

December 2, 1912.

Collision on the Pittsburg, Shawmut & Northern  
Railroad near Nile, N. Y., on September 22, 1912.

On September 22, 1912, there was an accident on the Pittsburg, Shawmut & Northern Railroad near Nile, N. Y., which resulted in the death of 2 passengers and 1 employee and the injury of 24 passengers and 2 employees. After investigation of this accident the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

Extra north-bound freight train No. 68 consisted of 20 cars and a caboose, hauled by engine No. 68. It was in charge of Engineman Starner and Conductor D. B. McLaughlin, and was bound from St. Mary's, Pa., to Hornell, N. Y. This train left St. Mary's at 9:05 a. m., and reached Bolivar, Pa., 66 miles north of St. Mary's, at 4:30 p. m. At this point the crew in charge of the train received a copy of train order No. 62, reading as follows:

"Exas 69 and 68 north will protect against extra 11 south between Angelica and Bolivar. Exa 11 south will wait at Angelica until 5:59 p. m., at Belvidere until 6:20 p. m., at Friendship until 6:32 p. m., and at West Notch until 6:49 p. m. for Exas 69 and 68 north."

Under the terms of this order south-bound train No. 11 was the superior train and the two north-bound extras had to clear the time shown in the order. Extra train No. 68 left Bolivar at 6:05 p. m., and at West Notch, 6 miles farther north received a copy of train order No. 73, reading as follows:

"Exa 68 north will meet Exa 11 south at Friendship and will meet Exas 57 and 73 south at Friendship instead of West Notch. Exas 11, 57 and 73 south get this order at Friendship."

Extra No. 68 left West Notch at 7:06 p. m. and at a point about 2 miles beyond collided head-on with south-bound extra No. 11.

South-bound extra No. 11 consisted of one coach and a combination baggage and coach, hauled by engine No. 11. It was en route from Hornell, N. Y., to Olean, N. Y., and was in charge of Engineman Johnson and Conductor J. J. McLaughlin. This train left Hornell at 4:40 p. m. and reached Angelica, 34 miles beyond, at 6:05 p. m., where the crew in charge received a copy of order No. 62 quoted above. They also received a copy of Order No. 68, reading as follows:

"Eng. 11 will run Exa Angelica to Olean and will meet Exa 21 north at Belvidere."

This train left Angelica at 6:06 p. m. and reached Friendship at 7:04 p. m., at which point the crew in charge received a copy of train order No. 73, quoted above. Extra No. 11 left the station at Friendship at 7:07 p. m., and proceeded to the passing siding about a half mile south, where it would have to meet extra No. 68, under the terms of train order No. 73. In this siding was a north-bound extra freight train which the crew of train No. 11 supposed to be extra No. 68, and extra No. 11 at once proceeded on its way. A stop was made at Mile, 1 3/4 miles south of Friendship, at which point Conductor McLaughlin came up to the engine and asked the engineman if he was sure that extra No. 68 was the

train passed in the siding at Friendship, to which question the engineman replied "Yes". The train then left Nile and when about 1½ miles south of Nile collided with extra No. 68. The train which was in the siding at Friendship was extra No. 69, which had reached that point on the time given in order No. 62.

The force of the collision drove engine No. 11 backward and its tender telescoped the coach immediately behind it for a distance of about 13 feet. The engine then ran backward a distance of about 400 feet and rolled down an embankment. Engine No. 68 was derailed and ran a distance of about 300 feet before turning over on its side. The first five cars of extra No. 68 were destroyed, while two or three additional cars were derailed. The speed of the passenger train was about 20 miles per hour, while the freight train was running at a speed of about 10 miles per hour.

This division of the Pittsburg, Shawmut & Northern Railroad is a single track line, well maintained. No block signal system is used, trains being operated by train orders. The accident occurred on a 4 degree curve, while the view in each direction is obscured by curves and hills. At the point of collision there is an ascending grade for south-bound trains of 1.33 per cent.

Conductor J. J. McLaughlin, of extra No. 11, said that he received an order at Friendship to meet extra No. 68 at that point. He signed the orders and read them to the engineman. Thinking that the freight train would have a heavy load and would not be at the siding by the time his train reached it, he

told the engineman that they had better pull down into the siding, his intention being to allow the freight train to pass by on the main track without stopping and thus save time. As soon as his train left the station he began to take up tickets. He noticed his train pulling slowly by a freight train in the siding, but did not look to see its number. When Brake man Laffan came back through the train he asked the brakeman what engine it was that passed at Friendship and the brakeman said either the No. 68 or 69. Conductor McLaughlin then said "We have got a meet on the 68", reaching for the bell cord and opening the door of the baggage compartment at the same time. He saw they were near Nile and signaled the engineman to stop there. He asked the engineman if the latter was sure that No. 68 had been passed at Friendship, and that the engineman replied "Yes". He then gave the signal to go ahead.

Brakeman Laffan, of extra No. 11, stated that after receiving and discharging passengers at Friendship the conductor told him that they would have to head in there. Brakeman Laffan then went up to the engine to ride on it as far as the switch. At this time he had not seen the orders received by the conductor, as he was near the head end when the conductor called to him that they would have to head in. When approaching the switch he saw a train in the siding and thought it would not be necessary to open the switch. There were two lights on the ground by the switch leading to the siding and by them his train was given a signal to come ahead. He saw he was not needed to throw the switch and started back over the tender to the coaches.

As he started back the engineman opened the throttle and a cloud of cinders and smoke obscured his view of the freight train as he passed it. When near Nile the conductor asked him what engine it was that was in the siding and he said either No. 68 or No. 69, he was not sure which. The conductor then stated that they would have to see what it was. He started to stop the train and then changed his mind, signalling the engineman to stop at Nile. When the train stopped at that point the conductor went forward to talk over the matter with the engineman.

Fireman Wells, of extra No. 11, stated that the engineman read to him the order requiring his train to meet extra North No. 68 at Friendship, and also gave it to him to read for himself. He stated that the train in the siding at Friendship did not have the engine headlight covered and that his train should have stopped according to the rules. He added that the rule requiring the covering of headlights is not regularly obeyed. He did not know what train it was that was in the siding; it was on the engineman's side, and as he was having trouble in keeping steam in the engine he did not look to make sure what train it was. He stated that when nearing the siding at Friendship the engineman shut off steam and allowed the train to drift, but was using steam when the freight train was passed. The train was stopped at Nile on signal to pick up a passenger. He did not remember whether or not a stop signal was given by any of the train crew. Fireman Wells also stated that at Nile the conductor came up to the engine and asked the engineman what engine it was that was passed at Friendship and the engineman replied that it

was No. 68. On being asked if he was sure, the engineman replied in the affirmative.

( Engineman Johnson, of extra No. 11, was fatally injured and no statement was obtained from him relative to the accident.

All of the employees involved were experienced men with good records, and none had been on duty in violation of the provisions of the hours of service law.

This accident was caused by the failure of the crew in charge of south-bound extra train No. 11 to obey and be governed by that part of train order No. 73 which provided that north-bound extra freight train No. 68 would be met at Friendship.

As a preventative of accidents of this character some adequate form of block signal system should be installed.