

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN  
RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON  
THE NEW YORK, NEW HAVEN & HARTFORD RAILROAD NEAR  
GLENBROOK, CONN., ON OCTOBER 6, 1925.

January 16, 1926.

To the Commission:

On October 6, 1925, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad near Glenbrook, Conn., which resulted in the injury of 24 passengers.

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on that part of the New York Division which extends between Woodlawn, N.Y., and Devon, Conn., a distance of 48.89 miles, and in the vicinity of the point of accident this is a four-track line over which trains are operated by time-table, train orders, and an automatic block-signal system. The tracks are numbered from North to south as follows: 3, 1, 2, and 4, tracks 3 and 1 being used for westbound movements; while tracks 2 and 4 are used for eastbound movements; the accident occurred on track 2 at a point about 2,200 feet east of Glenbrook, a non-telegraph station located 23.4 miles east of Woodlawn, the western terminus of this division. Approaching from the west there is a 2° 6' curve to the right 4,112 feet in length, the accident occurring on this curve at a point about 232 feet from its eastern end. The grade in this vicinity is ascending for eastbound trains, being 0.42 per cent at the point of accident.

The track is laid with 107-pound rails, 39 feet in length, with 23 and 24 treated hardwood ties to the rail-length, single-spiked and tie-plated; rail anchors are also used. The track is well constructed and maintained in good condition.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 12.53 p.m.

Description

Eastbound passenger train No. 54 consisted of one mail car, one Pullman buffet car, 3 Pullman chair cars, one dining car, and 3 coaches, in the order named, hauled by electric motor 0300, and was in charge of Conductor

Jenkins and Engineman Knapp. It passed Stamford, Conn., the last telegraph office preceding the point of accident, at 12.50 p.m., on time, passed Glenbrook, 2.11 miles distant, and was derailed at a point 2,200 feet east of that station while traveling at a speed of about 50 miles an hour.

Motor 0300, the first two cars and the front truck of the third car were not derailed, and came to a stop about 1,200 feet beyond the initial point of derailment. The six rear cars were derailed, but all of them remained upright and they were not seriously damaged.

#### Summary of evidence

Engineman Knapp, of train No. 54, said his train was making scheduled speed, about 50 miles an hour, at the time of approaching the point of accident; he saw the section crew at work on the track ahead and after they had stepped to one side he observed what appeared to be a hump in the track at the point at which they had been working but did not note any unusual lurch of the motor when passing over the track at that point. Shortly afterwards, however, he felt the speed being reduced, noted the loss of air pressure and at about this time the fireman called to him that the train was derailed; he at once placed the brake valve in the emergency position and the train was brought to a stop. The statements of Fireman Lawler corroborated those of Engineman Knapp and added nothing of importance to the testimony, as was also the case with the statements of Conductor Jenkins and the other members of the crew.

Road Foreman of Electric Locomotives Hess arrived at the scene of the accident less than an hour after its occurrence and said he observed three new ties at the point of derailment which had not been spiked; the first tie east of these new ties had been dropped preparatory to removing it, while the following three ties were not spiked. He called the attention of the section foreman to this condition, and said that later the section foreman had three of the ties spiked.

Track Supervisor Haggerty said that while the rules provide for an examination of section foreman on rules governing the maintenance of way department, Section Foreman DeMendri, who was in charge of the section of track on which this accident occurred, had not been examined because of his inability to read or write. Mr. Haggerty added, however, that he had frequently instructed the section foreman on the rules, particularly with reference to tie renewals, and that he was satisfied the section foreman thoroughly understood them. Track

Supervisor Haggerty said that in his examination of the track after the accident, he found five successive ties at the initial point of derailment that were not spiked. Upon being questioned the section foreman told him that he forgot about train No. 54 and was working under the impression that the next train scheduled to pass on track 2 would pass at about 3.01 p.m.

Acting Section Foreman DeMemdri, in charge of the crew working on the track at the point of accident, stated that on the day of the accident he had been working on tie renewals on track 2 from 9 a.m. until 12 o'clock noon; a stop was then made for lunch, during which time train No. 12 passed on track 2. The ballast around several ties had been loosened just previous to the time when work was suspended for lunch, and immediately after returning to work at 12.30 pm., two old ties were taken out and two new ties put in; spikes were removed from a third tie and the tie allowed to drop away from the rails preparatory to removing it; the spikes on a fourth tie were also removed to make an adjustment in the gauge and it was at this time that train No. 54 was seen to be approaching and he gave warning of its approach and work was suspended. Acting Section Foreman DeMemdri said about half of the train had passed over the point at which the ties were being removed when one of the cars became derailed, followed in quick succession by the balance of the train. He said the track spread a distance of several inches but he thought, however, that the track had been in safe condition for the passage of the train and that something about the train was responsible for the accident. It further appeared from the statements of the section foreman that he had a time-table, a watch, and was or should have been familiar with the time of scheduled trains, but that he forgot about train No. 54 and resumed work after lunch with the idea that the next train due to pass on track 2 would pass shortly after 3 p.m. He acknowledged that he had been instructed when renewing ties to renew one at a time.

#### Conclusions.

This accident was caused by an insecure condition of the track in which a number of ties had been left unspiked in the process of tie-renewal, for which condition Acting Section Foreman DeMemdri was responsible.

There was some difference of opinion as to the exact number of ties in the track at the point of derailment which were not spiked at the time of the passage of train No. 54, Road Foreman of Electric Locomotives Hess said he found seven consecutive ties which were not

spiked, while Track Supervisor Haggerty said he found five such ties. Acting Section Foreman DeMemdri at first stated that the track was fully spiked but later admitted that there were four ties not secured by spikes. In any event it is apparent that a condition existed which was sufficient to so weaken the track on the 2° 6' curve, which was elevated to permit a speed of 60 miles an hour, as to make it unable to withstand the strain placed upon it, resulting in the spreading of the rails and the derailment of train No. 54. Nothing about the equipment was found which could have contributed to the occurrence of the accident.

Acting Section Foreman DeMemdri re-entered the service of this railroad as a laborer on a work train in September, 1918, after having been employed as a track laborer on this railroad from August, 1905, to December 1907; in June 1924, he was assigned as acting section foreman in which capacity he was working at the time of the accident. All of the other 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. BCRLAND,

Director.