

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE LONG ISLAND RAILROAD AT BAY RIDGE, BROOKLYN, N. Y., ON OCTOBER 26, 1921.

November 19, 1921.

To the Commission:

On October 26, 1921, there was a rear-end collision between a transfer train and a light engine on the Long Island Railroad at Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, N.Y., which resulted in the death of 1 employee and the injury of 2 employees.

Location and method of operation.

Bay Ridge yard extends eastward from the water front, known as float yard, to New Utrecht Avenue, known as NU, a distance of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles. This accident occurred on track 2, known as the eastbound running track, extending eastward from the float yard in the vicinity of Second Avenue. The accident occurred under the west side of an overhead bridge at Seventh Avenue, approaching this point from the west the track is tangent for more than 1,000 feet while the grade is practically level. The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at about 2 a.m.

Description.

Central New England engine 10, <sup>hauled</sup> ~~hailed~~ by a Long Island crew, in charge of Conductor Brezney and Engineman Miller, was hauling 40 cars and was assisted by a pusher. It left float yard on track 2, and in the vicinity of Fifth Avenue the pusher was cut off and returned to Second Avenue,

while the train stalled with the rear car in the shadow of the Seventh Avenue bridge. Conductor Brezney notified Yardmaster Castine at Second Avenue by telephone that his train had stalled, and was told that N.Y. N.H. & H. engine 3104 would act as a pusher. After the conductor had notified Engineman Miller to that effect, he saw his train move ahead and supposed that engine 3104 was ready to push the train. When he boarded engine 10, Engineman Miller told him he could not move the engine and at about this time Flagman Heiser came up and notified him that engine 3104 had collided with the rear of the cut of cars.

Engine 3104, headed west, was backing up pushing a caboose; it was in charge of Conductor Davis and Engineman Telford. After the conductor had received instructions about helping engine 10, the engine was moved eastward on track<sup>2</sup> and collided with the rear of the cut of cars being handled by engine 10 while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 10 miles an hour.

The rear car of the cut being handled by engine 10 was damaged, while the caboose being handled by engine 3104 was badly damaged. The employee killed was the conductor of engine 3104.

#### Summary of evidence.

Flagman Heiser, who was standing on top of the last car, a gondola loaded with soft coal, said that about 15 minutes after his train stalled he noticed a train approaching on the same track with some one on the head end of it giving back-up signals with a lantern. He took it for grant-

ed that the crew of the approaching train had seen the rear end of his train, on which he was standing with a lighted lantern, and said he did not make any move until he realized that the approaching train was not going to stop. It was then about 2 car-lengths distant and he said he gave a violent stop signal, which extinguished his lantern, and called as loudly as he could, but did not see any answering signal given before the accident occurred.

The statements of Engineman Miller, Fireman Van Schalck, Conductor Brezney and Head Brakeman Meyer indicated that the shock of the collision was sufficient to move the head end of the cut of cars a distance of several feet.

Yardmaster Castine said that after hearing that engine 10 had stalled, he instructed Ground Switchman Lynch to let engine 3104 proceed on track 2, and to notify its crew to proceed with caution expecting to find engine 10 stalled in the vicinity of Seventh or Eighth Avenues. Switchman Lynch said he gave this information to Conductor Davis, going into the caboose to do so, just before lining the switches for engine 3104 to proceed.

Engineman Telford, of engine 3104, said he knew nothing of a train ahead being stalled and that from time to time he continued to receive back-up signals from the conductor, who was riding on the front/<sup>end</sup> of the caboose. He said the speed of his train was about 8 miles an hour, and that it had not been decreased at the time the accident occurred. His statements were substantiated by those of Fireman Hunley.

Flagman Norman was inside the caboose working on a wheel report, while Brakeman Gouldner and Conductor Davis were on the front end of the caboose. Brakeman Gouldner thought the speed of the train was 15 or 13 miles an hour, and said the first he knew of anything obstructing the track was when the conductor told him to jump, just before the accident occurred. Neither of these brakemen heard Switchman Lynch say anything to Conductor Davis about engine 10 being stalled, although Yardmaster Castine said Flagman Norman told him just after the accident that he remembered seeing the switchman in the caboose but did not pay attention to what he was saying. Both Brakeman Gouldner and Engineman Telford said they had not seen any light on the rear of the stalled train.

Then Flagman Heiser's lantern was found in the coal in the gondola after the accident, there was oil in the cup, and on lighting the lantern and swinging it, it was ~~again~~ <sup>again</sup> extinguished. Flagman Heiser said it had gone out once before during the same night, before his train left Second Avenue.

#### Conclusions.

This accident was caused by the failure of engine 3104 to be moving prepared to stop within range of vision, for which Conductor Davis is responsible.

While no rules or bulletin notices regulating the speed of movements through this yard could be located, the statements of various employees indicated that all of them

thoroughly understood the general rule to move under control prepared to stop within range of vision. Conductor Davis and Brakeman Gouldner were riding on the head end of the caboose presumably for the purpose of maintaining a proper lookout, and Conductor Davis, being in charge, should have seen to it that such a lookout was maintained and that the speed of the engine was reduced sufficiently to enable it to be brought to a stop in case the track was not clear.

The employees involved were experienced men, at the time of the accident they had been on duty  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours, previous to which the train crew of engine 10 had had 16 hours off duty, and the train and engine crews of engine 3104 from 12 to 37 hours off duty.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. Borland,

Chief, Bureau of Safety.