Inv-2182

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

BUREAU OF SAFETY

ACCIDENT ON THE

TEXAS & NEW ORLEANS RAILROAD

SHREVEPORT, LA.

June 26, 1937

INVESTIGATION NO. 2182

Summary

Inv-2182

Railroad:	Texas & New Orleans Railroad	
Date:	June 26, 1937	
Location:	Shreveport, La.	
Kind of accident:	Collision	
Trains involved:	T.& N.O. R.R. Passenger	:St.L.S.W. :Freight
Train numbers:	No. 26	:Switch
Engine numbers:	Motor Coach 1028	:500
Consist:	1 coach	:15 cars
Speed:	8 - 30 m.p.h.	:Standing
Track:	Tangent; grade 0.90 ascending eastbound.	
Weather:	Clear	
Time:	4.43 p.m.	
Casualties:	10 injured	
Cause:	Failure of switch crew to afford flag protection; failure to operate passenger train under proper control within yard limits.	

To the Commission:

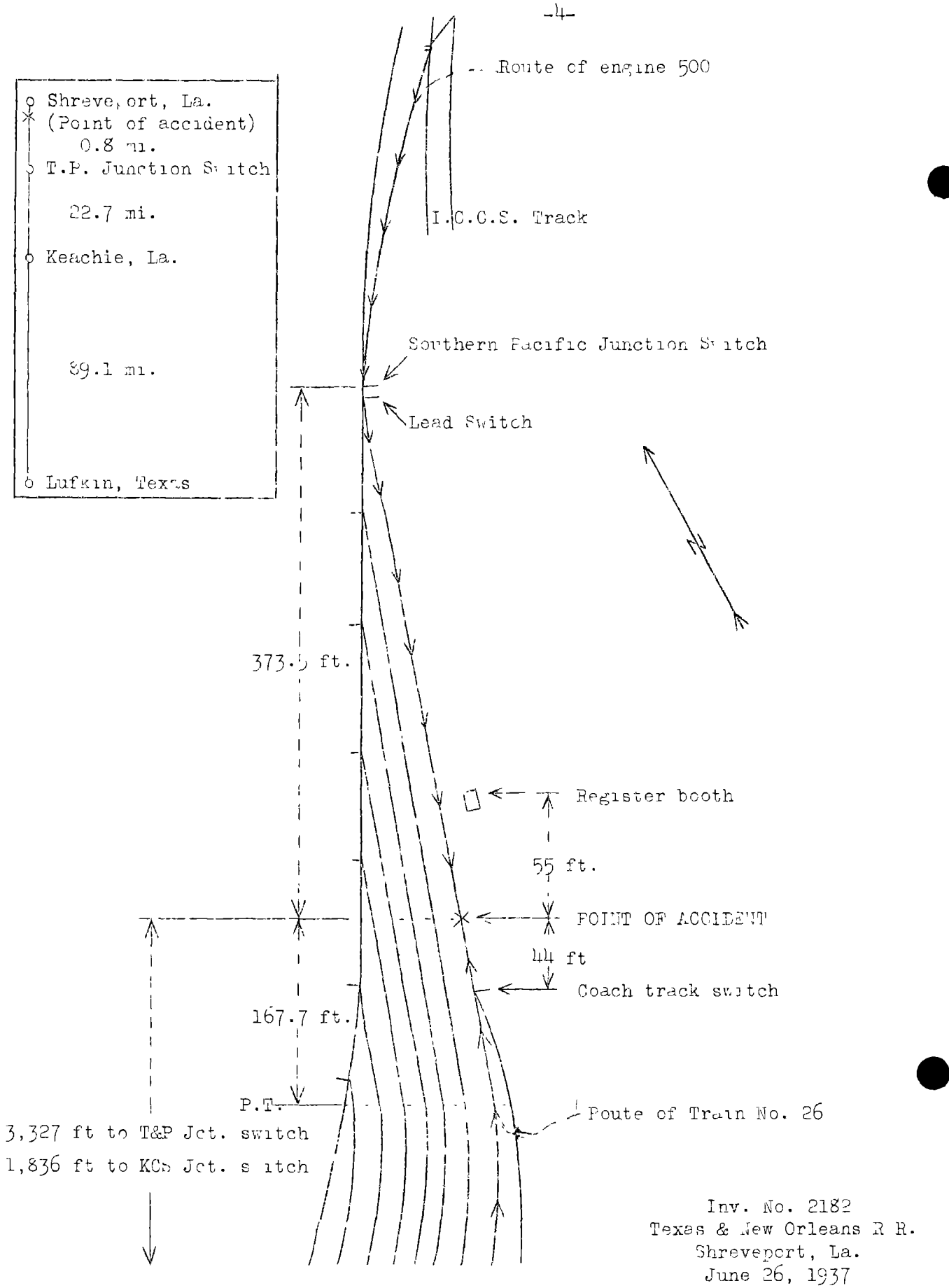
On June 26, 1937, there was a collision between a passenger train of the Texas & New Orleans Railroad and a switch engine of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway, on the Texas & New Orleans Railroad at Shreveport, La., which resulted in the injury of 7 passengers, 1 mail clerk, 1 person carried under contract and 1 employee.

