

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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 IVORYDALE, OHIO, ON OCTOBER 15, 1929.

January 24, 1930.

To the Commission:

On October 15, 1929, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway at Ivorydale, Ohio, resulting in the death of one employee and the injury of one employee. This accident was investigated in conjunction with representatives of the Ohio Commission of Public Utilities.

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred within the defined limits of the Cincinnati Terminal Division, part of the Cincinnati Division, extending between Ivorydale Junction and Geno, Ohio, a distance of 10.7 miles; within these limits this is a double-track line over which trains are operated by time-table and an automatic block-signal system. The accident occurred within yard limits east of Ivorydale, at a switch located about 400 feet west of Township Avenue; this switch is a facing-point switch for westbound trains, and leads off the main track to the right or north through a crossover that connects with a siding, the siding parallels the main tracks for a considerable distance in each direction from the point of accident. Approaching this point from the east the track is tangent for several miles, this tangent extending considerably west of the switch. The grade for westbound trains is 0.20 per cent descending at the point of accident.

The high switch stand is of the lever throw type and is located on the north side of the main tracks, the turnout is a No. 10. When the switch is closed a white banner is displayed, and when it is open it displays a red banner. This switch works in conjunction with westbound automatic signal 2521; this signal is of the one-arm, three-position, upper-quadrant type, and is located approximately 2,475 feet east of the switch, and a short distance east of Elmwood Place.

There are seven street crossings between signal 2521 and the switch. At the time of the accident there were two passenger coaches standing together on the siding; the west end of these coaches was approximately 100 feet east of the switch, resulting in the view of the switch lamp and banners being restricted to a distance of 1,150 feet from the left side of the westbound main track and to 1,050 feet from the right side thereof. There was also a gondola standing on the siding at a point about 775 feet east of the coaches, but this car did not obstruct the view.

The weather was somewhat nazy and a light fog prevailed at the time of the accident which occurred about 8.51 a.m.

Description

The westbound motor car and trailer involved in this accident were owned by the Western Union Telegraph Company, were operated by an employee of that company, and were in charge of Conductor-Pilot Daley, an employee of the railway company. The motor car was insulated and therefore did not actuate the automatic block signals. It left West Sharon, the last open office, 6.3 miles east of Ivorydale, at 8.16 a.m., and was attempting to get in on the siding when it was struck by train No. 15.

Westbound passenger train No. 15 consisted of one club car, four Pullman cars, one dining car, and four Pullman cars, in the order named, all of steel construction, hauled by engine 6520, and was in charge of Conductor Martin and Engineman Maloney. This train passed West Sharon at 8.45 a.m., one minute late, passed signal 2521, which apparently was displaying a proceed indication, and was derailed at the switch while traveling at a speed variously estimated to have been between 40 and 60 miles per hour.

The motor car and trailer were completely demolished. Engine 6520 came to rest across both main tracks and on its right side, headed north, with the front end about 400 feet west of the switch, the tender was torn from its trucks, but remained upright. The first three cars were derailed, but remained upright on the siding. The employee killed was the fireman of train No. 15, while the employee injured was the engineman.

Summary of evidence

Conductor-Pilot Daley, in charge of the motor car and trailer, stated that he was given information as to trains and informed that train No. 15 was on time. The motor car departed from West Sharon at 8.16 a.m. and a few miles west thereof a stop was made, of about two or three minutes duration, in order to pick up tools. The motor car and trailer then continued westward and on reaching Elmwood Place, 0.4 mile east of Ivorydale, he looked at his watch and it was then 8.46 a.m., while train No. 15 was due by West Sharon, 5.9 miles distant, at 8.44 a.m. Conductor-Pilot Daley figured that he could get into clear at Ivorydale before train No. 15 arrived, but on looking back he saw the headlight of that train, about at the depot at Carthage, located 1.2 miles east of Ivorydale, and told the gang foreman to light a fusee. The speed of the motor car was reduced to about 20 miles per hour and the gang foreman got off, between the first and second streets west of Elmwood Place, which would be about 1,000 feet from the switch, and began giving stop signals with the lighted fusee, on the engineman's side of the approaching train. The motor car and trailer continued to the switch and Conductor-Pilot Daley ran forward and opened it as the motor car slowed down, and the cars were moving in on the siding and the conductor-pilot was attempting to close the switch when the engine of train No. 15 reached it. Conductor-Pilot Daley said that immediately after the accident he looked at his watch and it was then between 8.48.30 and 8.49 a.m. He could not recall at what time he passed Carthage, 0.8 mile east of Elmwood Place, where he could have cleared the main line, and also said that just before he opened the switch he noticed that signal 2521 was displaying a proceed indication, but that he could not tell whether the engine of train No. 15 had passed the signal at that time, saying that it requires a short interval for the signal to function. Conductor-Pilot Daley further stated that he was busy watching street crossings between signal 2521 and the switch, in order to prevent an accident, as the insulated motor car did not actuate crossing-protection devices. He was thoroughly familiar with the territory in this vicinity, had a full supply of flagging equipment, and said that he should not only have been clear of the main track five minutes ahead of train No. 15, but that he should have been into clear at the time that train was due to leave the next station in the rear where time is shown, which in this instance was West Sharon, the time being 8.44 a.m.

