INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE CHICAGO, ST PAUL, MINNEAPOLIS & OMAHA RAILROAD AT SIOUX CITY, IOWA, ON JUNE 2, 1930.

August 4, 1930.

To the Commission:

On June 2, 1930, there was a head-end collision between a Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad passenger train and a Chicago, St Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad freight train, on the line of the last named carrier at Sioux City, Iowa, which resulted in the injury of three passengers, four employees, and one other person

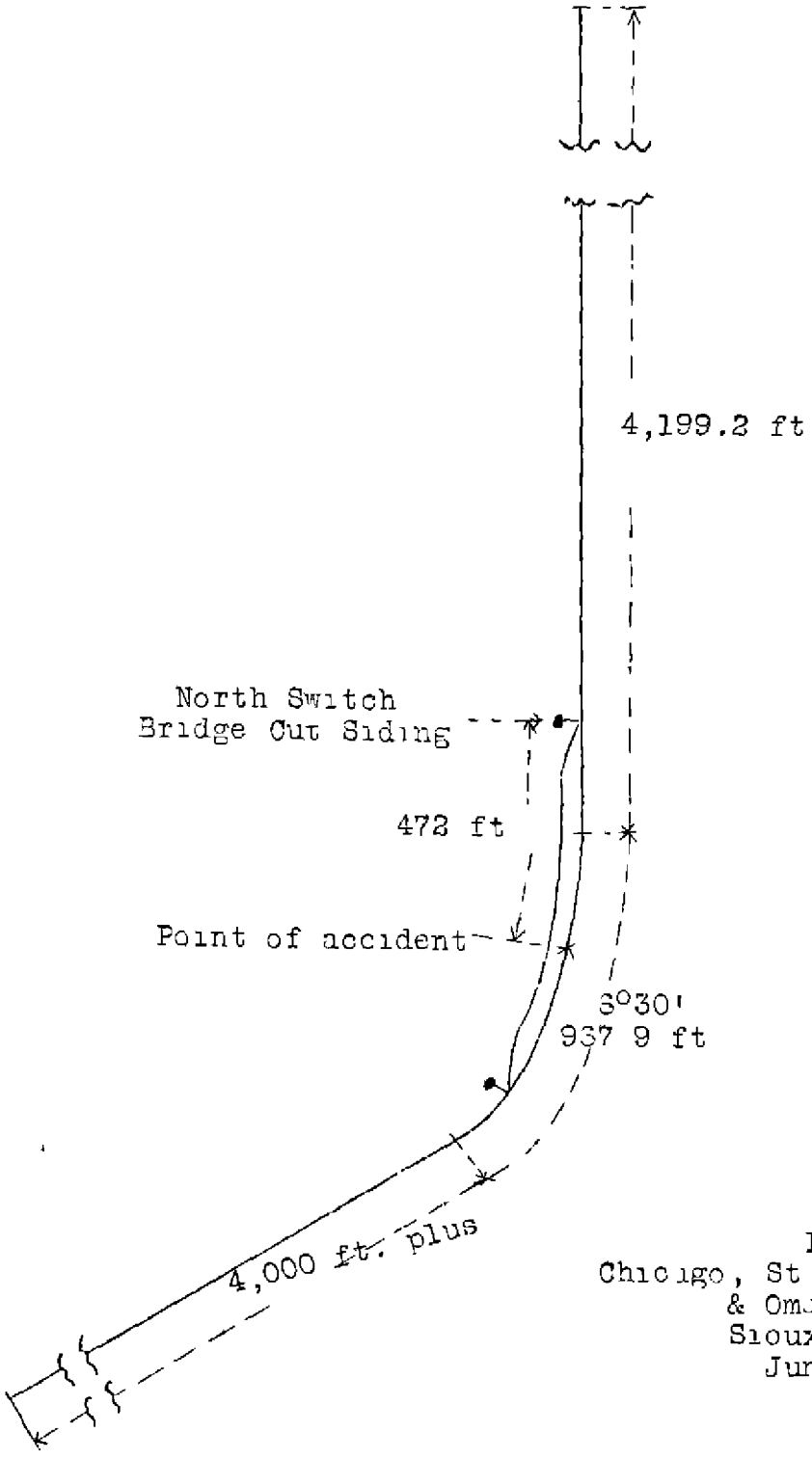
Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on Subdivision No. 1 of the Nebraska Division, extending between Sioux City, Iowa, and Omaha, Nebraska, a distance of 135 4 miles, this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by time-table, train orders, and a manual block-signal system Between First Street, Sioux City, and Ferry, Nebraska, a distance of 3.5 miles, within which territory the accident occurred, trains of the CB&QRR are operated over the tracks of the CStPM&ORR. The accident occurred on the main track between the switches of Bridge Cut siding; the siding is 822 feet in length and parallels the main track on the west, the accident occurring at a point 472 feet south of the north switch. Approaching the point of accident from the north, the track is tangent for 4,199.2 feet, followed by a 6° 30' curve to the right 967.9 feet in length, the accident occurring on this curve at a point about 400 feet from its northern end. Approaching from the South, the track is tangent for more than 4,000 feet, followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade for southbound trains is 0.75 per cent ascending around the curve involved.