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on the Shreveport Subdivision of the Houston Division of the Texas & New Orleans Railroad, hereinafter called the T.& N.O., which extends between Shreveport, La., and Lufkin, Texas, a distance of 114.5 miles, and is a single track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders, no block-signal system being in use. The accident occurred on the main track within yard limits, near the east end of the yard at a point 373 feet west of the S.P. Junction switch and 55 feet west of the register booth for T.& N.O. passenger trains. A coach track parallels the main track on the south, the east switch of which is located 44 feet west of the point of accident. Several yard tracks paralleling the main track on the north are numbered consecutively, beginning with track 1 on the south. K.C.S. Junction is located 1,836 feet west of the point of accident.

Approaching the point of accident from the west the track is tangent for a distance of 1,355 feet, followed by a 7° curve to the left 398 feet in length, then tangent for a distance of 403 feet, the accident occurring on this tangent 167 feet from its western end; approaching from the east the track is tangent 236 feet to, and 167 feet beyond the point of accident. The grade for east-bound trains is slightly descending for a distance of 1,250 feet, then 0.90 percent ascending for 260 feet to the point of accident and for 690 feet beyond.

Under a joint agreement effective August 1, 1933, terminal operations, at Shreveport, of the T.& N.O. and the St. Louis Southwestern Railway, hereinafter referred to as the St.L.S.W., were consolidated and placed under the supervision of officers of the St.L.S.W.; however, the T.& N.O. handle their own passenger and road freight trains as far as the end of the T.& N.O. tracks at S.P. Junction switch. From this point eastward, train and switching movements are



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handled over the tracks of the Kansas City Southern Railway, hereinafter referred to as the K.C.S., which extend to the passenger station approximately 0.9 mile farther east, the main yard of the St.L.S.W., being approximately 1 mile east of the passenger station. The rules of each respective railroad govern movements over their own trackage.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 4.43 p.m.

Description

Train No. 26 an east-bound T.& N.O. passenger train, consisted of 1 coach hauled by gas-electric motor 1028, and was in charge of Conductor Davis and Engineman Garrison. This train departed from Lufkin at 1.25 p.m., 15 minutes late, passed Keachie, the last open office, 22.7 miles west of the point of accident, at 4.06 p.m., 13 minutes late, according to the train sheet, and collided with St.L.S.W. switch engine 500 at the east end of the T.& N.O. yard at Shreveport while traveling at a speed estimated to have been 8 or 10 miles per hour.

Engine 500, a west-bound St.L.S.W. switch engine, headed east and hauling 15 cars, was in charge of Foreman Smith and Engineman Jackson. This engine left the St. L.S.W. yard, approximately 1.9 miles east of the point of accident, at about 4.20 or 4.25 p.m., according to the statements of employees, and arrived at S.P. Junction switch between 4.34 and 4.39 p.m. It then entered upon the main track of the T.& N.O., and had proceeded a distance of about 400 feet and stopped for the purpose of entering the coach-track switch when the tank of Engine 500 was struck by T.& N.O. Train No. 26.

