

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2667
THE CHICAGO, SOUTH SHORE AND SOUTH BEND
RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR HAMMOND, IND., ON
JANUARY 23, 1943

SUMMARY

Railroad: Chicago, South Shore and South Bend
Date: January 23, 1943
Location: Hammond, Ind.
Kind of accident: Collision with motor truck
Equipment involved: Passenger train : Motor truck
Train number: 21 :
Engine number: Electric motor 106 :
Consist: 5 cars : Tractor, two trailers
Speed: 35 m. p. h. : 2-25 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable, train orders and automatic block-signal system
Track: Double; 3° curve; 0.65 percent ascending grade eastward
Highway: Tangent; crosses tracks at angle of 48°42'; level
Weather: Clear
Time: About 1:48 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 5 injured
Cause: Accident caused by motor truck being driven upon highway grade crossing immediately in front of approaching train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2667

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

THE CHICAGO, SOUTH SHORE AND SOUTH BEND
RAILROAD COMPANY

March 2, 1943.

Accident near Hammond, Ind., on January 23, 1943, caused
by motor truck being driven upon highway grade cross-
ing immediately in front of approaching train.

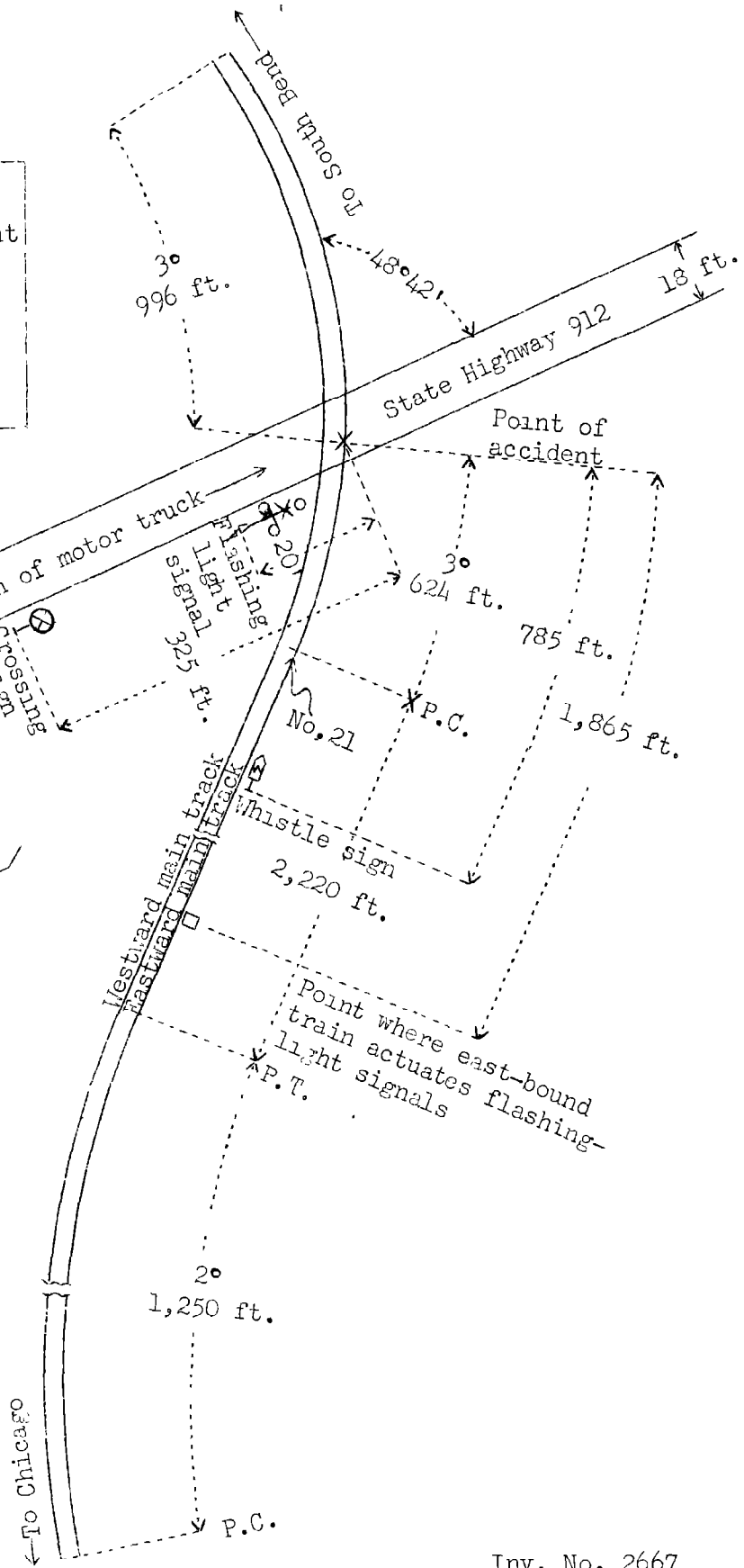
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 23, 1943, there was a collision between a
passenger train and a motor truck on the Chicago, South
Shore and South Bend Railroad at a highway grade crossing
near Hammond, Ind., which resulted in the death of one em-
ployee, and the injury of four passengers and one pedestrian.

