

In re Investigation of accident which occurred
on the line of the Minneapolis &
St. Louis Railroad near
New Richland, Minn.,
March 22, 1916.

April 18, 1916.

On March 22, 1916, there was a rear-end collision on the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad near New Richland, Minn., which resulted in the death of 2 employees and 2 trespassers, and the injury of 2 employees and 1 stockman.

The trains involved in this accident were 2 east-bound freight trains. Train No. 94 consisted of 40 cars and a caboose, hauled by locomotive 452, and was in charge of Conductor Siems and Enginemen Classen. Approaching New Richland the train stalled on the ascending grade and had to be doubled into that station. After several cars had been set at this point, the train was coupled together and departed at 2:53 a. m. When the rear end of the train was about 1½ miles beyond New Richland, and while traveling at a speed of 10 or 15 miles an hour, the train was struck by eastbound freight train first No. 96.

Train first No. 96 consisted of 33 cars and a caboose, hauled by locomotive 456, and was in charge of Conductor Kiskok and Enginemen Stover. It left Cedar Lake at

10:05 p. m. 43 minutes late, passed New Richmond at 9:01 a. m. 46 minutes late, and collided with the rear end of train No. 94 while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 35 miles an hour.

Locomotive 456 was derailed and considerably damaged and the first 5 cars of train first No. 96 were also derailed, 3 being badly damaged while 2 were destroyed. The cabooses on the rear of train No. 94 were destroyed while the 2 cars immediately ahead of it were burned.

This part of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad is a single track line. No block signal system is in use, trains being operated by time-table and train orders, and trains moving in the same direction are required to keep 3 minutes apart except when closing up at station. Proceeding eastward from the station at New Richmond, the track is level for about 1,600 feet, then there is a slightly ascending grade for about 2,400 feet, then about 1,000 feet of level track followed by an ascending grade of .4% to the point of the accident. The collision occurred on a tangent track at a point about 200 feet beyond the end of a curve to the left of 1° 30', this curve being about 1,500 feet in length. Just of this curve the track is tangent for 3,100 feet. At the time of the accident there was a heavy snow falling.

Engineer Cl... of train No. 94 stated that the speed of the train was about 12 or 15 miles an hour when he

felt the air brakes being applied, and as he looked at the air gauge there was a bump and he thought the train had parted.

The head brakeman then went back to the rear of the train to locate the trouble, and in a short time the conductor of train first No. 96 came forward and asked him to pull ahead a little, saying that there had been a collision and that the cars were on fire. Engineman Glasen stated although his locomotive was equipped with an electric headlight, yet on account of the thick heavy snow falling, he could not see more than 4 or 5 car lengths, saying that the snow seemed to form a wall similar to fog. His statements were corroborated by those of the fireman and the head brakeman.

Flagman Murphy stated that when he was out flagging, while the train was being doubled into New Richland, he went back about $3/4$ of a mile or a mile, and he stated that he could see the markers on his caboose from that point. When the train left New Richland, the markers were burning, and after the train had traveled about half a mile he looked out of the rear of the caboose and saw train first No. 96 approaching. He stated that he thought it was about $3/4$ of a mile distant. He told Conductor Siems that the train was coming and then lighted a yellow fusee and threw it off. He then stood on the platform of the caboose and when he thought that the approaching train had passed the fusee, he threw off another yellow fusee, and stated that at this time

the caboose was about at the western end of the curve approaching the point where the collision afterwards occurred. He thought that the fuses were thrown off about 80 or 90 car lengths apart. He continued to watch train No. 96 and saw that it was coming pretty fast, and then told Conductor Siems that he better get out on the platform. He then returned to the platform, saw that train first No. 96 was getting closer, and thinking that it was going too fast he lit a red fuse and began giving stop signals with it, but no answer to his signals was given. He then went into the caboose and told the conductor to get out on the platform. Flagman Murphy stated that he then returned to the platform and jumped off when the approaching train was about a half car length distant. He thought the speed of train first No. 96 was from 40 to 50 miles an hour, and said that the locomotive hauling the train was working steam when it collided with his train, and that he did not hear the engineman of that train whistle for either of the two road crossings which they had passed.

