

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON
THE CENTRAL NEW ENGLAND RAILWAY NEAR MAYBROOK, N. Y.,
JANUARY 23, 1916.

On January 23, 1916, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Central New England Railway near Maybrook, N. Y., resulting in the death of one employee and the injury of two employees. After investigation of this accident the Chief of the Division of Safety submits the following report:

The section of the Central New England Railway between Campbell Hall, N. Y., and Maybrook, N. Y., on which this accident occurred, is a single track line. While the entire distance of approximately three miles is within yard limits, all train movements are considered as main track movements and governed by train orders. No block signal system is in use. Trains of the Erie Railroad have trackage rights from Campbell Hall to Maybrook, where the main yard is located, and where freight trains from the various roads are classified. Transfer trains to and from the Maybrook yards make connections at Campbell Hall with the Lehigh & New England, New York, Ontario & Western, and West Shore Railroads. Approaching the point of accident from the west there is a curve to the left of 2 degrees 30 minutes, followed by about 1,200 feet of tangent to the point of accident.

East bound Erie extra 3024, consisting of 54 cars and a caboose, hauled by locomotive 3064, in charge of conductor Barrett and Engineman Stickenger, left Campbell Hall at 12:55 a. m., having received train order No. 4, reading as follows:

"After P. R. R. Exa 2333 west arrives at Campbell Hall, Erie Eng. 3084 run Exa Campbell Hall to Maybrook."

This train came to a stop at the switch at the west end of Maybrook yard at 1:10 a.m., on account of the switch being set wrong. When the engineman attempted to start his train it was discovered that the locomotive was unable to move it owing to the ascending grade. It was then decided to await the arrival of a following train, and to have this train assist them into the yard at Maybrook. The train had been standing about 55 minutes when its rear was struck by P. R. R. extra 2333.

Eastbound P. R. R. extra 2333 consisted of a transfer of 27 cars, hauled by P. R. R. switching locomotive 2333 backing up, this locomotive being rented by the Central New England, and was in charge of employees of the Central New England Railway, namely, Conductor Gall and Engineman Harber, and at Campbell Hall at 1:25 a.m. received train order No. 7 as follows:

"P. R. R. Eng. 2333 run Exa. Campbell Hall to Maybrook."

It left Campbell Hall about 1:50 a.m., and at about 2:05 a.m., while running at a speed of 12 to 15 miles an hour, collided with the rear end of Erie extra 3084.

As the result of the collision one freight car and the caboose were destroyed, and one freight car and locomotive 2333 were damaged. The locomotive was derailed and came to rest on its left side against a freight car. A brakeman off duty, who was riding in the cab of the locomotive, was killed. The weather at the time of the accident was clear.

Conductor B. Brett, of extra 3084, stated that his train

came to a stop at about 1:10 a.m., at the west end of Maybrook yard on account of the switch being set wrong, and, owing to the ascending grade at that point and the weight of his train, it was unable to proceed farther. He stated that he then walked to the "HE" office and said that his train was stalled, the switch tender informing him that P. R. R. extra 2333 was headed toward Maybrook and could help his train into the yard. He then returned to his train, proceeded toward the rear end, and when about 12 to 15 car lengths from his caboose he heard extra 2333 approaching. Conductor Barrett stated that his flagman had gone back about 35 to 40 car lengths to protect his train, and stated that he saw him flag extra 2333, the signal being unanswered. He stated that the engineman shut off steam when within about 15 car lengths of his train and he thought he was going to stop, but just before the collision occurred he began to use steam again. The speed at the time of the collision was about 15 miles an hour. He further stated that train movements between Campbell Hall and Maybrook are protected under the yard limit rules, but that his flagman usually went back to flag in order to avoid any possible accidents.

Flagman Stucker, of extra 3064, stated that when his train came to a stop at the switch at the western entrance to Maybrook yard at about 1:15 a.m. he immediately went back 35 or 40 car lengths to protect his train. The engineman of extra 2333 did not answer his stop signal, and he estimated the speed of the train to have been 12 to 15 miles an hour as it passed him. He stated he saw no one looking out of the cab window of the locomotive as

it passed him, and that he stepped back to throw his lamp against the cab, being prevented from doing so by losing his balance. He stated that when he saw that the extra was not going to stop he started to run toward his own train, arriving at the point of accident four or five minutes after its occurrence. He said that the crew of the extra then asked him who he was, he replying that he was the flagman of the train they had struck and that he had flagged them. He stated further that the crew said they had not seen him because they had had trouble with an injector on their locomotive, which had detracted their attention. Flagman Stucker further stated that he was thoroughly familiar with the operating practices of this section of the road, knew that it was within yard limits, and that his only motive for going out with a flag was to give a following train a chance to stop.