Gang Foreman Smith, a Western Union Telegraph Company employee, stated that when east of Elmwood Place, at about Oak Street, located approximately 1,700 feet east of the switch, Conductor-Pilot Daley looked at his watch and said that it was 8.46 a.m., the gang foreman looking at his own watch and noting that it was 20 seconds faster than that of the conductor-pilot, who then remarked that train No. 15 was due out of West Sharon at 8.44 a.m. When about 1,000 feet east of the switch, moving at a speed of about 20 miles per hour, Gang Foreman Smith said that he got off with a lighted red fusee, fell against the side of the gondola that stood on the siding, and then waved stop signals on the engineman's side, but that his stop signals were not answered and train No. 15 passed him at a speed of about 60 miles per hour, without the air brakes having been applied. Gang Foreman Smith stated that a crossing whistle signal was sounded on the engine whistle just as the engine passed him. He was not familiar with the territory in this vicinity and did not notice the indication displayed by signal 2521. With the exception of Workman Greenley, who estimated the speed of the motor car to have been about 5 or 6 miles per hour at the time the gang foreman jumped off with the fusee, statements of three other members of the gang crew developed nothing additional of importance. All of them fixed the location of the flagman as 1,000 feet, or more, east of the switch.

Engineman Maloney, of train No. 15, stated that signal 2521 was displaying a proceed indication, green, and that the fireman called it. The speed was about 50 miles per hour on passing Elmwood Place station and just afterwards he saw a fusee light up, whereupon he applied the air brakes in emergency, before any stop signals were given with the fusee, and he said it was not until he reached a point in the vicinity of Township Avenue, which is located about 400 feet east of the switch, that he saw the switch banner displaying a red indication. Engineman Maloney said that he saw the motor car at the same time that he saw the fusee, and he fixed the location of the man with the fusee as being just a little west of Township Avenue and about 200 or 300 feet east of the motor car, he did not see anyone around the motor car. Engineman Maloney further stated that the air brakes had been tested and worked properly, that no trouble was experienced in observing signal indications on account of weather conditions, that the headlight was burning brightly, that the automatic bell

ringer was in operation, that the engine whistle was sounded almost continuously for the street crossing, and that he did not see anyone at the switch, and it was his opinion that he had done all that he could to prevent the accident, but that everything happened so quickly he had no chance at all, saying that he could have brought the train to a stop had proper protection been afforded.

Conductor Martin, of train No. 15, was riding in the second car; he said that a service air-brake application was made approaching Elmwood Place station, how far east thereof he could not tell, following which a second application was made, a heavy one, and then he felt the cars bumping on the ties.

Brakeman Filmore, of train No. 15, was riding in the seventh car, he said that an air-brake application was made about one-half mile east of the switch, and then the brakes were released, and he did not feel another application until the accident occurred. Crossing signals were sounded on the engine whistle all the way. Immediately after the accident he got off, about two car-lengths east of the switch, and said that at that time he saw a man with a lighted fusee standing on the engineman's side of the track in the vicinity of Township Avenue, just east of the two coaches that stood on the siding. The fusee apparently had just been lighted, as it was not flaring brightly at the time.

Flagman Markins, of train No. 15, stated that immediately after the accident he went to the forward end of the observation car, the last car in the train, got off and looked along both sides, saw escaping steam and derailed cars, and then started back to flag. He estimated that on account of the fog, his vision was restricted to about 500 feet. The flagman also said that the train came to a stop with the observation car east of Township Avenue, and that at no time did he see a man with a lighted fusee.

Agent Drake, on duty at Elmwood Place, said he was looking toward the west and saw a man flagging with a fusee; he located this man as being in the vicinity of Township Avenue. Agent Drake also stated that he did not notice any reduction in the speed of train No. 15, which he estimated to have been about 40 or 50 miles per hour, and he fixed the time of the accident as 8.48 a.m.

Conclusions

This accident was caused by the operation of a motor car and trailer ahead of a first-class train, without sufficient time to clear the main track and without adequate flag protection.

Conductor-Pilot Daley said he should have cleared the time of train No. 15 not less than five minutes, and should have been into clear by the time it passed the last station, which was West Sharon, where the train was due at 8.44 a.m. He could have cleared the main track at Carthage, located 1.2 miles east of Ivorydale, but instead of doing so he continued westward and did not look at his watch until in the vicinity of Elmwood Place; it was then 8.46 a.m., according to his time, with train No. 15 overdue at West Sharon, and it was not until he looked back and saw the headlight of train No. 15 that he took any action toward affording flag protection. There is little excuse for his attempt to clear the main track at Ivorydale, leaving the question of protection until after train No. 15 had come in sight.

While the testimony is conflicting as to when and how the air brakes were applied, and also as to the exact location of Gang Foreman Smith at the time he was flagging with the lighted fusee, yet it is clear that he was not back far enough to enable Engineman Maloney to bring train No. 15 to a stop before reaching the switch. It also appears that the engine of train No. 15 had passed signal 2521 before the switch was opened.

All of the employees involved were experienced men, the conductor-pilot having spent about 20 years in this territory; none of them had been on duty in violation of any of the provisions of the hours of service law.

Respectfully submitted,

W.P. BORLAND,
Director.