Owing to the deep cut, neither crew could see the opposing train around the curve until they were within a short distance of each other.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6.55 p.m.

North



Inv. 1645
Chicago, St Paul, Minneapolis
& Omaha Railway,
Sioux City, Iowa
June 2, 1930

Description

Southbound CB&Q passenger train No 73 consisted of one combination car and one coach, both of wooden construction, hauled by engine 3020, and was in charge of Conductor O'Brien and Engineman Taylor At First Street, 1 3 miles north of Bridge Cut, a caution card and two train orders were received, one of these, namely, train order No 46, Form 31, reading in part as follows.

"No 73 take siding eet
No 22 at Bridge Cut *** "

Train No. 73 departed from First Street at 6 49 p m , four minutes late, but instead of heading in at the north switch of the passing track at Bridge Cut, it continued on the main track and collided with train No. 22 between the switches while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 15 miles per hour.

Northbound CStPM&O third-class freight train No. 22 consisted of 18 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 302, and was in charge of Conductor Kavanaugh and Engineman Onstot At Ferry, 2.3 miles south of Bridge Cut, a caution card and copies of train order No 46, Form 19, previously referred to, were received. Train No 22 departed from this point at 5.38 p m , 20 minutes late, and shortly after passing the south switch of the passing track at Bridge Cut it collided with train No 73 while moving at a low rate of speed The lead truck of engine 3020 was derailed, but neither engine was badly damaged, one car in train No. 22 was also derailed.

Summary of evidence

Engineman Taylor, of train No. 73, stated that he was thoroughly familiar with the requirements of train order No. 46, received at First Street, although the order was not delivered to him personally by the conductor, nor did he read it aloud to the conductor, as required, the engineman, however, read the order aloud to the fireman Engineman Taylor said that a stop was made for the C.MStP&P crossing located between First Street and Bridge Cut, but that he did not sound the engine whistle approaching the meeting point, as he was of the opinion that it was not required to be done on the CStPM&ORR. Approaching the north switch of the passing track at Bridge Cut, the speed was about 30 or 35 miles per hour When in the immediate vicinity of the switch, he shut off steam, and as soon as he saw the engine of the opposing train a short distance away, he applied the air brakes in emergency, he

jumped just prior to the collision, at which time he estimated the speed to have been about 15 miles per hour Engineman Taylor had been operating passenger trains over this section for a number of years, and said that it was customary for train No. 73 to make meets at Bridge Cut about once or twice a week The air brakes had been tested and worked properly, the engine was in good condition, and there was nothing in connection with the trip to distract his attention from the meet order except that he was not accustomed to operating an engine of the type of engine 2020, a 2-6-2 engine Engineman Taylor stated that he did not hear Fireman Holt or Brakeman Haney, both of whom were also riding on the engine, call attention to the meet when approaching Bridge Cut, and said that he entirely overlooked the meet with train No 22 No apparent reason for his forgetfulness was developed.