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

- o South Bend, Ind. 64.4 mi.
- o Point of accident 4.5 mi.
- o Hammond, Ind. 6.7 mi.
- o Kensington, Ill. 14.2 mi.
- o Chicago, Ill.



Inv. No. 2667
 Chicago, South Shore and South Bend Railroad
 Hammond, Ind.
 January 23, 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

The railroad on which this accident occurred extends between Kensington, Ill., and South Bend, Ind., a distance of 75.6 miles, and is equipped with an overhead catenary system for the electric propulsion of trains. Between Chicago and Kensington trains of the line involved are operated over a line of the Illinois Central Railroad. In the immediate vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. The accident occurred on the eastward main track at a point 4.5 miles east of the station at Hammond, Ind., where the railroad is crossed at grade by State Highway 912. Approaching from the west on the railroad there are, in succession, a 2° curve to the right 1,250 feet in length, a tangent 2,220 feet and a 3° curve to the left 624 feet to the point of accident and 996 feet beyond. At the point of accident the grade for east-bound trains is 0.65 percent ascending. Highway 912 crosses the tracks at an angle of 48°42'. Approaching from the north the highway is tangent a considerable distance to the crossing and beyond. At the point of accident the grade is level. The highway and the crossing are 18 feet wide. The highway is surfaced with concrete and the crossing with asphalt. The crossing is well maintained.

An advance warning highway-crossing sign is located 325 feet north of the crossing and 5 feet west of the highway. This sign is a disk 15 inches in diameter mounted on a mast and bears the letters "R. R." and a cross in black. This sign is 5 feet high. The crossing is protected on each side of the tracks by flashing-light signals. The signal governing south-bound traffic is located in the northwest angle of the intersection at a point 20 feet north of the center-line of the westward main track and 6 feet 5 inches west of the highway. On the mast of this signal a cross-buck sign is mounted 13 feet 6 inches above the level of the pavement, and bears the words "RAILROAD CROSSING." A horizontal bar, at each end of which a red light 9 inches in diameter is attached, is mounted on the mast 8 feet 6 inches above the level of the pavement. A vertical sign, attached on the mast and between the red lights, displays through a red lens the letters "STOP" when the signal is operated. The signals are actuated when an east-bound train reaches a point 1,865 feet west of the crossing. When the flashing-light signal is being operated a bell on a signal mast in the southeast angle of the crossing rings.

A crossing-whistle sign for east-bound trains is located 785 feet west of the crossing.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

14. Engine Whistle Signals.

Note:--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "___" for longer sounds. * * *

Sound.

Indication.

* * *

(1) _____ o o

Approaching public crossings at grade. To be prolonged or repeated until crossing is reached.

* * *

Article XIII, of the 1939 Acts of the Indiana General Assembly, reads in part as follows:

SPECIAL STOPS REQUIRED

GRADE CROSSINGS.

Sec. 102. Certain Vehicles Must Stop at All Railroad Grade Crossings. (a) The driver of any motor vehicle carrying * * * flammable liquids as a cargo or part of a cargo, before crossing at grade any track or tracks of a railroad, shall stop such vehicle within fifty feet, but not less than ten feet, from the nearest rail of such railroad and while so stopped, shall listen through an open window or door and shall look in both directions along such track for any approaching train, and for signals indicating the approach of a train, * * * and shall not proceed until he can do so safely. * * *

In the immediate vicinity of the point of accident the maximum authorized speed for the train involved is 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 21, an east-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of three multiple-unit cars, one compartment car and one multiple-unit car, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. This train was operated from the control station of electric motor 106, the front unit. After a terminal air-brake test was made this train departed from Chicago, Ill., 20.9 miles west of Hammond, at 1 p. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, on time, passed Hammond at 1:34 p. m., 2 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 35 miles per hour it collided with a motor truck on a highway grade crossing 4.5 miles east of the station at Hammond. The brakes of No. 21 functioned properly en route.

