

**In re investigation of an accident which occurred
on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Rail-
road at Westfield, Mass., on June 13,
1917**

July 28, 1917.

On June 13, 1917, there was a rear-end collision on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad at Westfield, Mass., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of two employees and one care-taker of live stock. After investigation of this accident, the Chief of the Division of Safety submits the following report:

Southbound second-class freight train No. 555 consisted of 61 cars and a caboose, hauled by locomotives 262 and 362, and was in charge of Conductor Gervey and Enginemen Tucker and Burr. It was en route from Northampton, Mass., to Bridgeport, Conn. It left Northampton at 9.42 p. m., nearly 4 hours late, and left Westfield at 12.35 a. m. While pulling out of the yard the yardmaster noticed fire flying from under one of the cars and called to members of the crew on the rear of the train that a brake rigging had dropped. The flagman applied the air brakes, the train being brought to a stop with the caboose about 100 feet north of bridge 60.18, the entire train being at this time within yard limits. While repairs were being made to the brake rigging the rear of the train was struck by train No. 1181.

Southbound second-class freight train No. 1181 consisted of 31 cars and a caboose, hauled by locomotive 502 and was in charge of Conductor McInnis and Engineman Fowler. It arrived at Westfield at 12.35 a. m., at which point the crew received a copy of train order No. 2 which in part directed their train to overtake and assist train No. 555. This order read as follows:

"No. 1178 meet No. 555 at Sinsbury instead of Plainville and meet No. 1181 and No. 599 at Congamond. No. 1178 take siding at Sinsbury. Close in on No. 555 and assist to Congamond."

Congamond is the second station beyond Westfield, and 8 miles distant therefrom. Train No. 1181 departed from Westfield at 1.25 a. m., having a caution card Form B, and at about 1.30 a. m. collided with the rear-end of train No. 555.

Train No. 555 was moved ahead about 50 feet by the shock of the collision, while the caboose and three rear cars of this train were derailed and considerably damaged. Locomotive 502 was slightly damaged, as was the case with three of the cars in this train, one of which, the seventh car, buckled

and caused the death of a brakeman who was riding on it.

This part of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad is a single track line, over which train movements are handled by time tables and train orders, and a manual block signal system is in use. Train order signals are used as block signals, the normal indication being at stop. In case the preceding train is not a passenger train and has departed at least 10 minutes earlier, following trains are permitted to enter the block under a caution card, Form B. Approaching the point of accident from the north the track is tangent and practically level to a point south of bridge 60.36, a bridge 320 feet in length over the Westfield River. Beyond this tangent there is a curve to the left of 7 degrees 36 minutes, 289 feet in length, this curve being located on an ascending grade of 0.8 per cent. to a point south of bridge 60.15, beyond which point the track is again tangent. The weather at the time was clear.

Yardmaster Helmes stated that as train No. 555 passed him he noticed fire flying from under one of the cars and called to the men on the rear of the train that there was a brake rigging down. After the train passed over the river bridge he heard the brakes applied. When the conductor and brakeman of train No. 1181 came into his office he gave them some instructions about work to be done and then told them that train No. 555 had a brake rigging down and that the train had stopped and he had not heard it start, and did not know whether or not it had gone. Later on he again told Conductor McInnis not to forget to tell the engineman that they probably would find train No. 555 at some point beyond the river bridge. He saw the conductor board the locomotive, but did not know whether or not he notified the engineman.

Flagman Onofrie said that as the train passed the yard office he heard some one call out that a brake beam was down and the middle brakeman, who was riding on the caboose platform, told him to apply the air brakes, which he did as soon as the train reached a point where he thought it would stop with the rear end beyond the bridge. After the train had been standing for some time he went forward to see what the trouble was and was assisting in fixing the brake rigging when the collision occurred. He said that within yard limits he was not required to protect his train by flag and that he made no effort to do so.

Conductor Garvey stated that on leaving Westfield he rode on the second locomotive. When the train was brought to a stop by the application of the brakes from the rear of the

train he started back and was working on the brake beam when the collision occurred. He stated that he made no effort to protect the rear end of his train, on account of being within yard limits.

