

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

Report of the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances covering the investigation of an accident which occurred on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad near Westerly, R. I., on October 25, 1913.

April 24, 1914.

To the Commission:

On October 25, 1913, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad near Westerly, R. I., which resulted in the injury of 74 passengers and 3 employees. Investigation of this accident was had in conjunction with the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Rhode Island, and a public hearing was held at Providence R. I., on October 31, 1913. As a result of the investigation of this accident I beg to submit the following report:

The derailed train was eastbound train No. 26, en route from New York, N. Y., to Boston, Mass. It consisted of three Pullman cars, all equipped with steel underframes, one smoking car, and two coaches, all of wooden construction, hauled by locomotive No. 1309. The train was in charge of Conductor Taber and Engineer Smith. Train No. 26 left Westerly at 9:25 p. m., 14 minutes late, and at about 3:00 p. m. was derailed at a point 1.6 miles east of Westerly while running at a speed estimated to have been between 30 and 35 miles per hour. Neither the engine nor the tender were derailed. With the exception of one wheel on the north rail, all of the wheels under the first Pullman car were derailed, while all the other cars in the train were derailed and came to rest on the south side of the track, some of them extending partly over the east segment.

The train broke in two between the second and third cars, the four rear cars being separated from the forward portion of the train a distance of about 150 feet. Illustration No. 1 is a view looking in a westerly direction, and shows the position of the last four cars after the derailment.

This part of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad is a double-track line, and trains are operated under the controlled manual block-signaling system. Approaching the point of derailment from the east there are about 3,000 feet of tangent all on a descending grade of about one-half of 1 per cent. The track is laid with 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch steel rails, 33 feet in length, single spiked to 12 or 13 dressed chestnut, oak, and pine ties, no tie-plates being used on any light track. At the point of derailment the track is on a 12-foot fill, chiefly composed of gravel. The ballast is of gravel varying from 12 to 16 inches

in depth. Examination showed this track to be in good condition. It was raining at the time of the derailment.

Examination of the equipment of the derailed train showed nothing which in any way could have contributed to the derailment. Examination of the track showed that the first indication of anything wrong was a broken rail on the south side of the track. West of this broken rail there were no marks of any kind upon the rails or ties, while east of the same the ties had been cut and broken by derailed wheels, the track being torn up for a distance of about 600 feet. East of the initial point of derailment the north rail was torn out of alignment for a distance of about 12 rail lengths, while 12 successive rails on the south side were also torn up. Four of these rails on the south side were separated from each other, the bolts at the rail joints having been sheared off.

The crew of an eastbound passenger train which passed over this track less than an hour previous to the derailment testified that they felt no unevenness in the track, and that they did not notice anything which would indicate that there was anything wrong with it. Engineman Smith, of train No. 26, stated that the first thing he noticed was a slight jar or yank. He at once applied the air brakes and on looking back saw fire flying from underneath the cars. After the accident no defects or damage of any kind were found to exist with respect to the locomotive and he operated it through to Boston. Fireman Murphy testified that at the time of the derailment he was putting coal on the fire. He did not notice any jar from the driving wheels, being of the opinion that it came from behind the engine. The testimony of the other members of the crew shed no light as to the cause of the accident, their first intimation that there was anything wrong being the shock occasioned by the cars being derailed, coupled with the application of the air brakes.

This accident was caused by a broken rail.