IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD NEAR NEWARK, OHIO, ON FEBRUARY 1, 1921.

March 17, 1921.

On February 1, 1921, there was a rear-end collision between a wreck train and a freight train on the Pennsylvania Railroad near Newark, Ohio, which resulted in the death of 4 employees and the injury of 2 employees. After investigation of this accident the Chief of the Bureau of Safety reports as follows

Location.

This accident occurred on that part of the Panhandle Division extending between Newark and MO Block Station, a distance of 94.2 miles. Between HK and FO towers, located 0.6 and 1.9 miles, respectively, east of Newark, within which territory this accident occurred, there are four main tracks, extending from north to south as follows: 3, 1, 2 and 4. Westbound track 3 and eastbound track 4 are freight tracks and are not signalled for the blocking of trains, trains enter them at these towers under the authority of interlocking caution-signal indications. The speed limit on tracks 3 and 4 is 15 miles an hour and although they are entirely within yard limits trains using them are required to protect by flag as required by time-table rule 19, which modifies rule 99 of the book of operating rules. The accident occurred on track 4, at a point about 1 mile east of HK tower. Approaching the point of accident from the west the track is tangent for 2,600 feet, while the grade is level. The weather was cloudy.

Description.

At the time of the accident the wreck train consisted of engine 7468, 5 freight cars, 1 derrick car, 1 flat car, 1 tool car and 1 commissary car, in the order named, in charge of Conductor Jones and Engineman McDowell. It had assisted in clearing up the wreckage of a derailment a short distance east of HK tower and had been standing on track 4 about a half hour when its rear end was struck by extra 8539.

Eastbound freight train extra 8539 consisted of 75 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 8539, and was in charge of Conductor Harrison and Engineman Hartman. It entered track 4 at HK tower at 4.54 a.m. and at about 5 a.m. collided with the rear end of the wreck train while travelling at a speed estimated to have been about 15 miles an hour.

The two rear cars of the wreck train telescoped and were destroyed by fire which broke out in the wreckage. Engine 8539 was slightly damaged, while three cars in its train were derailed. The employees killed were in cars on the rear of the wreck train.

Summary of evidence.

At the time Flagman Stump of the wreck train went back to protect the rear of his train, the marker on the right side was displaying red to the rear while the marker on the left side was displaying yellow to the rear. Flagman Stump knew that when his train departed for Columbus he might have to use a different set of markers, having been advised that there would be a car on the rear of the train on which the regular markers could not be properly displayed, and finally he re-

turned to his train for the purpose of arranging for a set of markers which could be used on the trip, when he returned to his train he did not leave any torpedoes or fusees. He went into the second car from the rear and while there noticed extra 8539 approaching, at first he thought it was on track 2, but by the time he had reached the rear end of his train he realized that it was on track 4, being then only 20 car-lengths distant Flagman Stump said he then reached for his lanterns, but overturned them, and he then started toward the approaching train, lighting a fusee as he ran, but had only gotten back a short distance when the approaching train passed him. He said he called to the engine crew and threw the fusee at the engine. Conductor Jones was at FO tower and did not know that the flagman had returned to his train.

According to Engineman Hartman, of extra 8539, when his train was approaching the point of accident he noticed a bright headlight and was wondering why the engineman did not dim it. After proceeding a short distance, however, he noticed another headlight which appeared to be very much brighter, and finally on dimming his own headlight he saw the rear end of the wreck train, but it was then too close to prevent the accident. Engineman Hartman thought the head-light first seen by him was on an engine in the vicinity of FO tower, while the second, which appeared to be a much brighter headlight, was due to the reflection of his own head-light on the window glass on the rear end of the commissary car of the wreck train. Engineman Hartman was sure that no

markers were displayed on the rear end of the wreck train and said he did not see any sign of a flagman or a fusee. The fireman of extra 8539 was working on the fire; while the head brakeman was shovelling down coal, neither of them was able to give any further information of importance.

Wreck Master Morrison, who was at the yard office, about 1,050 feet west of the point of accident, said he saw the markers as well as a red lamp on the rear platform, but that he did not see any lighted fusee or any one protecting the rear of the train.

Westbound train No. 21 passed the head end of extra 8539 when in the vicinity of the yard office and it is possible that the headlight of this engine may have been the one which Engineman Hartran first noticed, although Engineman Johnson, in charge of the engine on train No. 21, said he had been operating his engine with the headlight dimmed, it was rather bright, however, and he thought it was possible that it might have appeared as if it had not been dimmed.

Conclusions.

This accident was caused by the failure of Flagman Stump of the wreck train properly to protect his train.

Flagman Stump had ample time to give his train full protection, but returned without having been recalled and without leaving either torpedoes or a fusee, for such neglect of duty there can be no excuse.

Flagman Stump was employed as a brakeman in June, 1917, and promoted to flagman in December of the same year. His record was good.

At the time of the accident the train crew of the wreck train had been on duty about 10 hours and the engine crew about 12 hours, after periods off duty varying from 9 hours to several days, the train crew of extra 8539 had been on duty about 12 hours and the engine crew about 13½ hours, after periods off duty varying from 11 hours to about 43 hours.