

May 21, 1914.

In Re: Investigation of accident on the Toledo & Ohio Central Railway, at Kenton, Ohio, on April 21, 1914.

On April 21, 1914, there was a rear-end collision on the Toledo & Ohio Central Railway at Kenton, Ohio, which resulted in the death of two employees. After investigation of this accident the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

The Western Division of the Toledo & Ohio Railway, on which the accident occurred, is a single track line. Trains are operated by train orders and time table rights. No block signal system is in use, but trains are spaced five minutes apart.

This collision was between northbound freight trains Nos. 95 and 97. Train No. 95 consisted of 39 loaded cars and a caboose, hauled by locomotives Nos. 9638 and 9645, and was in charge of Conductor McCugin and Enginemen Smith and Jones. Train No. 97 consisted of 10 loaded cars, 36 empty cars, and a caboose, hauled by locomotives Nos. 9640 and 9610, and was in charge of Conductor Johnson and Enginemen Douglas and Melsop.

Train No. 95 reached Kenton at 12:50 a.m., and train No. 97 at 12:55 a.m., both of the trains stopping on the main track, while train let No. 7, another northbound freight train, reached Kenton at 2:05 a.m. in east end the northbound siding located north of the station. At Kenton the crew of train No. 95 received a train order to let southbound freight train let No. 98 at Kenton, the southbound train taking the siding. A message was also sent to train No. 97, at Kenton, reading as follows:

"Let let on the main line supplies go up and get behind 95 clear soon as let/ 75 is behind 97 let 97 fill up to your point siding and meet their engine from 95 at southbound siding. This will let let/ 98 out quicker."

This message was received by Engineman Douglas, in charge of the leading locomotive on train No. 97. A few minutes afterwards he gave it to Conductor Johnson, and then out of his engine, took coal and a car and coupled to the rear of train No. 95 for the purpose of assisting it up the grade of one and one-half miles out of Kenton. Train No. 95 then pulled ahead to clear the south side of the southbound siding, north of the station, and came to a stop between the switches. As soon as train let No. 98 had arrived and entered the siding, train No. 95 whistled and brakes, and was about to start when an air hose

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burst. This was repaired and the train finally started at 2:30 a.m., the rear of the train reaching a point about 135 feet beyond the north switch of the southbound siding, or about seven-eighths of a mile from the station of Kenton, when it was struck by train No. 97.

After locomotive No. 9640, the leading locomotive on train No. 97 had coupled to the rear of train No. 95, Engineman Melrop, on locomotive No. 9610, out off and went for coal and water. He then coupled to his train, and pulled ahead in order to let the locomotive from 1st No. 75, which had received a message at a previous station to help train 97 out of Kenton, out of the northbound siding for the purpose of coupling to the rear of this train. Conductor Johnson then came out of the telegraph office, boarded locomotive No. 9610, and explained to Engineman Melrop the move to be made, as outlined in the message referred to above. Train No. 97 then pulled ahead to clear the southbound siding in order that train 1st No. 98, then occupying that siding, might proceed, not knowing that train No. 95 had been delayed by a bursted air hose and was therefore only a short distance ahead. The lead end of train No. 97 had proceeded to within about 10 or 15 car lengths of the north switch of the siding when Engineman Melrop saw the red light on the tender of locomotive No. 9640, which was helping train No. 95. He made no attempt to stop his train until within about 3 or 4 car lengths of locomotive No. 9640 when he made an emergency application of the air brake, too late to avert the collision.

The force of the collision raised the rear end of the car immediately ahead of the caboose of train No. 95, a steel frame box car, and forced the trucks and floor of the caboose under the box car. The caboose body was destroyed by the collision and by fire which broke out immediately afterwards, the conductor and brakeman who were riding in the caboose being killed. Very slight damage was sustained by locomotives Nos. 9640 and 9610, while about ten car lengths back from the locomotive in train No. 97, three wooden coal cars buckled and were destroyed. Train No. 95 was moving at a speed of about 4 or 5 miles per hour, while the speed of train No. 97 had been reduced to about 6 or 8 miles per hour at the time of the collision.

Engineman Melrop, in charge of locomotive No. 9610, hauling train No. 97 at the time of the accident, stated that while taking coal and water he received verbal instructions that locomotive No. 9640 would help train No. 95, and that he himself could couple to his train, pull ahead and let train 1st No. 98 out of the southbound siding, remaining there until locomotive No. 9640 returned. He first pulled ahead so that the locomotive from train 1st No. 75 could couple to the rear of his train. The conductor then came to the engine, said that train No. 95 had gone and that they were ready to go. They then started ahead. After traveling a short

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distance he saw the red lantern on the tender of locomotive No. 9640 helping train No. 95, at which time he was about 10 or 15 car lengths distant. He supposed that train No. 95 was gone and that the locomotive was awaiting the approach of his train. He signaled the crew of locomotive No. 9640 with the whistle, but received no response, and when the two trains were about 3 car lengths apart he made an emergency application of the air brakes. Engineman Melsop further stated that as soon as the conductor got on to the engine the conductor asked him if there was anything against coupling up on the hill and he replied in the negative. He then stated that he expected to pick up locomotive No. 9640, either when his train stalled on the hill or else while in motion.

Conductor Johnson said that he explained to Engineman Melsop the move to be made and told him to pull ahead and let train 1st No. 98 out of the siding. He then boarded the locomotive for the purpose of riding in it. In the meantime the locomotive of train 1st No. 75 had been cut off from that train and coupled to the rear of his train for the purpose of assisting it over the hill. After starting, the only conversation Conductor Johnson had with the engineman was when he asked the engineman if there was any reason why they could not couple to locomotive No. 9640 on the hill without stopping, and the engineman replied that there was not. He did not, however, say anything further but left it to the engineman to stop or not as he wished. At the time they passed the caboose of train 1st No. 98 on the siding they saw the red lantern on the tender of locomotive No. 9640 and at that time supposed that it had returned from helping train No. 95, as they knew nothing about it having been delayed 20 minutes in starting on account of a bursted air hose. At this time the speed of train No. 97 was about 8 miles per hour and it was not until they were within a short distance of the locomotive ahead that the brakes were applied. Conductor Johnson further stated that at no time could he see anything of the train ahead of locomotive No. 9640 or the markers of the caboose of that train.

Engineman Douglas, of locomotive No. 9640, stated that it was his understanding that he was to help train No. 95 to the top of the grade and that after train No. 95 had left, train No. 97 would pull up until it cleared the north switch of the southbound siding so that train 1st No. 98 could go. He understood that train No. 97 could then wait until he returned with his locomotive from the top of the hill. He did not hear train No. 97 approaching, and his first knowledge of the fact being when the collision occurred.

This accident was caused by train No. 97 attempting to couple to locomotive No. 9640 while both were in motion, for which Engineman Melsop and Conductor Johnson are equally responsible. These employees knew that they had a heavy train behind

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them, assisted by a helper, and in the darkness they did not know whether or not the locomotive ahead of them was standing or moving, or whether or not it was coupled to a train. As long as employees take such dangerous chances as were evidenced in this case, in attempting to couple up trains or engines without stopping, accidents may be expected to occur. Both of the employees responsible had good records and neither had been on duty in violation of any of the provisions of the hours of service law.