March 3, 1915.

In re: Investigation of accident which occurred on the Seaboard Air Line Railway, near Osgood, N. C., January 19. 1915.

On January 19, 1915, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the Seaboard Air Line Railway at Osgood, N. C., resulting in the death of one employee, and the injury of two passengers and six employees. After investigation of this accident the Chief of the Division reports as follows:

The derailed train was southbound train No. 3, known as the "Seaboard Fast Mail", en route from Washington, D. C., to Tampa, Fla., and consisted of engine No. 200, three express cars, one mail car, one combination passenger and baggage car, one coach, one dining car, four Pullman sleepers, and one Pullman observation car. The express car next to the engine was of wooden construction, and the mail car had a steel underframe, the other cars being of all-steel construction. The train was in charge of Conductor Byrd and Engineman Stone.

On the date of the accident train No. 3 left Raleigh, N. C. at 6.25 p.m., 25 minutes late, and passed Monroe, the last telegraph station, about 6 miles north of Osgood, at 7.19 p.m. 24 minutes late, and was derailed about 300 feet north of Osgood station at 7.30 p.m., the speed of the train being approximately 35 miles per hour.

The Raleigh District of the Seaboard Air Line Railway, on which this accident occurred, is a single-track line, the movement of trains being governed by time-table, train orders and a manual block signal system.

Approaching the point of accident from the north, the track is tangent for a distance of about 2,100 feet. There is a grade of 1.1% descending southward. The track is laid with 85-pound steel rails, 30 feet in length, on untreated oak ties, 18 ties to the rail. The ties are single spiked and laid in ballast of sand and cinders.

About 320 feet north of Osgood station, on the east side of the main track, is a switch leading to a spur track which parallels the main track for a distance of 300 feet, then curves to the east toward the industry it serves. It was at this switch that the derailment occurred. The switch is operated by a Rempo upright switch stand, with enclosed springs. The switch stand is equipped with a red and white target, above which is placed a lamp having two red and two white lenses. The switch is a standard 15-foot split switch, made by the Pennsylvania Steel Company, and

has been in service approximately two years.

The engine and tender, the first three cars and the forward trucks of the fourth car were derailed. The engine came to rest 304 feet south of the point of the switch, on its left side, with the forward wheels of the engine truck 8 feet, and the trailer wheels 5 feet, east of the east rail. The tender remained coupled to the engine and came to rest on its left side, on the bed of the siding and almost at right angles to the main track. The rear truck of the tender was practically demolished. The first car came to rest in an upright position, at right angles to the main track and close to the tender. Its rear end was torn out and its trucks were badly damaged. The other cars that were derailed remained coupled and came to rest in an upright position on the roadbed a few feet south of the end of the first car in the train.

The east switch rail was torn out and broken about 10 feet 9 inches from its point, and the angle bar and rail at the heel of the switch, were bent and twisted toward the center of the track. The frog was practically uninjured. From the heel of the frog to the point where the engine came to rest, the main line rail on the east side was displaced. The main line rail on the west side remained intact for a distance of about 90 feet from the point of the switch, and from this point southward two rails were torn out by the derailed cars. The rails on the spur track were torn up for a distance of about 200 feet.

At the time of the accident the weather was mild and somewhat cloudy.

An examination of the engine, tender, cars and track showed them to be in good condition and no defect was revealed that could in any way have caused the derailment.

Fireman Hogan, of train No. 3, stated that a proaching Osgood he saw the switch light and it indicated clear. The locomotive had an electric headlight, which was burning; by its light he saw the switch points and they appeared to be in a proper position. About the time the engine was passing over the switch, he felt the tender settle; it jumped up and down on the ties for a short distance and then the engine overturned. He stated that in his opinion the tender was derailed first and that it dragged the engine off the rails.

Conductor Byrd stated that the first intimation of the impending accident he received, was the application of the brakes. At that time he was standing in the middle of the coach, the sixth car in the train. Immediately after the train stopped he went to the engine to assist in releasing the engineman, and shortly after that, in company with the conductor of a following train, he made an examination of the switch at the point of derailment. He stated that he found the switch unlocked and the lock hanging by its chain. The lever was raised and turned about half way. The switch points were in good condition and were open about one inch; one pair of derailed wheels was between the switch point and the stock rail. The switch lamp was not burning.

Conductor Meecham, of a freight train which stopped behind train No. 3 a short time after the accident, stated that he made an examination of the switch about 30 minutes after the accident occurred. He found the switch lock hanging by its chain, the switch lever raised and sticking out straight, and the switch points open from three-quarters of an inch to one inch.

Section Foreman Carr stated that at about five o'clock p.m. he and his men had occasion to use this switch, using their hand car to push a truck loaded with cross ties in on the side track, where it was left. He instructed one of his men to light the switch lamp, and then after lifting their hand car from the siding to the main track, they left Osgood about 5.10 p.m. and proceeded to Colon. He stated that he made no personal examination of the switch to see whether or not it was properly set and locked.

Sectionman Wicker stated that he handled the switch in placing the hand truck on the siding, and is positive that after the movement was made, he set the switch for the main track and locked it in that position.

The last train passing the switch prior to the derailment was southbound passenger train No. 11. Conductor Hargis and Engineman Muse of this train stated that they made a stop at Osgood and left there at about 5.30 p.m. They did not notice anything unusual while passing over the switch where the derailment afterwards occurred. Engineman Muse further stated that he did not notice whether or not the lamp on the switch was burning when he passed.

Postmaster McDowell stated that he was riding on

the rear of train No. 11 when it passed Osgood, and he noticed that the switch points on the switch fitted up tight and that the switch lamp was burning. He further stated that on January 6, ten days prior to the date of the accident, he made a personal examination of this switch and found it to be in good condition.

Car Repairmen Barrow and Russell, who were waiting at Osgood station for a northbound train at the time of the accident, stated upon hearing train No. 3 approach, they stopped out in front of the station to see it pass. Immediately after the engine reached the point of the switch they saw sparks flying which was followed by the overturning of the engine. They also stated that after the accident and before any of the derailed cars had been moved, they examined the switch and found it unlocked, the lever raised and the switch points open. They did not notice whether or not the switch lamp was burning before the derailment occurred.

This accident was caused by an improperly secured or a partially open switch.

The position in which the engine and cars came to rest after the accident, and the manner in which the track was torn up, as well as the statements of employees, indicate that the tender wheels were the first to be derailed, and that after being derailed and running along on the ties a short distance, on account of the ties bunching, the tender dragged the rear of the locomotive from the rails, causing it to overturn.

Sectionman Hoker was the last person known to have handled this switch. If he failed to secure and lock the lever in the proper position, the passage of train No. 11 and the locomotive of train No. 3 may have jarred the switch sufficiently to loosen the handle, allowing it to fly up and the switch points to spring open.

On the other hand, the switch may have been left partially open with malicious intent. A former employee, who had been dismissed, and was known to have a switch key in his possession, was seen at the scene of the wreck shortly after it occurred. He has since been placed under arrest charged with malicious tampering with the switch.