INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO 3009

TENNESSEE CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR OZONE, TENN., ON

AUGUST 2, 1946

SUMMARY

Railroad:	Tennessee Central	
Date:	August 2, 1946	
Location:	Ozone, Tenn.	
Kind of accident:	Head-end collision	
Equipment involved:	Track motor-car	: Passenger train
Train number:		: 2
Engine number:		: 551
Consist:	Motor-car C-37	: 4 cars
Estimated speed:	15 m. p. h.	: 30 m. p. h.
Operation:	Timetable and train orders	
Track:	Single; 6° curve; 0.5 percent descending grade eastward	
Weather:	Clear	
Time:	2:17 p. m.	
Casualties:	1 killed; 1 injured	
Cause:	Failure to provide adequate protection for movement of track motor-car	
Recommendation:	That the Tennessee Central Railway Company provide adequate train-order or block-signal protection for the movement of track motor-cars on its line	

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3009

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

TENNESSEE CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY

September 25, 1946.

Accident near Ozone, Tenn., on August 2, 1946, caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of a track motor-car.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION[1]

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 2, 1946, there was a head-end collision between a track motor-car and a passenger train on the Tennessee Central Railway near Ozone, Tenn., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of one employee.

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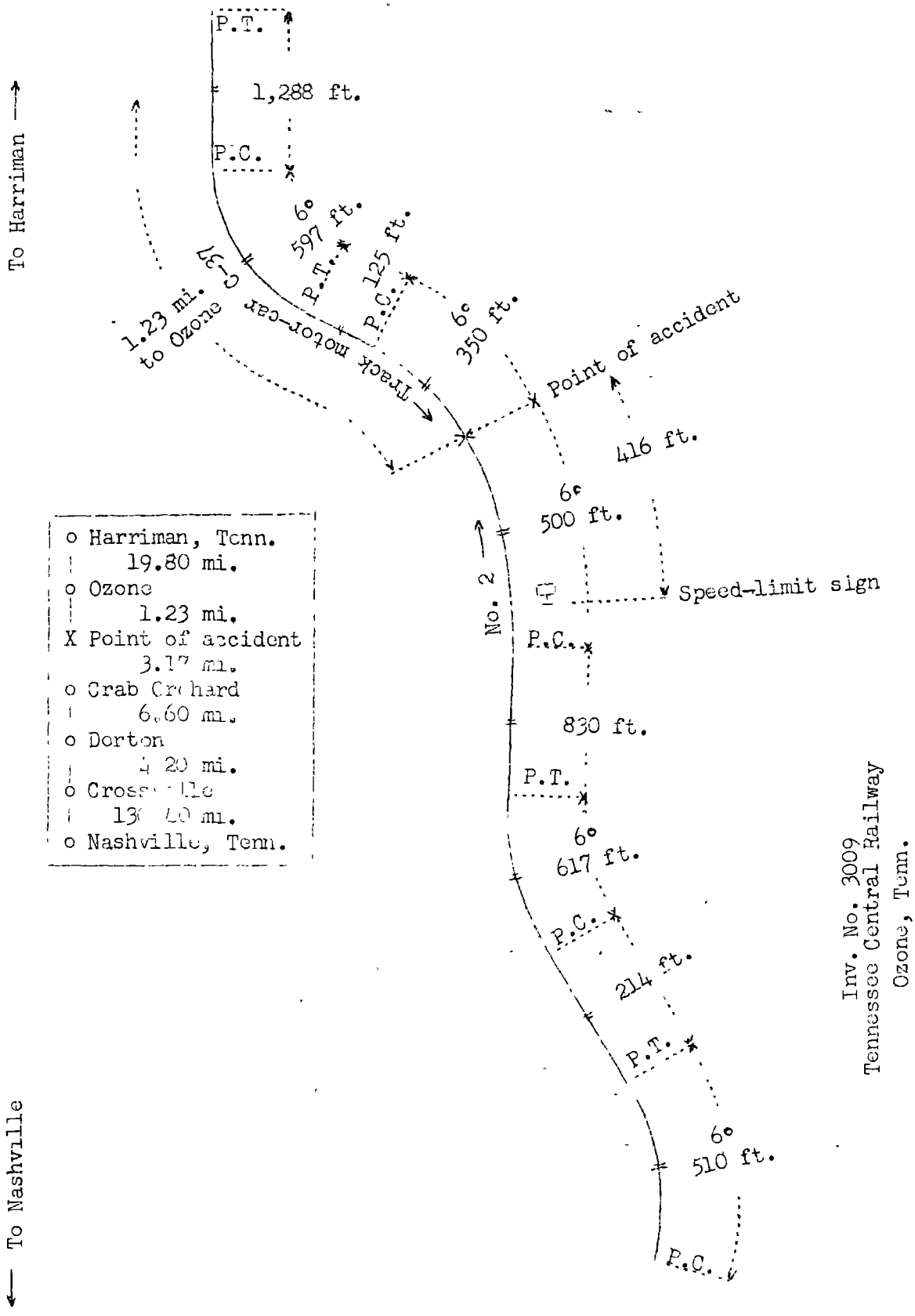
[1]Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and disposition.



Inv. No. 3009
Tennessee Central Railway
Ozone, Tenn.
August 2, 1946

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Eastern Division extending between Nashville and Harriman, Tenn., 165.4 miles, 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 144.37 miles east of Nashville and 1.23 miles west of the station at Ozone. From the west there are, in succession, a 6° curve to the left 510 feet in length, a tangent 214 feet, a 6° curve to the right 617 feet, a tangent 830 feet and a 6° curve to the left 500 feet to the point of accident and 350 feet eastward. From the east there are, in succession, a tangent 1,288 feet in length, a 6° curve to the left 597 feet, a tangent 125 feet and the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.5 percent descending eastward.

