

In re Investigation of an accident which
occurred on the Central New England
Railway near Canaan, Conn.,
March 25, 1916.

On March 25, 1916, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Central New England Railway near Canaan, Conn., which resulted in the death of one employee. After investigation of this accident the Chief of the Division of Safety submits the following report:

The First Sub-division of this railway, upon which this accident occurred, extending from Hartford, Conn. to State Line, N. Y., a distance of 67.29 miles, is a single track line. No block signal system is in use, train movements being governed by train orders and time-card rights.

Westbound freight train extra No. 112-114 consisted of 14 loaded cars, 8 empty cars and a caboose, hauled by locomotives 112 and 114, and was in charge of Conductor Blodgett and Enginemen Shove and Burr. This train left Grants, Conn., 40.81 miles west of Hartford, and 13.67 miles east of Canaan, at about 12.15 a.m., March 25th, and reached Canaan at 2.05 a.m., coming to a stop in the yards at that place at 2.35 a.m., with the rear end of the train about 250 feet within the yard limits and about 1,450 feet east

of the passenger station. While standing at this location, extra 112-114 was struck by westbound freight train No. 199.

Westbound freight train No. 199 consisted of 12 loaded cars and a caboose, hauled by locomotive 129, and was in charge of Conductor Wood and Engineman Bova. This train left Hartford, Conn., at 7.45 p. m., March 24th, and when entering Caneen yard at a speed of about 3 or 4 miles an hour collided with the rear of extra 112-114.

As a result of the collision, extra 112-114 was forced forward about 40 feet, the body of the caboose was demolished, and the rear trucks of the car immediately ahead of the caboose were derailed. The rear brakeman of extra 112-114, the only person who was riding in the caboose, was killed.

Approaching the point of accident from the east there is a 6-degree curve to the left, 958.5 feet in length, then 550 feet of tangent track, followed by a 4-degree curve to the left, 519 feet in length, at the western end of which this accident occurred. In the vicinity of the accident there is a ascending grade of .7% for westbound trains, and the view of enginemen of westbound trains is limited to about 800 feet. The weather at the time of accident was clear.

Rule 93, of the operating rules of this railway,

reads as follows:

"Yard limits will be designated on the time-table and indicated by yard limit signs.

"Within yard limits the main track may be used protecting against first-class trains.

"Second-class and extra trains must move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear."

Time-card rule No. 9005 provides in part as

follows:

"Where a block extends into or through yard limits, trains and engines are not relieved from the observance of Rule 91."

Conductor Blodgett, of extra 112-114, stated that he thought his train left Grants at 12.10 or 12.15 a.m., with the locomotives backing up, and that the train came to a stop at Norfolk, 9.47 miles east of Canaan, at 12.25 a. m. He stated that 50 minutes were spent there in looking for the operator, searching for waybills and checking the train; that his train left there at 1.15 a.m., and came to a stop in the yards at Canaan, about 40 or lengths east of the passenger station, at 2.05 a.m. He stated that he then went to the telegraph office, got orders and waybills, registered, and then went to a lunch room, a short distance from the station. The first knowledge he had that his train had been struck was when engineers of train No. 194, several minutes after the

occurrence of the accident, came to the telegraph office for assistance. Conductor Blodgett stated that his train had come to a stop about 5 car lengths within the yard limit, and for that reason, according to rule 93, no flagman was sent back to protect the train, as no first-class trains were due.

Engineman Bova, of train No. 195, stated that his train left Hartford about 7.40 p.m., March 24th. He stated that he thought his train was traveling at a speed of 15 or 18 miles an hour when rounding the curve east of the point of accident, and that he considered his train to be running under perfect control when he entered the yard limits. He further stated that at a point which he estimated to have been 10 car lengths from the rear of extra 112-114, his fireman told him that there was a train ahead and he at once made a service application of the brakes, but that he did not see the rear end of the extra until he was only a few car lengths distant, because of being on the outside of the curve. He stated that the brakes on his train were working properly and he did not think that the speed of his train was much more than 2 miles an hour at the time of the collision. Engineman Bova further stated that this was his second or third trip over the section of the Central New England Railway, that while he was qualified over the road it was necessary for him to be quite watchful in order to be acquainted at all times with his exact location, and that, in this instance,

while he knew he was approaching the yard at Casson, he did not know just where the yard limit board was located. Engineman Bove further stated that he knew that the rules required that yard limits be approached with the speed of the train under full control, prepared to stop, and that second class and extra trains are permitted to occupy the main track within yard limits without protection, except against first class trains. Engineman Bove stated that the conductor and fireman of his train, who were riding on the fireman's side of the engine, on the inside of the curve, had an unobstructed view of the track for about 2,000 feet; and he was depending upon them to a certain extent to notify him in the event that there was any train in the yard occupying the main track. He stated that when the fireman told him, about 10 car lengths before reaching the point of collision, that there was a train ahead, had there been any indication of excitement or apprehension in the tone of his voice when he did so, he should at once have brought his train to a stop instead of making only a service application of the brakes. He stated that when it was seen that a collision was unavoidable the fireman jumped, and that he then made an emergency application of the brakes.

Conductor Wood, of train No. 195, stated that approaching the scene of accident he was sitting on the left side of the engine, in front of the fireman, and that his first knowledge that any danger existed was when the fireman called to the engineman that there was a red light ahead. He then

saw the red light ten or twelve car lengths distant, and after the fireman had gotten off the seat box he got down on the step. He stated that the collision occurred at 7.35 a.m., and that, while he was not certain, he thought the speed of his train was about 2 miles an hour at the time of the collision.

Fireman Sweet, of train No. 195, stated that while he considers himself familiar with the road, he did not know the exact location of the yard limit board at Cansan. He stated that he saw the lights on the rear of extra 112-114 before he saw the yard limit board, and about ten car lengths from the point of collision. He stated that he at once told the engineman, who immediately made a service application of the brakes, and that he got off the engine about ten feet before reaching the point of accident.

Under rule 93, when extra 112-114 came to a stop within the yard limits at Cansan, inasmuch as there was no first-class train due, no flagman was sent out.

The direct cause of this accident was train No. 195 not being operated under full control, prepared to stop, when entering the yard at Cansan, as required by rule 93, for which Engineman Bove is directly responsible. During the investigation of this accident it was developed that on account of his side of the engine being on the outside of the curve, his view of the track approaching the yard limits was

The direct cause of this accident was train No. 195 not being operated under full control, prepared to stop, when entering the yard at Cansan, as required by rule 93, for which Engineman Bove is directly responsible. During the investigation of this accident it was developed that on account of his side of the engine being on the outside of the curve, his view of the track approaching the yard limits was very much restricted, and he was not certain as to the exact location of the yard limit board. This fact alone provided the most urgent reason for him to have his train under perfect control, for he knew, approximately, where the yard limit board was located.

It was also developed that Conductor Wood was riding on the left side of the locomotive, on the inside of the curve approaching the scene of accident, and could have seen where the yard limit board was located. Had he been exercising a proper regard for the safety of his train, considering the fact that his engineman had made but a few trips over this section of the road, he would have noticed that his train was not being operated under control approaching the yard limit board, and would have cautioned his engineman to bring the speed under control. Had he done so this accident would probably have been averted.

Engineman Bove entered the service of this railway as an engineman November 30, 1909. Conductor Wood was employed as a brakeman July 2, 1892, was dismissed January 25, 1907, was re-employed June 22, 1909, and was promoted to conductor November 15, 1909. At the time of the accident Engineman Bove had been on duty 8 hours 45 minutes.