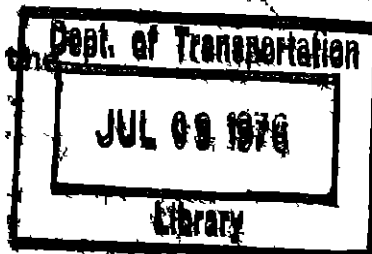


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NO. 151-200

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
✓ Railroad accident investigation 151
Report EV.47
NO. 151-200
August 29, 1913.

In re investigation of Accident on the
Michigan Central Railroad near
Francisco, Michigan, on
July 15, 1913.



On July 15, 1913, there was a derailment on the Michigan Central Railroad near Francisco, Michigan, which resulted in the death of the engineman and fireman and the injury of the conductor.

After investigation of this accident the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

Eastbound train No. 16 was an American Express train, en route from Chicago, Ill., to Buffalo, N. Y. It consisted of 9 express cars and one combination coach, all of wooden construction, hauled by locomotive No., 8363, and was in charge of Conductor Whalen and Engineman Martin. This train left Jackson, Michigan, at 4:58 a. m., was derailed on a curve west of the west switch of the passing track at Francisco, about three-quarters of a mile west of Francisco station, while running at an estimated speed of 45 miles per hour.

The engine and tender tore up the passing track for a distance of about 286 feet before turning over on their sides. The first three cars were derailed and tilted to one side, but did not leave the roadbed. The forward trucks of the fourth car were derailed, the balance of the train remaining on the rails.

The division of the Michigan Central Railroad on which this accident occurred is a double track line, the movement of trains being governed by automatic block signals. The track is laid with 100-pound rails, with about 21 oak and cedar ties under each rail and well ballasted with rock. Six-belt rail joints are used. The track had recently been reballasted, and careful examination for a distance of about one-half mile in each direction from the initial point of derailment showed it to be in good condition. At the point of the accident the track is level and on a 1.14 degree curve, 1600 feet in length.

The first marks of derailment were found 875 feet from the tangent on the west end of the curve. These marks indicated that only one pair of wheels was off the track at that point. Fifty-eight feet farther in on the curve the marks are very distinct where the second pair of wheels left the rails.

The derailed wheels ran along on the ties on the south side of the rails and on reaching the west passing track switch, 1295 feet from where the second pair of wheels was derailed, were caught by the switch points and rails and pulled in on the passing track.

The engine and tender turned over on their sides and came to rest 1639 feet from the first marks of the derailment. An examination of the track and of all the wheels of the engine and tender failed to disclose any condition that could be assigned as the cause of this derailment.

Head Brakeman Keeland stated that his first intimation of trouble was when the brakes were applied in emergency. He estimated that the train ran a distance of about 200 feet after the brakes were applied. He went forward to the engine and found the engineman dead, while the fireman, as afterwards proved to be the case, was fatally injured. The fireman was not able to talk very much, but stated that the tender wheels were the first to leave the rails. The statements of the other employees able to testify brought out no additional facts.

After the accident the axles on both pairs of wheels in the forward truck of the tender were found slightly bent. The wheels on the front axle were 1-15/32 inches out of gauge and the wheels on the rear axle were 9/16 inches out of gauge.

The steel wheels of the tender very plainly showed the marks of the last machine turning upon them, and being worn evenly the entire distance around the tire indicated without doubt that the bending of the axles must have occurred at the time of the derailment.

When derailed the tender was not heavily loaded, having traveled 45 miles since water was taken, and 82 miles since coaling.

The cause of this derailment cannot be stated. It is believed that the tender was the first part of the train to be derailed, but the reasons therefor are unknown.