May 6, 1913

In re investigation of accident on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad at Hoytville, Ohio, on April 4, 1913.

On April 4, 1913, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad at Hoytville, Ohio, resulting in the death of 1 employee and 1 trespasser, and the injury of 15 passengers, 4 employees and 1 trespasser.

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

The Chicago Division of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad upon which this accident occurred, extends between Chicago Junction, Ohio, and South Chicago, Illinois, a distance of 258.7 miles. It is operated under the block signal system, and with the exception of two sections of single track, aggregating 36 miles in length, is a double track line. Between South Chicago, Illinois, and Babcock, Indiana, a distance of 24 miles, and between Stanley and Hamler, a distance of 12 miles, automatic block signals are used; the balance of the division is operated under the manual block system.

The derailed train was eastbound passenger train No. 6, hauled by engine No. 2100 and consisting of 6 steel cars placed in the following order from the engine back; 1 baggage car, 2 coaches, 2 Pullman sleeping cars. At the time of the derailment the train was in charge of Conductor Allen and Enginemen Korst. On the date of the accident train No. 6 left Chicago, Ill., its initial terminal, on time, at 5:45 p. m. It passed Deshler, Ohio, the first station west of the point of derailment, at 11:19 p.m., seven minutes late, and was derailed by an open facing point switch, about 300 feet west of Hoytville station, 6.7 miles east of Deshler, at 11:26 p.m., when running about 60 miles per hour.

At the time of the derailment train No. 6 was proceeding eastward on the westbound track, against the current of traffic. The open switch was the west switch of a cross-over between the two tracks. It was a trailing point switch in the direction of traffic. The crossover is a number 10, and is 200 feet long from the switch points on one track to the switch points on the other. The engine left the rails about 15 feet east of the frog point in the westbound track and ran across the eastbound track into the station building coming to rest with its head end toward the track 300 feet from where it left the rails. The station building was completely wrecked. The engine tender was turned completely

around and rested on its side just west of the head end of the engine. The baggage car was torn from its trucks, but remained upright, lying across both tracks in front of the station. The first coach rested on its side parallel with the eastbound track, about 30 feet to the south. The second coach was torn from its trucks, but remained upright, with its head end about ten feet south of the eastbound track and its rear end on the roadbed. The first Pullman sleeper was derailed, but remained upright on the roadbed, and only the forward trucks of the last Pullman sleeper were derailed. The forward engine trucks became detached from the engine, but remained on the rails and continued along the eastbound track for a distance of 1-3/4 miles from the place of the accident, where they were found by a relief train going to the wreck.

For a considerable distance in both directions from the point of derailment the track is straight and level. It is laid with 85 pound steel rails 33 feet long, on oak ties, 18 ties to the rail. Rock ballast is used, and the track is in good condition.

On the night of the derailment an eastbound freight train, in charge of Conductor Cornwall and Engineman Lauby, while doing switching at Deshler, broke an empty flat car so that it blocked the eastbound main track, and damaged an adjoining car loaded with piling so that it could not be handled in clearing the track, and it became necessary to take the damaged car to Hoytville to get rid of it. Conductor Cornwall, Engineman Lauby, and Head Brakeman Smith proceeded to Hoytville with the damaged car, leaving Flagman Davis at Deshler to protect the train. Upon arrival at Hoytville the engine and damaged car was backed through the crossover onto the westbound track and by means of a chain the car was placed on a spur switch leading off from the westbound track about 300 feet east of the west crossover switch. After disposing of the car the engine backed up over the crossover switch and Brakeman Smith opened it to permit the engine to run through onto the eastbound track, while the conductor opened the switch at the east end of the crossover. After passing through the west crossover switch Engineman Lauby stopped his engine between the crossover switches and waited for Brakeman Smith to close the switch. Brakeman Smith said that he closed the switch and locked it, and Conductor Cornwall, who was standing near the east switch said that he was watching the brakeman and saw him go through the motions of closing the switch, but could not say for sure that it was closed, as there was no light on it to indicate its position. The engine stood between the crossover switches until Brakeman Smith passed around on the fireman's side and gave a proceed

signal from the head end. It then proceeded out onto the eastbound track. Conductor Cornwall then went into the telegraph office and informed the operator that the westbound track was clear, after which the engine backed up to Deshler on the eastbound track, Conductor Cornwall and Brakeman Smith riding on the rear end of the tender. It was bout 11:05 p. m. when the engine started to back from Hoytville to Deshler. When about two miles from Deshler it met train No. 6 going east on the westbound track, it having been necessary to run train No. 6 against the current of traffic because of the eastbound track at Deshler being blocked. Train No. 6 had an order to use westbound track from Deshler to Galatea, a station 7.2 miles east of Hoytville. The reason for crossing this train back to the eastbound track at Galatea instead of Hoytville was that the crossover switches at Galatea are controlled from an interlocking plant, which would permit the train to cross over without stopping, while the crossover switches at Hoytville are hand thrown. Immediately after the accident Conductor Allen and Flagman Mullen of Train No. 6 examined the west crossover switch, and found it locked in the open position. As Brakeman Smith of the extra train was the last person who handled the switch previous to the accident, it is evident that he failed to close it after his engine passed through.

This accident disclosed a very unsafe operating condition on this division of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, through failure to provide lights on trailing point switches. The danger inherent in this practice is enhanced by reason of the fact that it is a common occurrence to run passenger and fast freight trains against the current of traffic. Where trains are so run the trailing switches have their points facing an approaching train, and being without lights to indicate their position at night, an engineman may run into an open switch at high speed without the slightest warning, as in this case.

Had the crossover switches at Hoytville been equipped with lights it is not at all probable that this accident would have occurred. Had there been a light on the switch it is extremely unlikely that it would have been left open in the first place, as both Conductor Cornwall and Engineman Lauby, who had their attention directed to the switch while waiting for Brakeman Smith to close it, would have noted the brakeman's mistake and corrected it. But even had all the members of this crew failed to note the mistake, the red light on the switch could probably have been seen by the enginemen on train No. 6 a sufficient distance away to have enabled him to bring his train to a stop before reaching it. There was also the operator in the station, only about 300

feet away from the switch, and with an unobstructed view of it, who said he was watching train No. 6 approaching and if there had been a light on the switch he would have noticed it.

The practice of failing to provide lights on trailing switches is not uniformly followed on this division, as upon investigation it was found that on that part of the road lying within the State of Indiana all switches have lights, while on that part of the road lying within the State of Ohio quite a number of the trailing switches outside of interlocking plants are without lights. No good reason can be assigned for this lack of uniformity in practice. If lights on trailing switches are not needed, there would seem to be no occasion for using them on certain portions of the line and not on others, and if they are needed a proper regard for safety requires their use on all portions of the line.

Brakeman Smith entered the service of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad as a brakeman on February 13, 1913, less than two months before this accident. Previous to that, for about 5 months, he had been employed in the signal department of the road, working on interlocking plants. He had made but three trips over this portion of the Chicago Division previous to the trip he was making on the date of the accident.

Engineman Lauby had had but two months experience as an engineman, but had had about seven years experience as a fireman.

Conductor Cornwall had had three years experience as a conductor, and seven years previous experience as a brakeman.

No employee involved in this accident was working in violation of any of the provisions of the hours of service law.