

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2785

THE DETROIT, TOLEDO AND FRONTRON RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR WYANDOTTE, MICH., ON

MARCH 16, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Detroit, Toledo and Ironton
Date: March 16, 1944
Location: Wyandotte, Mich.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Work : Freight
Train numbers: D. T. and I. : D. C. Extra 62 North
Work Extra 900
Engine numbers: 900 : 62
Consist: 17 cars : 42 cars, caboose
Speed: 5 m. p. h. : 8 m. p. h.
Operation: Train orders
Track: Single; tangent; 0.20 percent
descending grade northward
Weather: Foggy
Time: 7:50 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed
Cause: Failure to provide proper protection
for an extra train moving within
working limits of a work extra
Recommendation: That the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton
Railroad Company establish an ade-
quate block system on the line on
which this accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2785

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 6, 1910.

THE DETROIT, TOLEDO AND Ironton RAILROAD COMPANY

April 20, 1944.

Accident near Wyandotte, Mich., on March 16, 1944, caused
by failure to provide proper protection for an extra
train moving within working limits of a work extra.

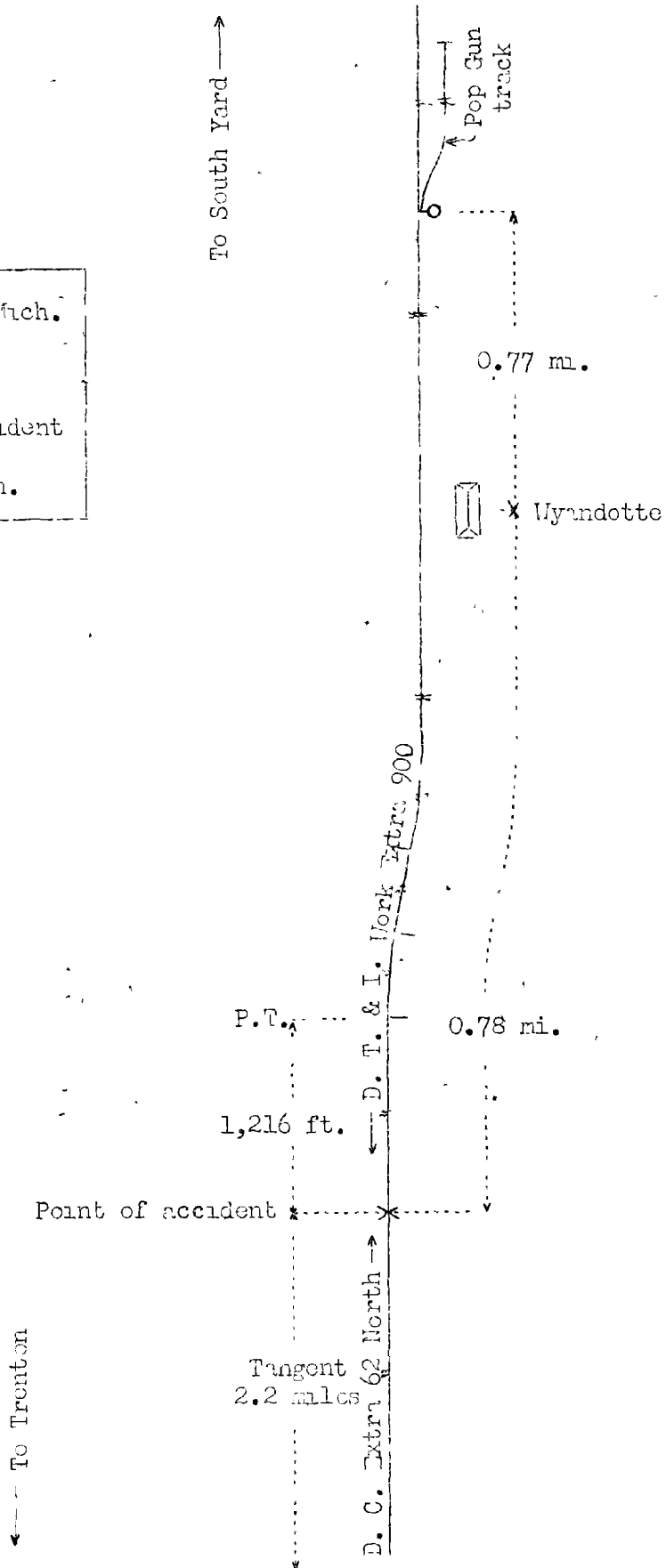
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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On March 16, 1944, there was a head-end collision between a Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad work train and a Delray Connecting Railroad freight train on the line of the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad near Wyandotte, Mich., which resulted in the death of one Delray Connecting Railroad employee. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Michigan Public Service Commission.

¹Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and disposition.

