

July 3, 1913.

In re investigation of accident on the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad on May 20, 1913, near Dewey, Ohio.

On May 20, 1913, there was a head-end collision between two passenger trains on the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad near Dewey, Ohio, resulting in the death of 1 postal clerk and the injury of 22 passengers and 3 employees.

After investigation the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances submits the following report:

Where this accident occurred the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad is a single-track line running east and west and operated under the train order system. The trains involved in this collision were No. 6, en route from Toledo, Ohio, to Wheeling, W. Va., and No. 35, en route from Wheeling to Cleveland, Ohio, each train consisting of an engine and 5 cars.

On the date of the accident train No. 35 left Wheeling at 4:15 p.m., on time, with Conductor Fry and Engineman Clement in charge. At Jewett, a station about 30 miles east of Dewey, this train was delayed 52 minutes waiting for a connection. At Sherredsville, 12.4 miles east of Dewey, the crew in charge of this train received three orders; one of them was an order directing the train to run at reduced speed over certain parts of the road; another was an order directing train No. 35 to run thirty minutes late, and the third was an order fixing a meeting point between trains No. 6 and No. 35 at Dewey.

Between Sherredsville and Dewey train No. 35 had one flag and two regular stops; Dewey was neither a flag nor a station stop but simply a siding for meeting and passing trains. No. 35 left Sherredsville at 6:35 p.m., 35 minutes late, and passed Soudale, the last telegraph station east of Dewey, at 7:10 p.m., 32 minutes late. On approaching a point about 300 feet east of Dewey siding, Engineman Clement reduced the speed of train No. 35 to 12 or 15 miles per hour, in obedience to green signals displayed at that point, and he ran under control approximately 1,400 feet to a point about midway between the switches of Dewey siding when he again began to use steam, forgetting the order fixing the meeting point between No. 6 and No. 35 at that place. Engineman Clement admitted that he forgot the meet order.

Conductor Fry stated that he received and signed for the orders at Sherredsville, delivered copies to Engineman Clement and had a clear understanding with him regarding the orders before leaving that station. He stated that he did not forget the meet order but as he was answering an inquiry made by a passenger he did not notice that the train had arrived at Dewey until he saw the white light at the point where the train was stopped. He then

turned and asked the brakeman if train No. 6 was in the siding at Dewey and the brakeman replied that he did not see it. Neither of them pulled the emergency cord or the signal cord; when asked why he did not immediately apply the brakes on finding his train going past the meeting point, Conductor Fry said that he could not reach the emergency cord as he was a rather short man, and he did not have time to climb up to it before the collision occurred.

Brakeman McCoy stated that the conductor did not show him the orders received at Sherredsville but that after leaving that station he found them on the clip board where they were kept for ready reference; he did not read all three orders, however, and did not know where his train was to meet No. 6.

Fireman Saunders stated that he did not read the orders as he was busy after the train left Sherredsville; the engineman offered the orders to him, but he asked the engineman what they were and when the engineman told him he considered that sufficient. He understood the engineman to say that the third order was a wait order instead of a meet order; and when the engineman began to use steam at Dewey he supposed that the time specified in the wait order had expired.

The collision occurred 2,024 feet west of Dewey, proceeding westward from Dewey the track is straight for about 1,160 feet and then there is a four-degree curve toward the north; this curve is about 600 feet in length, and is followed by a tangent about 400 feet long. It was about midway on this tangent that the collision occurred. The view in this vicinity was more or less obstructed by the curve and by trees. It was a dark, cloudy evening, but the headlights on both locomotives were burning. Train No. 6 had just left Zoor and had not attained full speed when the engineman saw No. 35. He had brought his train almost to a stop before the collision occurred. It is believed that train No. 35 passed over the last switch at Dewey at a speed of about 30 miles per hour but the speed was increased to about 50 miles per hour before Engineman Clement saw train No. 6. At the time of the collision the speed of this train was about 18 to 20 miles per hour.

This accident was caused by failure of Engineman Clement to remember and to obey an order fixing a meeting point for his train, and by the negligence of Conductor Fry and Brakeman McCoy in failing immediately to stop their train when they discovered it was passing a meeting point.

Attention is called to the fact that the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad did not have among its bell cord signals one with which to convey a signal from the conductor to the engineman a reminder of train orders to be executed at a meeting point which the train was approaching.

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Engineman Clement was 43 years of age and had been a locomotive engineer for 21 years; for 12 or 13 years he had been running in fast passenger train service and his record was good. All the other employees on train No. 33 were experienced men with good records, and none of the employees involved was on duty contrary to any of the provisions of the hours of service act.