

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2758
THE PIEDMONT & NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT BELTON, S. C., ON
JANUARY 7, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Piedmont & Northern
Date: January 7, 1944
Location: Belton, S. C.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: 48 : 60
Engine numbers: Electric motor 5610 : Electric motor
5602
Consist: 35 cars, caboose : 11 cars, caboose
Speed: Standing : 15 m. p. n.
Operation: Timetable and train orders;
yard limits
Track: Single; 4^o curve; 0.20 percent
descending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 10:35 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. 2758

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

THE PIEDMONT & NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

February 7, 1944.

Accident at Belton, S. C., on January 7, 1944, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of the
following train moving within yard limits.

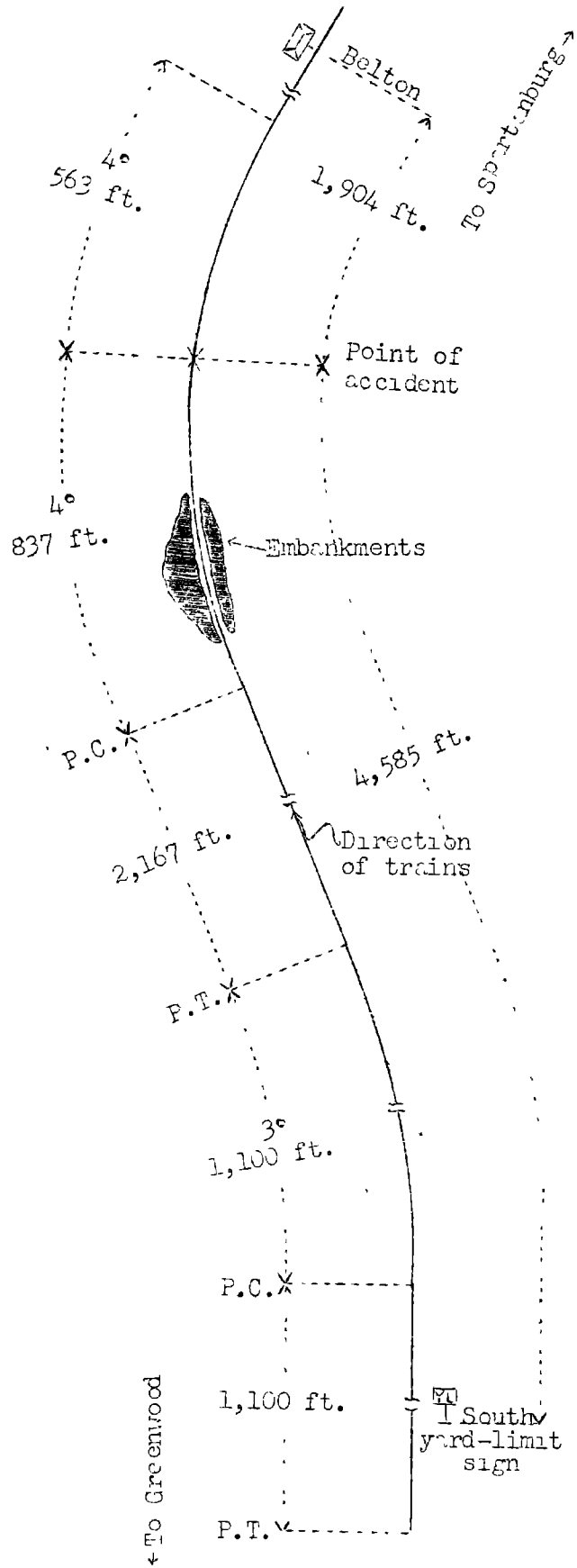
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On January 7, 1944, there was a rear-end collision
between two freight trains on the Piedmont & Northern
Railway at Belton, S. C., which resulted in the death of
one employee and the injury of two 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 Spartanburg, S. C.
58.0 mi.
- x Belton (P. of A.)
30.9 mi.
- o Greenwood, S. C.



Inv. No. 2758
 Piedmont & Northern Railway
 Belton, S. C.
 January 7, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the South Carolina Division extending between Greenwood and Spartanburg, S. C., 88.9 miles. This was a single-track line, equipped with an overhead catenary system for the electric propulsion of trains, over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track 1,904 feet south of the station at Belton and 4,585 feet north of the south yard-limit sign. From the south there were, in succession, a tangent 1,100 feet, a 3° curve to the left 1,100 feet, a tangent 2,167 feet, and a 4° curve to the right 837 feet to the point of accident and 563 feet beyond. The grade for north-bound trains was, successively, 0.60 percent descending 2,150 feet, 0.65 percent ascending 750 feet and 0.20 percent descending 800 feet to the point of accident.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

55 (a). When within yard limits trains must be run with great care, and under the control of the Motorman.

Bulletin No. 87, dated September 25, 1934, read in part as follows:

" * * * the meaning of 'under control'.
Be able to stop within one-half the distance
of your vision."

Description of Accident

No. 48, a north-bound second-class freight train, consisting of electric motor 5610, 35 cars and a caboose, stopped on the main track at Belton at 10:17 a. m. About 18 minutes later the rear end was struck by No. 60 at a point 4,585 feet north of the south yard-limit sign.

No. 60, a north-bound third-class freight train, consisting of electric motor 5602, 11 cars and a caboose, passed the south yard-limit sign at Belton, and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it struck No. 48.

From the control compartment of a north-bound motor the view of the point where the accident occurred was restricted to about 650 feet, because of embankments and track curvature.

The caboose and rear three cars of No. 48 were derailed and badly damaged. Motor 5602 was derailed and stopped, badly damaged, upright and in line with the track, with its front end 138 feet north of the point of collision.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 10:35 a. m.

The engineer of No. 60 was killed, and the front brakeman and the flagman of No. 60 were injured.

Discussion

The rules of this carrier governing operation within yard limits provide that all trains must be operated prepared to stop within one-half the range of vision, and all the surviving employees concerned so understood.

About 18 minutes after No. 48 stopped at Belton the rear end was struck by No. 60. As No. 60 was approaching the south yard-limit sign, the speed was about 35 miles per hour. The air brakes had been tested and they functioned properly. The motorman, the conductor, the front brakeman and the flagman were in the control compartment of the motor. There was no condition of the motor which obscured the vision or distracted the attention of the crew, and they were maintaining a lookout ahead. When the motor reached a point about 2,800 feet north of the yard-limit sign the engineer made a 10-pound brake-pipe reduction, and at a point about 3,300 feet north of the yard-limit sign he made another 10-pound reduction. From this point northward the view of the track ahead was materially restricted. When the motor reached a point about 500 feet south of the point where the accident occurred, the employees on the motor saw the caboose of the preceding train. The motorman immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but he was unable to stop his train short of No. 48. The speed of No. 60 was about 15 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

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 seventh day of February, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.