Engineman Barber, of extra 2333, stated that his train left Campbell Hall for Maybrook, with the locomotive backing up, at about 1:55 a.m., at which time the injector on the left side of his engine was not working, and a tank hose was missing. He stated that he was looking ahead until his train was about at the switch at the long siding west of Maybrook yard. At that point he thought it advisable to put on the injector, which operation he stated required about one minute, on account of the overflow pipe having been disconnected from the injector, permitting steam and water to escape. On the first trial the injector failed to work and, after closing the locomotive throttle and calling the attention of the crew, all of whom with the exception of one brakeman were riding in the cab of the locomotive, to the overflow pipe defect, he made a second and successful attempt. After getting

the injector in operation he opened the locomotive throttle and was turning to look ahead when his train collided with extra 3084, the force of the collision throwing him to the front end of the cab; he did not have any opportunity to close the throttle or apply the brakes. He stated that this was his first indication of the presence of the latter train, as he had seen no flagman or fuses, and that his engine had struck no torpedoes. He stated that several minutes after the collision he saw a man carrying a red and white lamp but did not know from which direction he had come, and asked him who he was and what train had been struck. The flagman replied that extra 3084 had been struck, that he was its flagman, and that he had been flagging him. Engineman Barber stated that he then asked him why he had not thrown his flag towards the cab in order to attract attention as the locomotive passed, and that the flagman replied that he had been unable to do so, as he had fallen into a ditch of snow and water. Engineman Barber further stated that the speed within these yard limits is restricted to 20 miles an hour for trains with the locomotive backing up, and estimated the speed of his train at the time of collision to have been about 15 miles per hour. He stated that he knew of no rule governing conditions such as existed on the night of the accident, other than a bulletin, which he thought had been posted, requiring trains to be protected by flagmen between Campbell Hall and Maybrook, and stated that he thought an adequate flagging rule was necessary to the safe operation of trains in this district.

Conductor Call, of extra 2333, stated that when his

train left Campbell Hall, he was riding in the cab of the locomotive, together with a brakeman on duty, and a brakeman who was off duty. He stated that when his train was approaching the switch at the western end of the long siding he stepped into the gangway, looked ahead, and saw the rear end of a train at a distance which he estimated to have been 16 or 20 car lengths east of the western end of the long siding, but saw no flagman. At this time he crossed over to the engineman's side of the cab and he and the brakeman became engrossed in assisting the engineman to repair the injector on the locomotive. He stated that he did not see the rear of extra 3084 until his train was about to collide with it, when he shouted to the engineman and jumped. He stated that he did not see the flagman until after the collision. Conductor Call further stated that this accident occurred within yard limits, where trains are not required to be protected by a flagman, and that while he had at various times been flagged in Campbell Hall by Erie crews in westbound movements, he had never before been flagged by those crews in eastbound movements.

Rule No. 93 of the rules for the government of the operating department of the Central New England 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."

The Central New England Railway time-table No. 66, rule 9005, states that yard limits indicated by signs are located at Campbell Hall and Maybrook, and that

"Maybrook-Campbell Hall Terminal embraces the territory within yard limit signs east of westward receiving tracks, Maybrook, to end of track at Campbell Hall."

The direct cause of this accident was the failure of Engineman Barber, of extra 2333, to observe and obey these rules, as well as the stop signal given by Flagman Stucker, of extra 3084 .

Rule 1228, of the rules and regulations of this company, reads as follows:

"If any difficulty with the injector or any portion of the engine machinery requires his attention, the engineman must reduce speed as much as necessary, or stop, so that the observance of all signals may be assured."

Engineman Barber failed to comply with this rule. Had he done so, and brought his train under control when the injector failed to work, in all probability this accident would not have occurred.

This investigation developed the fact that locomotive 2333 was in defective condition when Engineman Barber received it on the repair track at Campbell Hall at 7:45 p.m. The injector on the left side of the engine was inoperative owing to the absence of a tank hose and the locomotive was still in this defective condition when it departed from Campbell Hall at 1:30 a.m. Approaching the scene of the accident it was necessary to use the only operative injector with which this engine was equipped, and on account of the overflow pipe being disconnected steam and water were thrown into the cab. At this time there were five employees riding on the locomotive, the engineman, fireman, conductor, one brakeman on duty and one brakeman off duty. In view of this fact there appears to be no excuse for the failure to observe the stop signal given by Flagman Stucker of extra 3084, for

even though the engineman needed assistance in repairing the injector overflow pipe, it was the duty of some of these men to maintain a sharp lookout for any possible obstructions or signals.

Enginemen Barber entered the service of this railway October 17, 1915, as an engineman, and Conductor Call entered the service as brakeman October 18, 1914, and was promoted to conductor October 20, 1914. Each had a clear record and had been on duty about 7 hours at the time of the accident.