

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE
CENTRAL RAILROAD OF NEW JERSEY NEAR WHITE HOUSE,
N. J., ON JANUARY 25, 1919.

March 12, 1919.

On January 25, 1919, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Central Railroad of New Jersey near White House, N. J., which resulted in the death of 1 employee and injury of 3 employees. After investigation of this accident, the Chief of the Bureau of Safety submits the following report:

Westbound freight train extra 459 consisted of 45 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 459, and was in charge of Conductor Cadden and Engineman Sheep. The train left Bound Brook Junction at 2.00 a.m. and at about 4.05 a.m. stopped for water at a water tank located about 5,000 feet east of White House station. While standing at this point, the rear of the train was struck by westbound extra 478.

Westbound freight train extra 478 consisted of 35 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 478, and was in charge of Conductor Hartman and Engineman Miller. It passed Bound Brook Junction at 3.23 a.m. Automatic Signal No. 391, a little east of Lane's Crossing, about 4 miles from White House, was observed to be in the caution position. The train seemed to slow up at this point and the engineman dropped the reverse lever down a few notches in order to get the train over the grade. According to his own state-

ment, he then fell asleep, remaining asleep until the collision occurred. The speed at the time of the collision was estimated to have been about 15 miles an hour.

The caboose of extra 459 was demolished, an employee deadheading in it killed. Six cars on the rear of extra 459 were considerably damaged, while engine 478 was derailed and slightly damaged.

This part of the Central Railroad of New Jersey is a 4-track road. Trains are operated by time table and train orders, their movements being protected by an automatic block signal system. The track is straight for at least two miles in each direction, and the grade slightly descending for westbound trains. The weather was clear and cold.

Flagman Faust of eastbound extra 438, whose caboose was on a adjoining track about 15 or 20 car lengths east of where the collision occurred, stated that he was getting off the caboose when he heard extra 478 approaching, and that he saw the flagman of extra 459 swinging his red and white lanterns. He did not hear any torpedoes explode, but said that his failure to hear them might have been due to his excitement. He thought the flagman of extra 459 was back a distance of 10 or 12 car lengths.

Flagman L. E. Cadden of extra 459 said that he put down one torpedo when the train slowed down approaching the water tank. After the train stopped he went back to flag, going back a distance of about 12 car lengths. He saw extra 478 approaching, heard the explosion of the torpedo, and

began giving stop signals with his red and white lanterns. There was no response to his signals, and as the engine passed him, working steam, he threw his lanterns at the cab windows.

Conductor M. E. Cadden of extra 459 stated that when the train slowed down approaching the water tank he told the flagman to put down a torpedo. When the train stopped, he saw the flagman start back and he himself started forward. He stated that he was about 12 or 15 car lengths from the rear when he heard the exhaust of the engine of 417. He looked back and saw the flagman giving stop signals. He watched him, saw him swing his lanterns for a couple of minutes and apparently then start to run, and he himself at once started for the caboose, but the collision occurred when he was 6 or 7 car lengths from it. Conductor Cadden also stated that he saw the flagman throw his lanterns at the engine when it passed him. He could not say definitely how far back the flagman went.

Engineman Miller stated that the last automatic signal seen by him was a signal east of Lane's Crossing. After dropping the reverse lever down a couple of notches, he began to feel a little drowsy and said that he remembered nothing more until the time of the collision. He did not hear any torpedoes or see anything of the flagman. On January 22, Engineman Miller went on duty at 7.00 p.m. and registered off duty at 12 o'clock noon on January 23rd, this

being after a period of 16½ hours duty. He went to bed at about 3.30 p.m. and got up at about 9 p.m. He reported for duty at midnight in order to go out at 1 a.m., January 24th. He registered in at 1.45 p.m., January 24th, went to bed at about 5.45 p.m., and was called at 9.25 p.m. to go on duty at 10.30 p.m. on the trip on which this accident occurred.

Head Brakeman Bocan stated that, as he felt cold, he had shut the cab windows on the left side. There was some steam in the cab and it made him feel drowsy and finally he fell asleep. He stated that he remembered when the engine entered a cut in the vicinity of Lane's Crossing; he then fell asleep and knew nothing more until the collision occurred.

On account of engine 478 being of the double-cab or "Mother Hubbard" type with the engineman in the cab over the boiler, the fireman was not in direct communication with the engineman, and Fireman Jauber stated that he knew nothing about the engineman or head brakeman being asleep, the first he knew of the train or cab being when the collision occurred. He also stated that he did not hear or smell an exploded torpedo; neither did he see any sign of a flagman.

From the statements of employees, it is apparent that there is no corroboration of Flagman Cadden's statement that he put down a torpedo. However, the statement of the flagman of the extra standing on an adjoining track indicated that Flagman Cadden was back 10 or 12 car lengths, giving stop signals. While Flagman Cadden did not by any means go back

as far as he could, nevertheless under the existing conditions he went back far enough to have stopped extra 478 had Engineman Miller been awake.

This accident was caused by the failure of Engineman Miller to observe and obey automatic block signal indications, as well as the stop signals given by the flagman, due to the fact that he was asleep. A contributing cause was the failure of Head Brakeman Bocam to observe the automatic signal indications, as well as the signals of the flagman.

Between 7.00 p.m., January 22, and 4.15 a.m. January 23, the approximate time of the collision, Engineman Miller had been off duty an aggregate of 20 hours and 45 minutes. Of this time, only a little over 2 hours had been spent in sleeping. Nine hours sleep out of 57 consecutive hours is not enough sleep for anyone, and Engineman Miller is particularly at fault for not obtaining more sleep in the time at his disposal.

Engineman Miller was employed as a brakeman in January, 1907, resigning in March. He was again employed as a brakeman in June, 1907, and in July of the same year was made a fireman. In March, 1916, he was promoted to engineman. Head Brakeman Bocam was employed as a brakeman in December, 1915. His record was clear.

None of the employees involved had been on duty in violation of any of the provisions of the hours of service law.

G.V.L.