

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3378
GRAND TRUNK WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR ANDERSONVILLE, MICH., ON
NOVEMBER 26, 1950

SUMMARY

Date: November 26, 1950

Railroad: Grand Trunk Western

Location: Andersonville, Mich.

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Passenger

Train numbers: Extra 3743 West : 57

Engine numbers: 3743 : 6037

Consists: 74 cars, caboose : 10 cars

Estimated speeds: 4 m. p. h. : 45 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders

Track: Single; 2° curve; level

Weather: Light rain

Time: 12:36 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 9 injured

Cause: Failure to provide adequate protection
for train occupying main track on
time of following superior train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3378

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

GRAND TRUNK WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY

January 29, 1951

Accident near Andersonville, Mich., on November 26, 1950,
caused by failure to provide adequate protection for a
train occupying the main track on the time of a
following superior train.

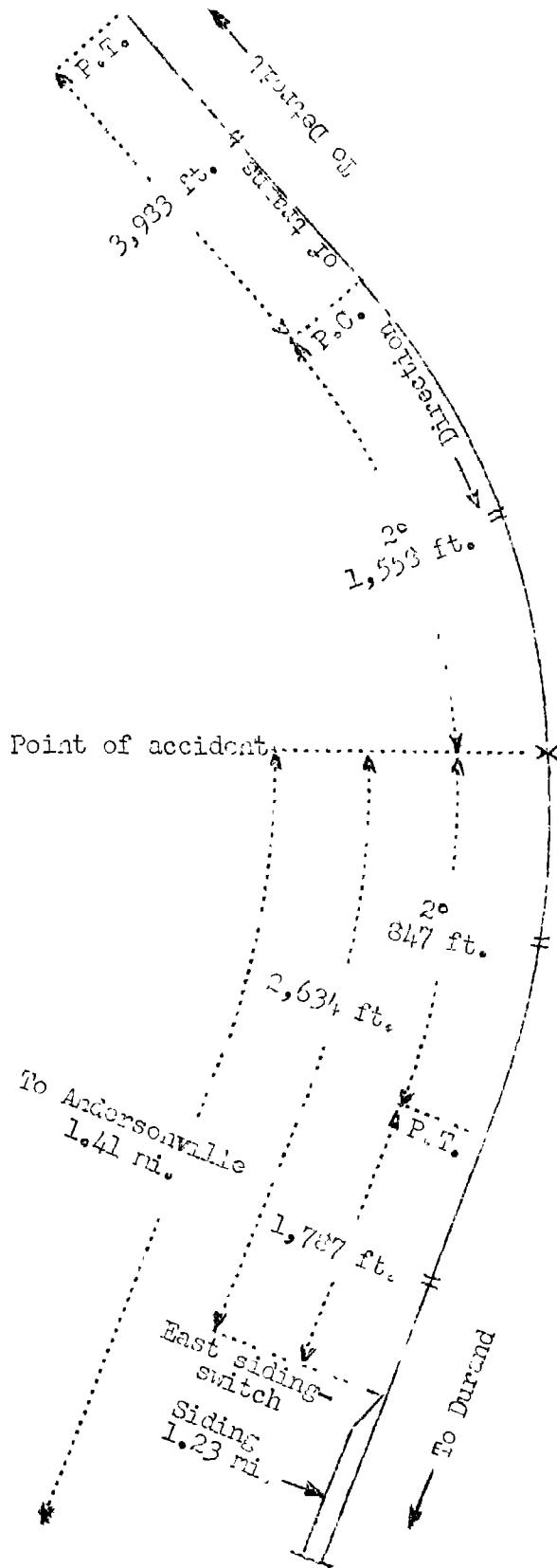
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On November 26, 1950, there was a rear-end collision between a freight train and a passenger train on the Grand Trunk Western Railroad near Andersonville, Mich., which resulted in the death of one train-service employee, and the injury of six passengers and three train-service employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Michigan Public Service Commission.

1

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



- | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| o | Detroit, Mich. | 26.34 mi. |
| o | Pontiac | 6.95 mi. |
| o | Waterford | 3.84 mi. |
| X | Point of accident | 1.41 mi. |
| o | Andersonville | 28.43 mi. |
| o | Durand, Mich. | |

Report No. 3378
 Grand Trunk Western Railroad
 Andersonville, Mich.
 November 26, 1950

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Detroit Division extending between Detroit and Durand, Mich., 66.97 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. At Andersonville, 38.54 miles west of Detroit, a siding 1.23 miles in length parallels the main track on the north. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 37.13 miles west of Detroit and 2,634 feet east of the east siding-switch at Andersonville. From the east there is a tangent 3,983 feet in length and then a 2° curve to the right 1,558 feet to the point of accident and 847 feet westward. The grade is practically level.

This carrier's operating rules read in part as follows:

11. * * *

On track not protected by automatic block signals a train approaching a fusee burning red on or near its track must stop before any part of the train has passed it, and not proceed until the fusee is burned out.

* * *

A train approaching a fusee burning yellow on or near its track will proceed with caution.

* * *

73. Extra trains are inferior to regular trains.

86. * * * an inferior train must clear the time of a first class train in the same direction not less than ten minutes, unless it is clear before such train is due to leave the next station in the rear where time is shown (in which case clearing time must be not less than five minutes), * * * failing to clear the main track as required, the train must be protected as prescribed by Rule 99.