Fireman Holt, of train No 73, was fully aware of the contents of train order No 46, he stated that he had just finished putting in a fire and was on the seat box, he noticed that the engine was near the north switch of the passing track at Bridge Cut, at which time he estimated the speed to have been about 25 or 30 miles per hour, and he and the brakeman shouted to the engineman about the time the north switch was reached, and the engineman immediately applied the air brakes in emergency, the speed being reduced to about 15 miles per hour at the time of the collision Fireman Holt also stated that it was not the regular practice for enginemen to sound the meeting-point whistle signal in this particular vicinity, and that in order to have complied with that part of the rule requiring that this signal be sounded at least 1 mile before reaching the meeting point, the signal should have been sounded just after leaving First Street.

Brakeman Haney stated that he read and understood the train order involved before handing it to the engineman He rode the engine so as to be in position to line the north switch of the passing track at Bridge Cut to head in, and said that when his train was about 300 to 450 feet from the switch, traveling at a speed of about 20 or 25 miles per hour, he called the attention of the engineman to the meet, but the engineman did not make any effort to reduce speed and as they neared the switch he again called to the engineman; the opposing train came into view at about that time, and it was then too late to avert the accident

Conductor O'Brien, of train No 73, stated that he received the orders in the office at First Street, but that he did not personally deliver them to the engineman, giving them to the brakeman to give to the engineman, as the brakeman was going to ride on the engine

to line the north switch of the passing track. Conductor O'Brien stated that approaching Bridge Cut he went to the rear door of the coach, so as to definitely ascertain his location, and when he reached for the trap door, which was down, the collision occurred. Conductor O'Brien further stated that the rule in regard to sounding the meeting-point whistle signal at least 1 mile before reaching the meeting point, is not observed at this particular location, as it is only slightly more than 1 mile from First Street to Bridge Cut. Conductor O'Brien was under the impression that the freight train had arrived at the meeting point first and had opened the north switch of the passing track for his train, he said train No. 73 has a meet at Bridge Cut about once a week and that it always takes siding.

Engineman Onstot, of train No. 22, stated that the speed of his train was about 7 or 8 miles per hour on passing the south switch of the passing track at Bridge Cut, approaching the north switch, the fireman and head brakeman, being on the inside of the curve, shouted that train No. 73 was coming on the main track instead of having taken the siding, and Engineman Onstot immediately applied the air brakes in emergency, and he thought the collision occurred just after his train had stopped. Statements of Fireman Jacobs and Head Brakeman Early corroborated in substance those of Engineman Onstot, while statements of Conductor Kavanaugh and Flagman Weber brought out nothing additional of importance.

Conclusions

This accident was caused by the failure of Engineman Taylor, of CB&Q passenger train No. 73, to obey a train order establishing a meeting point.

The testimony is to the effect that it was customary for train No. 73 to make meets at Bridge Cut passing track several times a month, and for this train to take siding. Engineman Taylor was familiar with the contents of train order No. 46, as were the other members of the crew of train No. 73, and there was nothing in connection with the trip to distract his attention from the meet order, except that he was not accustomed to operating an engine of the type he was handling, and in some unexplained way he entirely overlooked the meet with train No. 22. Both the fireman and head brakeman stated that they called the engineman's attention to the meet, but apparently he did not hear or understand them, and when they realized he was not going to stop at the switch, it was then too late to avert the accident.

Under the rules, a Form 31 train order must be delivered to the engineman personally by the conductor, and the engineman must read it aloud to the conductor

before proceeding. While Conductor O'Brien and Engineman Taylor both failed to comply literally with the rule in this instance, each of them was thoroughly familiar with the contents of train order No. 46, which was delivered to the engineman by the brakeman, who was also riding on the engine for the express purpose of opening the passing track switch.

On this portion of line there was a movement of approximately 30 trains per day. In view of this volume of traffic on single track, and the circumstances surrounding this accident, the carrier should give careful consideration to the need for additional protection on this line.

All of the employees involved were experienced men, at the time of the accident the crew of train No. 73 had been on duty less than 1 hour, after having been off duty more than 48 hours, while the crew of train No. 32 had been on duty less than 8 hours, prior to which they had been off duty more than 40 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. Borland,

Director.