

INV. 307.
DECEMBER 29, 1915.

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON
THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA & SANTA FE RAILWAY,
AT SAN DIEGO, CALIF., NOV. 18, 1915.

On November 15, 1915, there was a head-end collision between two locomotives, running light, on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, at San Diego, Calif., which resulted in the death of 1 employes. After investigation of this accident, the Chief of the Division of Safety reports as follows:

The accident occurred on the Fourth District of the Los Angeles Division of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway within the yard limits of San Diego. The yard limits of San Diego extend to the end of the line at National City, 3.5 miles east of San Diego, and although San Diego is the terminal for both freight and passenger trains, passenger locomotives are regularly scheduled between San Diego and National City to insure prompt movement between the western end of the yard and the roundhouse at National City. No block signal system is in use on this part of the road, the rules governing the movement of trains between San Diego and National City being in part as follows:

Rule No. 33:

"Stations having yard limits will be designated in special rules in time-tables. All trains and engines will have the right to work within such yard limits regardless of second or third class trains or extras, but will give way as soon as possible on their approach."

Special Time-table Rule No. 55:

"Movement of all engines and trains between San Diego and National City, in either direction will be under yard limit rules and no train orders will be issued between these points. Train register will be kept in the roundhouse at National City."

Westbound train No. 77, consisting of locomotive 1844, running light, in charge of Engineman Turner and Fireman Riggs, was a regularly scheduled train, and left National City at 3:15 p.m., on time. This train was scheduled to meet eastbound passenger train No. 74 at Twenty-second Street, 4.7 miles west of National City, at 3:30 p.m., but at 3:54 p.m. it collided with locomotive 997 at Twenty-fifth Street, while running at a speed of about 20 miles an hour.

Eastbound train extra 997 arrived at San Diego at 3:15 p.m., at which point the locomotive was cut off from the train. The crew in charge of locomotive 997, which consisted of Engineman Alexander and Fireman Drusenmeyer, was under the impression that train No. 77 was not carded west of Twenty-second Street and started toward National City with locomotive 997. This locomotive had traveled a distance of about 2.2 miles beyond San Diego when it collided with train No. 77 at Twenty-fifth Street, while running at a speed of about 20 miles an hour.

Immediately west of the point of accident the track is tangent for about one-half mile, preceded by a 2-degree curve toward the north about 500 feet in length. Immediately east of the point of accident there is a curve toward the north of 3 degrees and 30 minutes, about 1,100 feet in length, preceded by a tangent about 1,500 feet in length. On account of this curve just east of the point of accident, the views of both engine crews were materially limited. The weather at the time was clear.

As a result of the collision both locomotives were very badly damaged, the fireman of locomotive 997 being killed.

Engineman Alexander stated that upon his arrival at San

Diego, with extra 997 the brakeman uncoupled the locomotive from the train, but did not throw the switches. He stated that he then pulled the engine up to the main line switch and the fireman threw the switch and allowed him to head out upon the main track. He stated that he started toward National City at 5:15 p.m., and admitted that he did not consult his time-table and was under the impression that train No. 77 was not a regularly scheduled train east of Twenty-second Street. Engineer Alexander further stated that it is not the custom for engineers of extra locomotives to check the train register before proceeding westward from San Diego and that there is no one in authority at that point to direct the movement of trains to National City. He stated that the only way of preventing two extras from coming together between these points is to run under control prepared to stop. He further stated that as it was not yet dark when he departed from San Diego he did not light his headlight, but only the cab lights and the little pilot light on the front of the engine. He stated that he was running his locomotive at a speed of about 15 miles an hour, or perhaps a little faster, while rounding the curve just east of the point of accident, and that on account of this curve he could see only a very short distance ahead. He stated that he did not observe the rule which requires engineers to run their trains under control while within yard limits, and further stated that the two locomotives were in contact together when he first saw train No. 77; just before he saw train No. 77 his fireman called out to him and then he immediately applied the air brakes and sounded the whistle, but does not remember whether or not he sent off steam.

Engineman Turner, of train No. 77, stated that he left National City with locomotive 1244 at 5:13 p.m., on schedule time, and collided with locomotive 997 while running at a speed of about 30 miles an hour. He thought that when he first saw locomotive 997 it was about 300 feet away, and at that time the engine of the opposing locomotive whistled for him to back up. He immediately reversed the locomotive and jumped just before the collision occurred. He stated ~~that~~ that the headlight of his locomotive was burning and thought that the headlight of locomotive 997 was also burning at the time. He looked at his watch immediately after the accident occurred and it was then 5:24 p.m.

This accident was caused by extra locomotive 997 occupying the main track on the time of a superior train, for which Engineman Alexander is responsible, he admitting that he entirely overlooked train No. 77, and failed to observe the rule that required him to run his engine under control within yard limits.

Engineman Alexander entered the service as a road fireman in October, 1909, and was promoted to road engineman in July, 1915. His record was clear, and at the time of the accident he had been on duty about 1 1/2 yrs.