officials said that as the movements in question were not being made on a main track, no rule covering operation on main tracks was applicable unless special instructions in the timetable so specified. They said that the rule requiring the use of markers on trains moving on main tracks was not in effect on secondary tracks, and that there was no rule or instruction that markers were required to be displayed on movements on secondary tracks.

As engine 1222 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the members of the train crew of this engine were inside the caboose and were maintaining a lookout ahead from the caboose windows. When the caboose reached a point about 300 feet south of the point where the accident occurred one of the brakemen saw the rear end of the preceding movement, and called a warning. Then the conductor, who was in the middle of the caboose, rushed to the front platform and moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the action of the brakes could stop the train. The brakes had been tested and had functioned properly. The fireman was tending the fire, and the first he knew of anything being wrong was when the accident occurred. It could not be determined when the engineer first became aware of anything being wrong, as he

was killed in the accident. All the members of the train crew of engine 3597 were in the vicinity of their engine when the accident occurred.

At the time of the accident night signals were being used. The rear car of the preceding movement was not equipped to display marker lamps. No light was displayed on the rear end of either movement involved. However, the investigation disclosed that prior to the day of the accident some of the movements on this line had displayed markers. The conductor of the following movement thought a red light should have been displayed on the rear end of the preceding movement, and said that such a light could have been seen a distance of 1/2 mile. The caboose of the following movement obstructed the light projected by the rear headlight of the engine. However, the conductor said that the rear end of the preceding movement could have been seen a distance of about 500 feet, and that under the circumstances his engine should have been moving in such manner that it could be stopped within a distance of 100 feet in order to comply with existing operating rules. If a member of the crew of the following movement had been stationed on the front platform of the caboose and in position to control the speed by use of the brake valve, it is probable this accident would have been averted.

The investigation disclosed that it had been a long-standing practice on this line to push the caboose ahead of the engine. The trainmaster said that there was no reason why the caboose could not be placed behind the engine or at the rear end, but that the position of the caboose in a movement was left entirely to the option of the crew. If the caboose of the following movement had not been in front of the engine, the rear headlight of the engine would not have been obstructed, the engine crew would have been able to see the unlighted rear end of the preceding movement a considerable distance farther than the train crew were able to see it from the caboose, and probably necessary action could have been taken in time to avert the accident.

The line in question was shown in the front part of the timetable as the Sparrow's Point Branch, 9.8 miles long, of which distance 3.7 miles had one track and 5.1 miles had two tracks. In common railroad practice a line shown in the operating timetable as a division, a subdivision, or a branch indicates that at least one main track extends the entire distance between the terminal stations, but in the investigation the officials maintained that there was no main track on this line, and that the only tracks in use were designated as secondary tracks. Under special instructions in the back part of the timetable the tracks of this line were listed as secondary tracks. The officials said they considered these secondary

tracks as merely yard tracks. In view of the nature of the traffic and the maximum authorized speed, the operation over this branch is equivalent to main-track operation. Therefore, movements over this line should be given as much protection as movements on other lines designated by the carrier as main tracks. If the tracks of this branch had been operated as main tracks, block authority would have indicated the presence of the preceding movement, which would have been required to display a red light on the rear end and also to furnish flag protection, and this accident would not have occurred.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company to provide adequate protection for movements on the line involved.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the carrier establish and maintain a method of operation on its Sparrow's Point Branch that will provide adequate protection for movements over said branch.

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

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.