

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN RE-
INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON
THE CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO & ST. LOUIS
RAILWAY AT GREENWICH, OHIO, ON MAY 31, 1923.

June 18, 1923.

To the Commission:

On May 31, 1923, there was a derailment of a freight train on the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway at Greenwich, Ohio, the derailed equipment of which was struck by another freight train on an adjoining track, resulting in the death of one employee and the injury of two employees. The investigation of this accident was held in conjunction with a representative of the Commission of Public Utilities of the State of Ohio.

Location and Method of Operation.

This accident occurred on that part of the Cleveland-Indianapolis Division extending between Cleveland and Bellefontaine, Ohio, a distance of 140.8 miles; in the vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line over which trains are operated by time-table, train orders, and an automatic block-signal system. The first mark of derailment was about 600 feet west of the station at Greenwich; approaching the point of accident from either direction the track is tangent for several miles, while the grade is slightly descending eastward. The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at about 11.25 p. m.

Description.

Eastbound third-class freight train No. 60 consisted of 60 cars and a caboose, hauled by engines 6023 and 178, and was in charge of Conductor Mahoney and Enginemen Schultz and Springer. It left Gallon, 24.9 miles east of Greenwich, at 10.42 p. m., and as the train was passing the station at Greenwich the 31st car became derailed on account of a broken journal, fouling the westbound main track, and resulting in the air brakes being applied in emergency, but before the train had come to a stop this car was struck by westbound train No. 91.

Westbound third-class freight train No. 91 consisted of 47 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 6015, and was in charge of Conductor Cotton and Engineman Geiseman. It passed Boyd, an interlocking station located about 3,400 feet east of the station at Greenwich, at 11.25 p. m. and

very shortly afterwards collided with the derailed car of train No. 60 while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 30 miles an hour.

Engine 6015 was derailed and came to rest at the bottom of a 30-foot embankment, while the first six cars in this train were also derailed. Two cars in train No. 60 were destroyed and four others derailed. The employee killed was the head brakeman of train No. 91.

Summary of Evidence.

Engineman Schultz and Fireman Williams, of the leading engine on train No. 60, stated in substance that their first knowledge of anything wrong was when the air brakes were applied in emergency, apparently as the result of breaking in two. Engineman Schultz called to the fireman and head brakeman to get a fusee, while he also whistled "brakes" to the crew of train No. 91, the engine of which was about opposite his own engine, which was moving at a speed estimated by him to have been 38 or 40 miles an hour. Head Brakeman Dunson lighted a fusee and said he threw it off at about the time the engine of train No. 91 passed. Engineman Springer, of the second engine on train No. 60, thought the engine of train No. 91 was about opposite his own engine when the fusee was thrown off from the leading engine. The statements of these employees also indicated that frequently they had looked back along their train but had not seen any indications of a hot box.

Conductor Mahoney said that at Larue, where a stop was made on account of a brake hanger being in contact with a wheel flange on the third car from the caboose, he looked over the train until he met the head brakeman, who said every thing was all right. At Galion the conductor inspected 37 cars, on the left side of the train, and said that he felt every journal box, then crossed over to the right side, but had gone back toward the rear a distance of only 10 or 12 car lengths when the train started. This, however, brought him past the car which was afterward derailed. Both he and Brakeman Brockway said they had looked at the train at it rounded curves en route, but had seen nothing indicating a hot box. After the accident the brakeman went back to protect the rear of his train and saw crossing planks which had been torn up and also wheel marks on the ties. He found the side and lid of a journal box, and about 15 car lengths from the caboose found another portion of the journal box, wedge and journal, the latter being too hot to handle, but not red hot.

The statements of Engineman Geiseman and Fireman MoAtee, of train No. 91, were to the effect that their first knowledge of anything wrong was when the engineman of train No. 60 sounded the whistle signal for brakes,

while at the same time a lighted fusee was thrown off, this being when the engines were about opposite each other. The speed of their train then was about 30 or 35 miles an hour, and the engineman said he at once applied the air brakes in emergency but that the distance was too short for the brakes to have much effect. The crews of each train stated that the air brakes on their respective trains were in good condition.

The journal which failed was at the L-4 wheel, under the 31st car, which was the leading wheel on the forward truck on the right side of the car in the direction in which the train was moving. This car had been marked "bad order" at Bellefontaine on account of a worn wheel, and a new pair of wheels was applied by the car repairman at that point. Car Oilers Schuffner and Wynegar were packing journal boxes and the former said he packed three boxes under this car and had just packed a box on the left side where the new pair of wheels had been applied when the whistle to quit work sounded; at this time the repairmen were still working on the opposite side of the car. Car Oiler Wynegar said he worked on the right side of the car and examined all the boxes except the one on which the repairmen were working, and that they had not taken out the box bolts so he could pack the box when the whistle for stopping work was sounded; he further stated that he then notified Assistant Car Foreman Westphal. Assistant Car Foreman Westphal acknowledged receiving this information, and said he went to the car, but was under the impression the box which had not been packed was on the left side, and asked one of the repairmen if that box had been packed and was answered in the affirmative. He acknowledged it was his duty to look at the boxes and that he failed to do so.

Wreck Foremen Sherrick and Adams said they found the accident due to a journal having become overheated, breaking as a result thereof, and they thought there had been no packing in the box.

Conclusions.

This accident was caused by a broken journal, due to overheating as a result of its not being properly packed.

The evidence showed that a new pair of wheels had been applied under the car which was the first to be derailed, but that a journal box on the south or right side of the car was not packed after this renewal. The employee whose duty it was to do the packing notified Assistant

Car Foreman Westphal that it had not been packed, and the assistant car foreman went to the car but was confused as to which journal box had not been packed and failed to make the inspection which it was his duty to make. Had this inspection been made, he would have found the box which had not been packed and this accident could have been averted.

As there was no packing in the journal box it did not blaze after it had become overheated, and this undoubtedly accounts for the fact that it was not discovered by the members of the train crew.

Assistant Car Foreman Westphal had had about five years' experience in the car department of various roads.

At the time of the accident the crew of train No. 60 had been on duty practically 5 hours, after 16 hours or more off duty; the crew of train No. 91 had been on duty practically 3 hours, after 13 hours or more off duty.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. BORLAND,

Director.