

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN RE  
INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE  
EAST ST LOUIS & SUBURBAN RAILWAY AT GRANBY, ILL.,  
ON JULY 7, 1925

October 21, 1925.

To the Commission:

On July 7, 1925, there was a head-end collision between two electric interurban cars on the East St. Louis & Suburban Railway at Granby, Ill., resulting in the death of one employee and the injury of three passengers.

#### Location and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on the Collinsville and Edwardsville Division, a single-track line extending between St. Louis, Mo., and Edwardsville, Ill., a distance of 23.86 miles, over which trains are operated by time-table and train orders, no block signal system being in use. The collision occurred at a point about 200 feet west of Granby station, at about the middle of a 1° curve 900 feet in length; the grade is practically level.

Trees bordering the right-of-way and a line of poles on the inside of the curve restricted the range of vision of both motormen to a distance of about 400 feet.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred at 8.41 a.m.

#### Description

Southbound passenger train No. 285 consisted of motor car 11, of all-steel construction, in charge of Conductor Kneedler and Motorman Cravens. It departed from Longs, Ill., 5.6 miles from Granby, at 8.24 a.m., passed Granby without stopping, and the speed had been reduced to 5 or 10 miles an hour when it collided with extra 50 at a point 200 feet beyond the station.

Northbound extra 50 consisted of motor 50, of wooden construction, in charge of Conductor Smith and Motorman Miller. At Lansdowne, approximately 1.70 miles from

Granby, train order No. 17, Form 19, was received, reading as follows:

"Mtr 50 run extra Lansdowne to Maryville"

It left Lansdowne at 8.34 a.m., according to the train sheet, made a stop at Allens, 1/4 mile distant from Granby, and collided with train No. 285 at Granby while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 35 or 40 miles an hour.

Both cars remained upright on the rails, motor car 11 telescoped motor car 50 a distance of about 7½ feet. The track was only slightly damaged. The employee killed was the motorman of extra 50.

#### Summary of Evidence

Motorman Cravens, of train No. 285, said he had received no orders concerning extra 50, his first knowledge of that train being when he saw it approaching about 200 feet distant; he applied the air brakes and reversed the motor, reducing the speed of his train to about 5 or 10 miles an hour at the time of the collision. The statements of Conductor Kneedler corroborated those of Motorman Cravens relative to the movement of their train prior to the accident the conductor adding that on account of several road crossings near Granby the speed of his train had been materially reduced at the time of approaching the point of accident, and was moving at a speed of 8 or 10 miles an hour at the time of the impact;

Conductor Smith, of extra 50, admitted overlooking train No. 285 entirely. He said that while he was taking train order No. 17 over the telephone at Lansdowne, Motorman Miller registered, and in answer to his question "is everything in" the motorman replied in the affirmative. They had some conversation regarding opposing regular trains, but train No. 285 was not mentioned. His train departed from Lansdowne at 8.34 a.m., six minutes before train No. 285 was due, made a stop at Allens, about 1/4 mile from Granby, and was traveling at a speed of about 35 or 40 miles an hour when he saw train No. 285 approaching. He did not know whether or not the brakes were applied prior to the collision, explaining that the wheels might have slid on the wet rails, thus accounting for the fact that the speed did not seem to be reduced before the accident occurred. Conductor Smith acknowledged his responsibility for the accident, and said he could not explain how both he and Motorman Miller could have overlooked train No. 285.

### Conclusions

This accident was caused by the failure of Conductor Smith and Motorman Miller, of extra 50, to keep their train clear of the main track on the time of train No. 285, an opposing superior train, due to the fact that both of them overlooked that train.

Conductor Smith admitted that he overlooked train No. 285, said that neither he nor the motorman mentioned train No. 285 when discussing where they would go for various opposing trains, and was at a loss to explain how he could have completely overlooked that train.

Had an adequate block-signal system been in use on this line, this accident probably would not have occurred; an adequate automatic train stop or train control device would have prevented it.

Motorman Miller entered the service of this railway in 1907; his service record was good, Conductor Smith was employed in October, 1916; Conductor Knedler and Motorman Cravens were also experienced men. At the time of the accident the crews of these trains had been on duty nearly  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours, previous to which they had been off duty 11 hours or more.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. BORLAND

Director.