Conductor Siems of train No. 94 stated that when leaving New Richland he was sitting at his desk and that he saw the flagman throw off a yellow fuse. He also saw the headlight of the locomotive hauling train first No. 96 when it was about 1 mile distant. He did not see the flagman throw off the second fuse, and stated that just before the collision occurred the flagman told him to get off, but that

he did not have time to do so. He did not remember whether or not the flagman told him about the approaching of train first No. 96 previous to this time.

Fireman Dalton of train first No. 96 stated that at Waseca, a station 12.6 miles from New Richland, the conductor delivered a train order to the engineman and said that train No. 94 had left New Richland. At a point about 1 mile west of the passing track switch at New Richland his locomotive ran over two torpedoes which had been left by the flagman of train No. 94, and the speed of his train was at once reduced. Approaching the station he was looking out expecting that they would receive a train order, and he stated that he did not see the train order signal until within about four car lengths of it. After passing the station the speed was again increased, and he got off his seatbox and put in a fire. He then got back on the seatbox, which was also occupied by Head Brakeman McBride, and leaned out of the window looking ahead, but did not see any fuses or lights ahead of his train. He then got down to put in another fire. Fireman Dalton stated that while he was putting in this fire, the engineman stood up in front of the seatbox as though he might have been looking at the lubricator, and it was while he was in this position that the collision occurred. Fireman Dalton further stated that the front window on the left side of the engine was covered with wet snow

being driven by the wind from the left toward the right side of the locomotive; he did not know whether or not the engineman's window was covered in a similar manner. He stated that from the time he started to put in the second fire until the collision occurred, he did not see the engineman look out of the window. He also stated that he did not notice any reflection which might have come from a fusee, that he did not see anything of train No. 94, and that he did not think the engineman saw that train. He saw that the engineman made no move toward shutting off steam or applying the air brakes. After the accident he was talking with Brakeman McBride, who afterwards died from his injuries, and the brakeman told him that he did not see a thing. Fireman Dalton stated he found the cupola of the caboose of train No. 94 in the wreckage, with the cupola light still burning, and he extinguished it. He estimated the speed of his train passing New Richland to have been 15 or 20 miles an hour, and about 35 miles an hour at the time of the collision.

Conductor Hickok stated that it was at Waterville, 23.2 miles from New Richland, that the operator told him that train No. 94 was at New Richland, and when he went to the head end of the train and told Engineman Stover the latter said that the operator had already told him the same thing. Conductor Hickok stated that when the collision occurred he was sitting at his desk, and that there was no application of the air brakes; the speed at the time was about 25 miles

an hour. He stated that as he got out of the caboose to go to the head end of the train he saw a yellow fusee burning on the engineman's side of the track at a point about two car lengths behind the caboose.

Flagman Collins, who was riding in the cupola, first on the one side and then on the other, stated that from the time his train passed New Richland to the time of the accident, he did not see anything of any burning fusees, but that he could see the reflection from the fire box door of the locomotive when it was open. At the time of the collision, he was riding on the right side of the cupola, but he did not feel any application of the air brakes. He stated that when he started back to flag, he found a yellow fusee burning a short distance behind the caboose on the engineman's side of the track.

After the accident an examination of locomotive 436 showed that the reverse lever was in the forward position, hooked up close to the center, the throttle valve closed and the air brake valve handle in the release position. Engineman Stover was killed in the accident.

This accident was caused by the failure of Engineman Stover of train first No. 96 to observe and be governed by caution and stop signals given by Flagman Murphy of train No. 94. The evidence clearly indicates that fusees were thrown off by the flagman of train No. 94 when he saw train first No. 96 approaching approximately 1 mile distant, while his

train was running at a speed of 10 or 15 miles an hour; that no attention was paid to them by Enginemen Stover, and that his locomotive collided with train No. 94 without any application of the air brakes having been made.

Head Brakeman McBride is also at fault for his failure to maintain a proper lookout, in view of the stormy weather condition prevailing, and in view of the fact that he undoubtedly knew that train No. 94 was somewhere ahead of his train. Under such circumstances he should have done his best toward assisting the enginemen in observing the track ahead. Had he done so, it is possible that he might have seen the burning fuses and have called the enginemen's attention to them thus preventing the accident.

Engineman Stover entered the service as a fireman in 1898, and was made an enginemen in 1904; his record was good. Brakeman McBride entered the service in January, 1915, and had a clear record. At the time of the accident, these men had been on duty 8 hours and 50 minutes after a period off duty of 17 hours.