The first pair of wheels of motor 1028 were derailed; this car sustained considerable damage while the trailer coach was only slightly damaged. Switch engine 500 was not derailed and sustained only slight damage.

The employee injured was the baggageman of Train No. 26.

Summary of evidence

Engineman Garrison of T.& N.O. Train No. 26, stated that the air brakes on his train had worked properly the entire trip. After the switch had been lined behind his train at K.C.S.

Junction, he increased the speed of his train to about 15 miles per hour in about 8 car lengths and then shut off the power; after traveling about 3 or 4 car lengths farther he applied the brakes to further check the speed of his train, released the brakes, and then saw switch engine 500 at the east end of the yard. When at a distance of 6 or 8 car lengths from the switch engine, he tried to determine which track it was occupying. After making another application and release of the brakes he saw that the switch engine was standing on the main track, whereupon he applied the brakes in emergency when 4 or 5 car lengths or less from engine 500. He thought that his train was running at a speed of about 12 or 14 miles per hour at the time. This was his sixth consecutive trip on this run within the past 20 days and he did not remember having previously seen a switch engine in this vicinity. Owing to the curve to the left and other physical characteristics approaching the point of accident, and due to the fact that his train was an overdue first-class train, he considered that he was complying with the rules, which required him to run with caution within yard limits not protected by block signals. He was positive that he did not pass or see a flagman prior to the emergency application of the brakes but he saw a flagman about a car length west of the switch engine, giving stop signals with his hat from the south side of the track. After the accident he noted the time was 4.44 p.m., and said the weather was clear at that time.

Conductor Davis of T.& N.O. Train No. 26 stated that no trouble was experienced with the brakes and normal stops were made en route. He was on the rear platform upon leaving K.C.S. Junction and noticed the engineer shut off after the train had travelled about 400 feet, at which time the conductor moved to a position on the right rear steps preparatory to getting off at the register booth. He did not notice any applications of the air brakes between K.C.S. Junction and the time they were applied in emergency immediately prior to the collision. He said that he did not see Foreman Smith of Engine 500 give any stop signals, nor did he see him prior to the accident. He said that from his position on the rear of the train he believed he would have seen anyone that his train passed on the right side of the track between K.C.S. Junction and the point of accident. His train was operated at about the normal rate of speed en route and he estimated the speed to have been about 10 miles per hour prior to and at the time of the accident. It was his opinion that had the engineman of his train known what track the switch engine was occupying, the train could have been stopped before the accident occurred.

He believed that the collision was caused by his engineman being mistaken in the location of the switch engine and the failure of the crew of the switch engine to afford proper flag protection. He placed the time of the accident at 4.42 p.m.

Train Porter Pittman of T.& N.O. Train No. 26, estimated the speed of the train to have been 8 or 9 miles per hour when the brakes were applied in emergency.

Engine Foreman Smith, of St.L.S.W. switch engine 500, stated that he is a regular helper on this assignment, but is used in the capacity of engine foreman for 3 or 4 days each month and this was his fourth consecutive day in that capacity. He had had 4 years' experience in the Shreveport yards and had been examined on the T.& N.O. rules about a year ago and was familiar with the tracks of the different railroads over which St.L.S.W. engines operate at Shreveport. On the day of the accident he went on duty at 3.00 p.m., and compared his watch with a standard clock just before going on duty. His engine was moving backward hauling 15 cars and left the St.L.S.W. yard between 4.20 and 4.25 p.m., and there were no irregularities in the movements en route to the T.& N.O. yard. He had a T.& N.O. timetable in his possession and was familiar with the time of train No. 26 at various points in Shreveport. His engine entered upon the main track of the T.& N.O. at S.P. Junction about 4.38 p.m., and travelled about 7 car lengths and he estimated that it stopped east of the coach track switch at 4.38½ p.m. He lined the switch for his engine to enter the coach track and realizing that train No. 26 was then due, he ran westward along the track on the engineman's side, toward the approaching train, giving stop signals with his hat. After running a distance of about 8 or 10 car lengths, train No. 26, passed him at a speed of between 20 and 25 miles per hour with the motor working and no brakes applied. He was flagging and shouting in an attempt to attract the attention of the engineman who was looking down at the cab floor. After the train passed him he turned and ran after it, still shouting and he then saw Switchman Hall of his crew also giving stop signals from a point 7 or 8 car lengths west of engine 500. Switchman Hall later told him that the engineman of Train No. 26 was looking in the direction of some cars stored on the coach track at the time he went by. When the collision occurred Engine Foreman Smith was still 3 or 4 car lengths behind Train No. 26; he saw that Conductor Davis had been thrown to the ground and when he reached him he asked if he was injured. Engine Foreman Smith knew of nothing that would have obstructed the view of the engineman of Train No. 26, and said that had he been looking ahead the stop signals could have

