

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE WASHINGTON, BALTIMORE & ANNAPOLIS ELECTRIC RAILROAD AT REVELL, MD , ON AUGUST 23, 1921

October 15, 1921.

To the Commission

On August 23, 1921, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and work train on the Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Electric Railroad at Revell, Md , which resulted in the death of 2 employees, and the injury of 1 passenger and 1 employee

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on the Annapolis Short Line Division, which extends between Baltimore and Annapolis, Md , a distance of 25.8 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident it is a single-track line over which trains are operated by time-table and train orders, no block-signal system being in use. The accident occurred about 40 feet south of the station at Revell. Approaching the point of accident from the north, there is 710 feet of tangent, followed by a 3-degree 45 minute curve to the left 731 feet in length, in about the center of which the accident occurred. Approaching this curve from the south the track is tangent for a distance of 582 feet. The grade is 0.41 per cent descending for northbound trains from a point 2,450 feet south of the point of accident to a point 1,000 feet north thereof. The view of motormen approaching the point

of accident from either direction is materially obscured. The accident occurred at about 1 17 p. m., at which time the weather was clear.

Description

Northbound passenger train No. 332 consisted of motor car No. 97, of semi-steel construction, and was in charge of Conductor Harris and Motorman Miller. It left Severnside, 1 9 miles north of Annapolis, at 1 08 p. m., 1 minute late, and while slowing down to make the passenger stop at Revell, collided with work extra 15.

Work extra 15 consisted of motor car No. 15, which had a wooden superstructure with a reinforced underframe, and 1 wooden flat car, which was being pushed ahead of the motor, it was in charge of Conductor Pearson and Motorman White. At Earleigh Heights, 4 6 miles north of Revell, the crew received an order to run extra to Arnold, the first station south of Revell. Work extra 15 left Earleigh Heights at 12 56 p. m., made several stops en route, and while running at a speed thought to have been at least 20 miles an hour collided with train No. 332.

The front end of motor car No. 15 was demolished, the body of the flat car penetrating the motor car for a distance of about 20 feet, the front vestibule of car No. 97 was slightly damaged. The employees killed were the conductor and motorman of work extra 15.

Summary of evidence

Motorman Miller, of train No. 332, stated that he had applied the air brakes preparatory to stopping at the

station at Revell, and on passing the freight station 150 feet south of the point of accident he saw the flat car of the work extra, approaching at a high rate of speed. He said he reversed the motor and only had time to get out of the motorman's compartment before the collision occurred, at which time the speed of his train was about 6 or 8 miles an hour. His train had passed a telephone booth south of Revell at 1 15 p. m., and he judged the accident occurred at about 1.17 p. m. Motorman Miller also said he compared his watch with the train dispatcher's time at about 6 a. m. on the date of the accident, and at that time his watch was 5 seconds fast. The statements of Conductor Harris practically corroborated those of Motorman Miller.

Flagman France, of work extra 15, did not know the wording of the order received at Earleigh Heights, but said Conductor Pearson told him they were going to run to Arnold and instructed him to wait at Earleigh Heights and ride on the next train following, notifying the crew of that train to look out for the work extra between Earleigh Heights and Arnold. He knew nothing of the accident until after its occurrence. Flagman France also said he saw the motorman and conductor of his train comparing their watches at about 12 15 p. m., and heard one of them say his watch was about 2 seconds faster than the other watch.

Brakeman Beyer, of work extra 15, was riding on the rear of the motor attending to the trolley. As the train rounded the curve he saw Conductor Pearson, who was riding on the flat car, giving violent stop signals to the motorman.

and also saw the workmen trying to get off the car. He could not tell whether there had been any reduction in the speed of his train before the collision, and he did not know what orders his train was running on, or why it was occupying the main track on the time of the opposing regular train. Brakemen on this railroad are not responsible for the proper execution of train orders or the operation of their trains. Brakeman Beyer, however, expressed the opinion that the crew of the work extra were running ahead of a following superior train in the expectation that that train would make its time-table meet with train No 332 on the double track south of Revell, not knowing that a train order had been issued fixing a meeting point ^{for the following train} at a station north of Revell.

Lineman Revell, of work extra 15, said that while working at Jones, 1.02 miles north of Revell, the conductor said to him "Hurry up those fellows, as I only have 2 minutes"; the conductor then said he could not use the siding at Jones as it was blocked, and that he was going to Revell. Lineman Revell could not estimate the speed of the train, but said it was going fast enough to make the water come to his eyes.

Train Dispatcher Loney said he had told the conductor of the work extra that the siding at Jones was blocked, although he said that by pushing cars on the siding farther back there would have been room enough for the work extra to have cleared the main track.

Conclusions.

This accident was caused by work extra 15 being operated against an opposing superior train without proper authority or protection, for which Conductor Pearson and Motorman White are responsible.

Train No 332 is due at Revell on its timetable schedule at 1.15 p. m., and under the rules, which require extra trains to clear regular trains 5 minutes, work extra 15 should have been into clear at Revell not later than 1 10 p. m., or be protected by flag. On account of the death of the employees at fault, it is impossible to assign any definite reason for their failure to observe these rules, although it is possible, as stated by Brakeman Beyer, that they expected train No 332 to wait on the double track south of Revell for train No. 329, which they supposed was following them.

Conductor Pearson and Motorman White were experienced employees. At the time of the accident they had been on duty about 7 hours, after 14 and 11 hours, respectively, off duty. The conductor and motorman of train No. 332 had been on duty about 8 hours, after nearly 15 hours off duty.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. BOPLAND,

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