Instructions governing the operation of track motor-cars read in part as follows:

> 3. Keeping Clear of Trains: Before placing a * * * motor car on main track, person in charge must, when practicable, get information from the Dispatcher on train movements * * *, but such information will not in any way relieve the person in charge from properly protecting against all trains.
>
> Motor * * * cars should be clear of the main track ten minutes before passenger trains are due. * * * Curves, tunnels and other dangerous places should be flagged when necessary and a constant lookout should be kept. * * *
>
> 6. Speed of Cars: Motor * * * cars must not exceed fifteen (15) miles per hour at any time, and must be run slowly * * * around curves.
>
> * * *

Special bulletin instructions dated March 30, 1944, and addressed to foremen and patrolmen read in part as follows:

> * * *
>
> Existing instructions to telegraph operators provide that they will furnish you with written line-ups. Operators will retain carbon copies of same.

Effective at once, when you receive a line-up from an operator, over a 'phone, you will put the line-up you receive in writing, as you receive it, and read same back to operator. Do not accept line-up until you have read it back to the operator and he has told you that you have understood him correctly.

You will not entrust anybody other than yourself with the responsibility of obtaining line-ups.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains is 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

About 2:13 p. m. track motor-car C-37 departed west-bound from Ozone and about 4 minutes later it was struck by No. 2 at a point 1.23 miles west of that station.

No. 2, an east-bound first-class passenger train, consisting of engine 551, one baggage-mail car, one baggage-express car and two coaches, in the order named, departed from Nashville at 8:30 a. m., on time, departed from Crab Orchard, the last open office, 4.4 miles west of Ozone, at 2:10 p. m., 7 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 30 miles per hour it collided with track motor-car C-37.

The motor-car was moved eastward about 615 feet on the front of the engine of No. 2 to the point where the train stopped. The motor-car and the pilot of engine 551 were damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 2:17 p. m.

The employee killed was a general roadmaster, and the employee injured was an assistant roadmaster. These employees were occupants of the motor-car.

According to data furnished by this carrier, motor-car C-37 was of the 4-wheel, open deck, light inspection type. It weighed 565 pounds, and was powered by an 8-horsepower gasoline motor.

Discussion

The investigation disclosed that immediately prior to the accident a general roadmaster, a supervisor of bridges and buildings and an assistant roadmaster were making an inspection trip westward from Harriman on motor-car C-37. They stopped at Ozone about 2 p. m. to procure information relative to train

movements. The supervisor of bridges and buildings communicated by telephone with the operator at Crab Orchard, about 4 miles west of Ozone, and obtained information that No. 60, an east-bound freight train, had not arrived at Crab Orchard, that this train would be delayed at Crab Orchard about 30 minutes performing station switching, and that No. 1, a west-bound passenger train, and No. 2, an east-bound passenger train, would meet at Dorton, 11 miles west of Ozone. After they discussed the line-up at some length, there was some question as to whether the supervisor of bridges and buildings had properly understood the operator at Crab Orchard. Then the assistant roadmaster communicated by telephone with the operator at Crossville, 15.2 miles west of Ozone, and he understood the operator to say that No. 2 was then at Crossville. The operator at Crossville said that he was not questioned with reference to the movement of No. 2, but that information was requested relative to the movement of No. 60, and that he informed the assistant roadmaster that No. 60 was then at Crossville. No. 2 had departed from Crossville at 1:45 p. m., 5 minutes late, and had received copies of a train order at Crossville, which established Dorton as the meeting point between No. 1 and No. 2. The supervisor of bridges and buildings said he informed the general roadmaster that No. 2 was to meet No. 1 at Dorton, but the assistant roadmaster said he understood the supervisor to say that these trains were to meet at Crossville. The general roadmaster was killed in the accident. The information obtained by these employees with reference to train movements was not in writing, and it was not repeated to the operators from whom it was obtained. The occupants of the motor-car did not have a correct understanding of the location of No. 2. No. 2 was due to leave Ozone at 2:13 p. m. and Crab Orchard, the first station west, at 2:03 p. m. The motor-car departed from Ozone about 2:13 p. m., on the time of No. 2, and was moving on a curve about 1.23 miles west of Ozone at a speed of about 15 miles per hour when the assistant roadmaster saw the engine of No. 2 about 150 feet distant. He called a warning to the other occupant of the motor car, then jumped just before the collision occurred.

As No. 2 was approaching the curve on which the accident occurred the speed was about 30 miles per hour, in compliance with a speed restriction of 30 miles per hour for trains moving on this curve. No train order restricting the movement of No. 2 with respect to motor-car C-37 had been issued. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead, and the first they knew of the movement of the motor-car was when the fireman saw the motor-car about 150 feet distant. The fireman called a warning to the engineer, who immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position. The accident occurred before the speed of the train was materially reduced. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route. Because of track curvature and a high embankment on the inside of the curve, the view of the point of accident from either direction was restricted to a distance of about 150 feet.

In addition to the present accident, during the past two years the Commission has investigated ten collisions between trains and motor-cars. These accidents resulted in the death of 21 persons and the injury of 19, and were caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of track motor-cars. In the instant case, the members of the crew of No. 2 were not informed by train order as to the location of the opposing motor-car, and no protection was provided for the motor-car. If adequate train-order protection had been provided for the movement of the track motor-car, this accident might have been prevented. If proper block protection had been provided, neither the motor-car nor the opposing train would have been permitted to enter a block occupied by an opposing movement.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the movement of a track motor-car.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Tennessee Central Railway Company provide adequate train-order or block-signal protection for the movement of track motor-cars on its line.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-fifth day of September, 1946.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.