The motor truck involved consisted of a tractor, a semi-trailer and a full-trailer, in the order named. This equipment

was owned and operated by the Rogers Cartage Company, Chicago, Ill. The driver, who was the sole occupant, held Indiana chauffeur's license No. 140257. The tractor was a 1941, cab-over-engine, 6-cylinder, International KS-8-COE model, and bore Indiana license No. 8-857 for 1942. Its weight was 9,000 pounds. It was equipped with dual rear wheels and was provided with an enclosed steel cab having a sleeping berth. The semi-trailer was a Fruenaufr YO-2-DF model, equipped with dual rear wheels and a steel tank having a capacity of 4,000 gallons. It bore Illinois license No. X-1818. Its weight was 5,900 pounds. The full-trailer was a Fruenaufr YO-2-NDF model, equipped with dual wheels and a steel tank having a capacity of 4,000 gallons. It bore Illinois license No. Z-220. Its weight was 8,300 pounds. The tractor, the semi-trailer and the full-trailer were equipped with Westinghouse air brakes. The three units had an over-all length of 41 feet and a total weight of 25,200 pounds. At the time of the accident the cargo consisted of 8,150 gallons of gasoline, which weighed approximately 24,000 pounds. The vehicle, moving southward on State Highway 912, en route from Roby to Gary, Ind., proceeded upon the crossing involved at a speed variously estimated at 2 to 25 miles per hour, and the full-trailer was struck by No. 21.

There was no unusual condition about the enclosed cab that restricted the vision. At a point on the highway 425 feet north of the crossing involved, the driver of a south-bound vehicle can have an unobstructed view of a train approaching from the west at a distance of about 780 feet.

The full-trailer was torn loose from the semi-trailer and demolished. The wreckage was carried in front of the train to a point 56 feet east of the point of the collision where it stopped 15 feet south of the eastward main track. The tank was punctured and the escaping gasoline became ignited. No. 21 stopped 639 feet east of the point of collision. The front end of the first unit was crushed inward about 16 inches, and this unit and the second unit were badly damaged by fire.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 1:48 p. m.

The employee killed was the motorman.

Data

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, there was a daily average of 74.23 trains over the crossing involved. During the 24-hour period beginning at 12:01 p. m., January 28, 1943, 1,555 automobiles, 175 trucks and 78 buses passed over the crossing.

Discussion

No. 21 was approaching the crossing at an estimated speed of 35 miles per hour in territory where the maximum authorized speed was 40 miles per hour. The whistle signal was sounded for the crossing in compliance with the rules. It is not known when the motorman of No. 21 first saw the approaching motor truck, as he was killed in the accident. The evidence indicates that the train brakes were applied in emergency about 200 feet west of the crossing. The train struck the rear trailer about midway and the wreckage was thrown to the south and a short distance east of the crossing. The trailer was loaded with gasoline, which became ignited when the collision occurred.

The driver of the motor truck involved was an experienced driver and was familiar with the route. He said he stopped the motor truck about 25 feet north of the eastward main track, looked in both directions along the tracks and then operated his truck at a speed of about 2 miles per hour to the crossing. The left cab window was open but the right cab window was closed. He did not see or hear the warning signals at the crossing, or see the approaching train until the collision occurred. On the other hand, two witnesses stated that the flashing-light signals and the warning bell were operating when the truck was approaching the crossing. The signals were visible a considerable distance, and the weather was clear. Several witnesses stated that the motor truck did not stop before it reached the crossing, and they estimated the speed at 20 to 25 miles per hour just before the collision occurred. The driver had been off duty about 18 hours prior to the time he started the trip involved, and at the time of the accident had been on duty about 1 hour 45 minutes. The laws of the state of Indiana require motor vehicles carrying inflammable liquids as a cargo to stop within 50 feet but not less than 10 feet from the nearest railroad track and not to proceed until it is safe to do so. If the driver involved had complied with this provision of the law, undoubtedly he would have seen the warning signals at the crossing and the approaching train, and this accident would have been averted.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a motor truck being driven upon a highway grade crossing immediately in front of an approaching train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this second day of March, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. PARTEL,

Secretary.