been seen for at least 20 or 25 car lengths. Although he knew that proper flagging equipment consisted of a red flag, fusees and torpedoes, Engine Foreman Smith said that he had never seen anyone in yard service use a red flag to flag trains in Shreveport yard. His engine had been working in the T.& N.O. yard practically every day when Train No. 26 passed, which was due at T.P. Junction switch, located about 0.4 mile west of the point of accident, at 4.35 p.m., and was due at S.P. Junction switch at 4.39 p.m. He knew that all trains were required to run with caution in the T.& N.O. yard, and for this reason he considered that by placing himself in a position where his stop signals could be seen a distance of 20 or 25 car lengths he was affording proper protection to his train. The weather was clear and he said the accident occurred at 4.40 p.m.

Engineman Jackson of St.L.S.W. switch engine 500, stated that on June 26 he was transferred from Pine Bluffs to Shreveport for temporary yard service. About 1½ years ago he had been examined and qualified for service in the Illinois Central yards at that point and worked 3 or 4 days as fireman in yard service at Shreveport about that time. This is the only work he had done at that point until the shift on which he was working at the time of the accident. He was not acquainted with the tracks and switches between the St.L.S.W. yard and T.& N.O. yard, nor had he ever been qualified for service over these tracks and had never been examined on the rules of the T.& N.O. railroad; neither did he have a T.& N.O. timetable. He went on duty in the St.L.S.W. yard at 3.00 p.m., June 26, and at that time he informed Engine Foreman Smith that he had never run an engine in Shreveport yard. The engine foreman informed him that they were to deliver a cut of cars to the T.& N.O. yard. He questioned his fireman relative to any superior trains they had to clear and the fireman informed him that train No. 26 was the first one they had to look out for; Engineman Jackson then consulted the fireman's timetable and saw that train No. 26 was due at S.P. Junction at 4.39 p.m.; however, he did not know where that point was located. His fireman ran the engine leaving the St.L.S.W. yard in order to give Engineman Jackson an opportunity to observe the track layout as they proceeded to the T.& N.O. yard. Their train passed the Union Station between 4.34 and 4.35 p.m., and the engineman took charge of the engine shortly afterwards. A stop was later made at a switch and his fireman advised him that this switch was where they entered the T.& N.O. yard; however, Engineman Jackson did not realize that the location was S.P. Junction and he was depending for guidance on his fireman's familiarity with the yard, the fireman having told him there was plenty of time to make the move ahead of Train No. 26. After proceeding a short distance a stop was made while Engine Foreman Smith threw the

coach track switch; when the switch was thrown, the engine foreman started running westward on the track, giving stop signals until he disappeared from view around the curve, about 6 or 7 car lengths beyond the tank of his engine. Very soon afterwards, Train No. 26 appeared about the same distance away and seemed to be running at a speed of between 20 and 25 miles per hour and immediately collided with his engine. Engineman Jackson said that his engine had been standing about 1½ or 2 minutes at the time of the collision, which occurred at 4.40 p.m., but previous to that time he did not know that he was occupying the main track.