Fireman Reilly, of train No. 1181, stated that he read the orders handed to him by the engineman at Westfield and he remembered the order which directed his train to close in on train No. 555, but did not remember that it said anything about assisting that train. As the train left Westfield he was working on the fire with the hook, and the conductor was standing in the gangway on the right side of the locomotive waiting until he finished hooking over the fire. The head brakeman was riding on the top of the train, so that no one was maintaining a lookout on the left side of the locomotive. The first he knew of the collision was when it occurred, the brakes being applied at about the same time. It was the first time in six months that he had been over this part of the road and he said that he never had been over it very often. Fireman Reilly further stated that when the orders were handed to him nothing was said about train No. 555, and he did not hear Conductor McInnis say anything to the engineman about that train having stopped on account of a defective brake beam.

Engineman Fowler stated that in the tower at Westfield, Conductor McInnis gave him the orders and remarked that they had a meet at Congamond and would close in and assist train No. 555 from Westfield to Congamond. He read the orders and then went to his locomotive and boarded it, tried the brakes, and received a proceed signal. As the train started, some one boarded the locomotive on his side, but he did not look to see who it was as he was leaning out of the cab window looking ahead. After passing the bridge over the river, he reached forward to put on the injector and saw a red light, and at once applied the emergency air brakes. He thought the speed of his train at the time of the collision was about 5 or 6 miles an hour. Engineman Fowler stated that he knew the track curved to the left and that he might find train No. 555 at any point on the road, but he did not say anything to any one about keeping a lookout on the left side of the locomotive. He thought he was partly to blame, but said that he thought the train ahead should have been protected by flag, considering the fact that the members of the crew were working on their train, although he said that he would not expect flag protection within yard limits. He further stated that Conductor McInnis did not say anything to him about train No. 555 having a brake rigging down.

This accident was caused by the failure of train No. 1181 to be operated within yard limits prepared to stop within the range of vision, as required by rule No. 93, for which En-

gineman Fowler and Conductor McInnis are responsible. Rule No. 93 reads as follows:

"Yard limits will be designated on the timetable and indicated by Yard limit signs.

"Within yard limits the main track may be used protecting against first-class trains.

Second-class and extra trains must move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear.

Passenger carrying trains are not relieved from observance of Rule 93 within yard limits."

While Engineman Fowler did not know the location of train No. 555, he knew that his own train was still within yard limits and that he was rounding a curve to the left which caused his range of vision to be limited to two or three car lengths. Under these circumstances he should have seen to it that a proper lookout was maintained on the left side of the locomotive and in case that was not done, he should have so reduced the speed of his train that he could have stopped within his own range of vision, as required by rule No. 93 and by the caution card, Form B, which he held.

While no statement could be secured from Conductor McInnis, on account of the injuries received by him, yet it is apparent that he said nothing to Engineman Fowler about train No. 555 being delayed on account of a broken brake rigging. Not only this, but Conductor McInnis was riding on the right side of the locomotive and knew that the view from the engineman's side was restricted, yet he remained on that side, waiting for the fireman to finish hooking over the fire, instead of crossing over the left side of the locomotive and maintaining a proper lookout. Had he been on the left side of the locomotive where he should have been, if he had had a proper regard for the safe operation of his train, he would undoubtedly have seen train No. 555 in sufficient time to notify Engineman Fowler and enable the latter to bring the train to a stop in time to avoid a collision.

Engineman Fowler was employed as a fireman in March, 1907, and in February, 1916, was promoted to engineman. His record was good.

Conductor McInnis was employed as a brakeman on October 10, 1907, promoted to flagman in December, 1909, and promoted to conductor in October, 1911. On May 5, 1910, he re-

ceived 15 demerits for responsibility in connection with a collision; on January 9, 1913, he received 5 demerits for not seeing that his train was properly protected by flag, resulting in a rear-end collision; and on March 7, 1916, he was given 45 demerits for running his train, an extra, from Westfield to New Haven, 61 miles, without running orders.

At the time of the accident Engineers Fowler and Conductor McInnis had been on duty about 5-1/2 hours after about 17 hours off duty.