- o South Yard, Mich.
4.20 mi.
- o Wyandotte
0.78 mi.
- X Point of accident
2.92 mi.
- o Trenton, Mich.



Inv-2785
 Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad
 Wyandotte, Mich.
 March 16, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the railroad extending southward from South Yard, near Detroit, to Trenton, Mich., 7.9 miles. This was a single-track line over which trains were operated by train orders only. There were no time-table schedules in effect, and there was no block system in use. Trains of the Delray Connecting Railroad, hereinafter referred to as the D. C., were regularly operated over this portion of the railroad. The accident occurred on the main track 0.78 mile south of Wyandotte, and 2.92 miles north of Trenton. The main track was tangent throughout a distance of 2.2 miles south of this point and 1,216 feet northward. The grade for north-bound trains was 0.20 percent descending.

About 0.77 mile north of Wyandotte there was a spur track, designated as Pop Gun track, on the east side of the main track. The switch was facing-point for north-bound movements.

DEFINITIONS

Extra Train.--A train not authorized by a time-table schedule. It may be designated as--

Extra--for any extra train, except work extra;

Work extra--for work train extra.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

24. When cars are pushed by an engine except when shifting or making up trains in yards, a white light must be displayed on the front of the leading car by night, and a trainman must take a conspicuous position on leading car.

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS

* * *

S-H.

Work Extra.

- (1.) Eng 292 works extra 6 45 a m until 5 45 p m between D and E.

The work extra must, whether standing or moving, protect itself against extras within the working limits in both directions as prescribed by the rules. * * *

This may be modified by adding:

* * *

(3.) Not protecting against extra trains.

Protection against extra trains is not required. * * *

* * *

Whenever extra trains are run over working limits they must be given a copy of the order sent to the work extra. Should the working order instruct a work extra to not protect against extra trains in one or both directions, extra trains must protect against the work extra; * * *.

The maximum authorized speed for the trains involved was 20 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

At Wyandotte the crew of Work Extra 900, a D. T. & I. freight train, received copies of train order No. 14 reading as follows:

Eng 900 Works Exa six forty five 645 am
March 16th until four thirty 430 am
March 17th between Pop Gun track and
Trenton not protecting against Exa trains.
Northward trains get this order at Trenton.

Work Extra 900 consisted of engine 900, headed northward, and 17 cars. The engine, pushing the 17 cars, departed southward from Wyandotte about 7:40 p. m., and while this train was moving at an estimated speed of 5 miles per hour it collided with Extra 62 North at a point 4,162 feet south of the station at Wyandotte.

Extra 62 North, a north-bound D. C. freight train, consisted of engine 62, 42 cars and a caboose. At Trenton the crew received copies of train order No. 14, and, in addition, train order No. 49 reading as follows:

DC Eng 62 run Extra Trenton to South Yard

This train departed from Trenton, the last open office, at 7:31 p. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 8 miles per hour it collided with Work Extra 900.

The engine and the first car of Extra 62 and the first 3 cars of Work Extra 900 were considerably damaged.

It was foggy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 7:50 p. m.

The fireman of Extra 62 North was killed.

During the 32-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 14.3 trains.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that when a work extra is authorized by train order not to protect against extra trains, extra trains must protect against the work extra within the working limits. When cars are being pushed at night, except during shifting or the making up of trains in yards, a white light must be displayed from the front of the first car, and a trainman must take a conspicuous position on the first car. All surviving employees concerned so understood.

The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 14, which authorized Work Extra 900 to work between Pop Gun track and Trenton, and not to protect against extra trains. Under the rules, Extra 62 North was required to provide protection against Work Extra 900 while it was moving within the specified working limits.

As Work Extra 900 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 5 miles per hour. The conductor and a brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead from the front end of the first car. Each of these employees had a lighted white lantern, and, because of a dense fog which materially restricted visibility, the conductor was displaying a lighted fusee. They saw the reflection of the headlight of Extra 62 about 300 feet distant, and they immediately gave stop signals, but the collision occurred before either train was stopped.

The surviving members of the crew of Extra 62 said that they were expecting Work Extra 900 to be moving at any point within the specified limits; however, no member of the crew was instructed to provide protection while this train was moving

within the working limits. The speed of Extra 62 was 8 or 10 miles per hour when the engineer saw simultaneously the first car of Work Extra 900 and stop signals being given with a lighted white lantern about 300 feet distant. He immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the accident occurred before the brakes became effective.

In the territory where this accident occurred trains are operated by train orders only. If an adequate block system had been in use, the crew of Extra 62 would have received definite information as to the movement of Work Extra 900, and this accident would have been averted.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide proper protection for an extra train moving within the working limits of a work extra.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad Company establish an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twentieth day of April, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.