Fireman Amis, of St.L.S.W. switch engine 500, stated that he had been in the service of the St.L.S.W. as fireman for about 18 years, the most of which was spent working in Shreveport yard and he was working his regular assignment at the time of the accident. He was examined on the T.& N.O. rules about a year ago and was familiar with the tracks upon which St.L.S.W. engines operate at Shreveport. He checked the timetable schedules with Engineman Jackson when they went to work and it was understood that No. 26 was due at S.P. Junction switch at 4.39 p.m. He had a Kansas City, Shreveport & Gulf Terminal timetable in his possession upon which is shown the time of Train No. 26 at S.P. Junction. He had asked for a T.& N.O. timetable at both the roundhouse and the yard office but was told there was none available and for this reason he had none in his possession. He knew that Engineman Jackson was inexperienced in Shreveport yard but he did not inform him when they had reached S.P. Junction nor did it occur to him to see what time it was; neither did he advise the engineman that they had entered upon the T.& N.O. tracks. He handled the engine part of the way en route but before reaching the switches to the T.& N.O. yard, Engineman Jackson took charge. He said that there were no irregularities in the movement of his train to the point of accident, and while on previous occasions No. 26 had been met in the T.& N.O. yard, the switch engine had always cleared the time of No. 26. The stop at the point of accident was made to line the switch for his engine to enter the coach track and his engine had been standing about 3 or 4 minutes when the collision occurred. Engineman Jackson told him that one of the switchmen had gone out to flag. He did not see the switchman flagging nor did he see the approaching passenger train until it was within about 5 car lengths from his engine and he estimated that the train was running about 25 miles per hour at that time.

Switchman Hall of St.L.S.W. switch engine 500, stated that he had been in the service of the St.L.S.W. about 4 months. Prior to reaching the point of accident he and Engine Foreman Smith were riding on the footboards at the rear of the tender. He said that they discussed Train No. 26, and it was his understanding that his engine foreman intended to enter track No. 1, the switch of which is east of the coach track. After stopping at the coach track switch at 4.39 p.m., Engine Foreman Smith ran down the track about 8 or 10 car lengths to flag No. 26, while he threw the switch and when he looked up he saw that the train was approaching at a speed of about 25 miles per hour; he also immediately ran toward it, giving stop signals, and had reached a point 4 or 5 car lengths from his engine when the train passed him at a speed he estimated to have been between 15 and 18 miles per hour and immediately collided with engine 500 while running at about the same speed. When the motor of Train No. 26 passed him, the engineman of that train appeared to be looking off to the right of the track. Switchman Hall said that his engine had been standing 1 or 2 minutes when struck.

Switchman Robinson, of St.L.S.W. switch engine 500, stated that his engine used about 15 minutes going from the St.L.S.W. yard to the point of accident. He had been employed as switchman in the St.L.S.W. yards at Shreveport for about 3 years and this was his regular assignment. His engine moved backward, hauling 15 cars, and while approaching the point of accident he was on the rear car. When the stop was made for the coach track switch he immediately lined one of the cross-over switches behind his train and then saw No. 26 approaching 5 or 6 car lengths behind his engine, and Engine Foreman Smith and Switchman Hall were running toward it, flagging as they ran. In his opinion there was not sufficient time between the stop of his train and the arrival of No. 26 to have afforded proper flag protection as his engine had just come to a stop when the accident occurred. He looked at his watch at that time and it was 4.40 p.m.

Joint Car Inspectors Berry and Gibson stated that they were standing near the main track in the T.& N.O. yard waiting to inspect the cut of cars hauled by the switch engine. Train No. 26 passed them at a point 8 or 10 car lengths west of the point of accident at a speed of 8 or 10 miles per hour. Inspector Berry, who was on the engineman's side, saw Engineman Garrison of Train No. 26, apparently alert, leaning out of the cab window, looking ahead. The only flagman they saw attempting to flag No. 26 were the two switchmen near the switch

engine. When Train No. 26 stopped, the car inspectors were but 4 or 5 car lengths from the rear of the train.

