

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN RE  
INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE  
DELAWARE, LACKAWANNA & WESTERN RAILROAD AT BINGHAMTON,  
N. Y., ON JANUARY 3, 1926.

February 18, 1926.

To the Commission:

On January 3, 1926, there was a side collision between two freight trains on the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad at Binghamton, N. Y., which resulted in the death of one employee.

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred at the eastern end of the east-bound receiving yard, which consists of three tracks numbered from north to south as follows: 1, 2, and 3, with a capacity of 99, 101, and 108 cars, respectively; the point of accident was at the extreme end of track 3, near the switch connecting it with track 2. These tracks are tangent and practically level for a considerable distance. The switches at the eastern end of the receiving yard, leading to the classification yard, are hand-operated, while the stands are located on the left sides of the tracks, proceeding eastward.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 9.42 p.m.

Description

Eastbound freight train extra 1261 consisted of 73 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 1261, and was in charge of Conductor Ryan and Engineman Bohlke. It arrived at Binghamton at 9 28 p.m. and entered the receiving yard on track 2. The train was brought to a stop on that track, and shortly afterward it proceeded to pull ahead through the switch connecting that track with track 3 for the purpose of entering the classification yard, and it was while this movement was being made that the 37th car in the train was struck by extra 2123.

Eastbound freight train extra 2123 consisted of 79 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 2123, and was in charge of Conductor Hossey and Engineman Mack. On arriving at the western end of the eastbound receiving yard the crew received a signal to pull in on track 3 and the train contin-

ued on this track, moving at a speed of 4 or 5 miles an hour, until it collided with extra 1261 at the eastern end of track 3.

The damage to the train of extra 1261 was so slight that it proceeded without the crew knowing that there had been an accident. Engine 2123, however, was turned over on its right side, resulting in the death of the head brakeman.

#### Summary of evidence

Fireman Cney, of extra 2123, said that while en route toward Binghamton the power top pipe had broken, placing the headlight out of commission, and that the head brakeman had placed a lantern on the front end of the engine. Fireman Cney noticed a train standing on track 2 when his own train pulled in on track 3, but at about this time he began to prepare the fire for cleaning on the pit while repairs were being made to the generator pipe, and knew nothing of what was transpiring until the accident occurred.

Engineman Meck, of extra 2123, said he closely followed extra 1261 into Binghamton and pulled in on track 3 at a low rate of speed, about 4 or 5 miles an hour, not being able to see very well on account of the fact that the headlight was not burning. He said he was looking out of the cab window and was about to bring his train to a stop when he noticed that extra 1261 was pulling out of track 2 and then realized that he had pulled too far ahead on track 3. He at once applied the air brakes in emergency and he said he did not notice the impact of his engine with the cars in the train of extra 1261, but suddenly the rails seemed to be pushed over while the engine headed toward the ditch; in his opinion the engine had come to a stop before it turned over. Engineman Mack further stated that he was familiar with the existing physical conditions, had made the same movement on several occasions within the past month, and that the accident would not have occurred had the headlight on his engine been burning. His view of the switch lamp was cut off by the cars in the train of extra 1261.

The conductor, head brakeman and flagman of extra 2123 were in the caboose and knew of nothing wrong until they received a severe shock when the air brakes were applied in emergency.

#### Conclusions

This accident was caused by the failure of Engineman Mack, of extra 2123, to bring his train to a stop before it fouled the switch at the end of track 3.

Under rule 7 of the general instructions in the timetable, extra trains are required to proceed under control within yard limits expecting to find tracks occupied, while rule 530 of the rules for the government of the operating department requires trains to proceed through yard limits cautiously and if a switch lamp can not be seen enginemen are to reduce speed sufficiently to stop before reaching the switch unless the track is seen to be clear. Engineman Mack was familiar with the territory in the vicinity of the point of accident and offered no excuse except that he pulled ahead a little too far, and that he could not see as well as usual due to the fact that the headlight on his engine was not burning.

There was no marker on the engineman's side of the track indicating the location of the fouling point, it is possible the use of such a marker would have warned Engineman Mack in time to enable him to bring his train to a stop.

The employees involved were experienced men, and at the time of the accident 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.