91. * * *

* * * trains must keep not less than ten minutes apart unless the preceding train has arrived at the station ahead.

91a. * * * it will be the duty of operators * * *
to maintain the intervals prescribed by Rule 91. * * *

99. * * *

* * *

When a train is moving under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, such action must be taken as may be necessary to insure full protection; lighted fuses, red or yellow as the case may require, must be thrown off at proper intervals.

* * *

The maximum authorized speeds were 57 miles per hour for passenger trains and 45 miles per hour for freight trains.

Description of Accident

Extra 3743 West, a west-bound freight train, consisted of engine 3743, 52 cars and a caboose. This train passed Pontiac, the last open office, 10.79 miles east of the point of accident, at 10:55 p. m., November 25. It stopped west of the station, and, after 22 cars were added to the train, it departed about 11:40 p. m. It then proceeded westward, and while it was entering the siding at Andersonville at a speed of about 4 miles per hour the rear end was struck by No. 57 at a point 2,634 feet east of the east siding-switch.

No. 57, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 6037, two express cars, four baggage cars, two coaches, one sleeping car, and one business car, in the order named. The first, fourth, fifth, ninth, and tenth cars were of all-steel construction, and the other cars were of steel underframe construction. This train departed from Pontiac at 12:20 a. m., 5 minutes late, and while it was moving at an estimated speed of 45 miles per hour it struck the rear end of Extra 3743 West.

The engine, the tender, and the first three cars of No. 57 were derailed. The engine stopped with its front end 180 feet west of the point of accident and 12 feet north of the center-line of the track and its rear end on the track. It leaned to the north at an angle of about 45 degrees. The front end of the engine was badly damaged. The tender remained coupled to the engine and stopped upright and in line with the track. It was slightly damaged. The first and the second cars were demolished. The third car remained coupled to the fourth

car and stopped with its front end 10 feet south of the centerline of the track. It leaned to the south at an angle of about 30 degrees. The third car was badly damaged, and the fourth car was slightly damaged. The seventy-third and seventy-fourth cars and the caboose of Extra 3743 West were derailed and stopped in various positions on or near the track. The caboose and the seventy-fourth car were demolished, and the seventy-third car was badly damaged.

The fireman of No. 57 was killed. The engineer of No. 57 and the conductor and the flagman of Extra 3743 West were injured.

There was a light rain at the time of the accident, which occurred about 12:36 a. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 19 trains.

Discussion

Extra 3743 West passed Waterford, 5.25 miles east of Andersonville, at 11:55 p. m. No. 57 was due to leave Waterford at 12:24 a. m., and to leave Andersonville at 12:30 a. m. There was no siding of sufficient length to permit Extra 3743 West to clear the main track between these stations, and if this train failed to clear the time of No. 57 as prescribed by rule No. 86 the crew was required to provide protection as prescribed by rule No. 99.

Because of inadequate steam pressure, the speed of Extra 3743 West was reduced to about 3 miles per hour on an ascending grade east of Andersonville. When the train was approaching Andersonville, the engineer, the fireman, and the front brakeman were in the cab of the engine and the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The speed was further reduced to permit the front brakeman to proceed ahead of the engine to operate the east siding-switch, and the train entered the siding without stopping. The conductor and the flagman said that lighted red fuses were thrown off at points about 1.9 miles, 1.3 miles, and 3,500 feet east of the point where the accident occurred. After the engine and about 20 cars had entered the siding and when the speed was about 4 miles per hour, the rear end of Extra 3743 West was struck by No. 57.

As No. 57 was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from their respective positions on the engine, and the members of the train crew were in various locations throughout the cars of the train. The headlight was lighted brightly. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. Because of curvature of the track, the marker lights of a caboose at the point of accident are not visible from an approaching west-bound engine until the engine is within 868 feet of the caboose. The engineer said that he did not observe a lighted fusee between Waterford and the point of accident, and he first became aware that Extra 3743 West was occupying the main track when he saw the marker lights on the caboose. The speed of the train at this time was about 45 miles per hour. When he observed the marker lights he immediately made an emergency application of the brakes. The collision occurred before the speed of the train had been materially reduced.

The engineer of Extra 3743 West said that when his train passed Waterford there was sufficient time to proceed ahead of No. 57 to Andersonville and there clear the time of that train as prescribed by the rules. However, normal speed was not maintained because of inadequate steam pressure. He said he understood that when his train failed to clear the time of No. 57 the crew was required to provide protection and he assumed that protection was being provided by the conductor or the flagman. Both the conductor and the flagman were aware that their train was on the time of No. 57. They said they thought that sufficient protection was being provided when lighted red fusees were thrown off at points east of Andersonville. However, the engineer of No. 57 said that he did not see a lighted fusee east of the point where the accident occurred and that no torpedoes were exploded.

In this territory trains are operated by timetable and train orders. The only provision for spacing following trains is by the time-interval method enforced by operators at open stations, and by flagman's signals. The rules require that a following train must be spaced at least 10 minutes behind a preceding train. In this case the preceding train departed from Pontiac, 10.79 miles east of the point where the accident occurred, 1 hour 25 minutes before the following train departed from that station. There was no open office between Pontiac and the point where the accident occurred. If an adequate block system had been in use in this territory, the crew of the following train would have received definite information that the preceding train was occupying the main track in the same block.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for a train occupying the main track on the time of a following superior train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-ninth day of January, 1951.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson,

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.