

August 15, 1911.

The Interstate Commerce Commission,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sirs:-

On July 29, 1911, the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad Company reported by wire an accident at Grindstone, Me., resulting in the death of five passengers and three employees, and serious injury to seventeen other passengers.

Inspectors Anderson and Roche were assigned to investigate this accident. They also attended the hearing held by the Railroad Commission of the State of Maine and assisted in the taking of testimony. A synopsis of their report is herewith submitted.

THE ACCIDENT.

Second section of No. 7, a northbound excursion train, consisting of engine 55, one combination baggage and passenger car, and four day coaches, collided head-on with regular scheduled southbound passenger train No. 8, consisting of engine 243, one baggage car, two coaches, and two sleepers. As a result of the accident five passengers and three employees were killed and seventeen other passengers injured.

DESCRIPTION.

Second section of train No. 7 was an excursion train, starting from Kidders Point, Me., en route to Caribou, Me., via Killbuck, and prior to its arrival at Killbuck had been running extra. It was made a second section of regular northbound

passenger train No. 7 at Millinocket and its rights restricted by train order to run 3 hours and 45 minutes late.

Under the Standard Rules used by the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad, passenger train No. 8 was the superior train by direction to passenger train No. 7 and all its sections. Under these rules, second No. 7 was required to keep clear of No. 8's leaving time at all stations. At 8:55 p. m., two orders were completed to Conductor Dibblee and Engineman Carcelon, who had charge of the excursion train, at Millinocket, to run as second section of train No. 7 and to run 3 hours and 45 minutes late. Conductor Dibblee states that he asked for orders against train No. 8 and was told that there would be no orders for him on that train. No orders were given this train regarding train No. 8.

Train No. 8 is a regular scheduled southbound passenger train, the initial starting point being Van Buren, Maine. It was proceeding south on its timetable rights and was on time at the time of the accident, and had no orders regarding second No. 7 or otherwise restricting its rights.

When second No. 7 was released at Millinocket at 8:58 p.m., Conductor Dibblee asked Engineman Carcelon if he could make Grindstone for No. 8 which is due to leave that point at 9:07 p.m. It was some seconds after this time that second No. 7 started. The distance between Grindstone and Millinocket is 8.9 miles. The weather on the night in question was very inclement, there being violent winds, very dark, and a heavy rain falling--all of which should have discouraged any effort at high speed or any movement on short time against a superior

train. The rules of the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad required second No. 7 to be on the siding at Grindstone, clear of the main track, at 9:09 p. m., or to properly protect itself.

The accident occurred at 9:10 p. m., at approximately two-fifths of a mile from the south switch at Grindstone station on an 8-degree curve where the line of vision was very limited. Conductor Dibblee testified that at 9:09 p. m., he realized that No. 8 was leaving Grindstone but made no effort to stop his train; neither did he make any preparations to flag No. 8. His excuse was that he hoped No. 8 would see them and stop. He stationed himself in the door of the baggage car in order to watch No. 8's approach, and when he saw their headlight, leaped to the ground.

His experience in the service of the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad has covered a period of ten years as brakeman and conductor. He said he relied more on the judgment of Engineman Garcelon for making the time on this run than he relied upon himself. Engineman Garcelon, who was equally responsible, was killed in the accident.

The records show that none of the employees involved in this accident had been on duty in excess of the statutory period and that each of them had had the required time off duty.

The speed restrictions shown by the timecard on the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad are that passenger trains must not exceed fifty miles per hour.

CAUSE.

The cause of this accident was the attempt on the part of Conductor Dibblee and Engineman Garcelon, of train second No. 7, to make Grindstone siding for train No. 8, a superior train, in violation of the speed restrictions of the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad and without sufficient time to make the 8.9 miles, the distance between Millinocket and Grindstone.

Conductor Dibblee, after realizing the danger of a collision, which he states he did, could have averted this accident by stopping his train and properly protecting it prior to No. 8 leaving Grindstone Station.

This is a single track railway, which uses the double train-order system, and the accident could have been averted had there been in operation some system of block signalling that would have prevented two trains being in the same block at the same time.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Inspector
of Safety Appliances.