Assistant Section Foreman Dickerson, who resides along the T.& N.O., right of way, south of the track and about 290 feet west of the point of accident, stated that he was sitting outside his house on the afternoon of the accident and saw engine 500 stop just east of the coach track switch. Realizing that Train No. 26 was about due, he looked at his watch and saw that it was then 4.42 p.m. He started walking in the direction of engine 500 and one of the switchmen walked over and threw the coach track switch, and then started westward down the track waving his arms. About that time Train No. 26 passed the end of Assistant Section Foreman Dickerson's house and came within his view. After reaching a point about 20 feet west of the coach track switch, the switchman who was running toward the approaching train, turned and started back toward the switch but he was passed by Train No. 26 before he reached the switch. Assistant Section Foreman Dickerson said that Train No. 26 was running at a speed of about 10 miles per hour when it passed his house and he saw the engineman sitting on his seat box looking out the front window.

Mechanical Foreman Schlater, of the St.L.S.W., stated that he received a letter from the general yardmaster of the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad under date of October 3, 1935, to the effect that Engineman Jackson, who at that time was employed as fireman, had been examined on the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Rules, and had qualified for service on October 2, 1935. It was the mechanical foreman's understanding that this letter of approval from the general yardmaster included all of the qualification requirements applicable to switchmen and enginemen for yard service at Shreveport. He said that Engineman Jackson was instructed to familiarize himself with the tracks upon which he was required to work when arrangements were made for the rule examination on October 2, 1935, and it was his understanding that Jackson had complied with these instructions.

Discussion.

Train No. 26 was scheduled at T.P. Junction switch, located 3,327 feet west of the point of accident, at 4.35 p.m., and was scheduled at S.P. Junction switch, located 373.5 feet east of the point of accident, and also the point at which engine 500 entered upon the T.& N.O. tracks, at 4.39 p.m. There was much conflict in the statements made during the

investigation relative to the time engine 500 left S.P. Junction switch and stopped east of the coach track switch, the flag protection afforded, and also the time the accident occurred, and these facts cannot be determined with accuracy. The weight of evidence, however, is to the effect that engine 500 entered upon the T.& N.O. tracks at S.P. Junction switch not earlier than 4.38 p.m., and had been stopped near the coach track switch such a short period before the accident occurred that the engine foreman was able to get but a very short distance west of the switch when he was passed by Train No. 26. Engineman Garrison's own statement relative to handling Train No. 26 after stopping at K.C.S. Junction, located 1,836 feet west of the point of accident indicates that his train attained a speed of about 15 miles per hour in about 8 car lengths. He then shut off power and after traveling 3 or 4 car lengths, made a service application of the brakes and released, then saw engine 500 at the east end of the yard. When about 6 or 8 car lengths from the switch engine he was still uncertain as to which track the engine was occupying and he made another application and release of the brakes and upon reaching a point 4 or 5 car lengths from engine 500 he saw that the switch engine was on the main track, whereupon he applied the brakes in emergency. He estimated the speed of his train to have been about 12 or 14 miles per hour at that time. The statements of other witnesses whom Train No. 26 passed in the immediate vicinity just before the collision, as well as the damage resulting from the accident, support Engineman Garrison's estimate of the speed immediately prior to the collision.

T.& N.O. Rule No. 93 reads as follows:

> "Within yard limits the main track may be used, protecting against first-class trains. Second and inferior class trains, extra trains and engines must move with caution within yard limits. When not protected by block signals or when moving against the current of traffic, first-class trains must move with caution within yard limits."

T.& N.O. definition of the term "with caution" reads as follows:

> "To run at reduced speed, according to conditions, prepared to stop short of a train, engine, car, misplaced switch, derail, or other obstruction, or before reaching a stop signal. Where circumstances require, train must be preceded by a flagman."

Under the above rule, St.L.S.W. switch engine 500 should not have left S.P. Junction less than 1 minute ahead of scheduled time of Train No. 26 without proper flag protection. On the other hand, the rule required Train No. 26 to move "with caution" in the vicinity of the accident and, according to the definition of this term appearing in the T.& N.O. rule book, Train No. 26 was not so operated.

Conclusions

This accident was caused by failure properly to protect St.L.S.W. switch engine 500 by flag and by failure to operate T.& N.O. Train No. 26 under proper control within yard limits.

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. PATTERSON,

Director.