

July 29, 1912
Inv-68

Collision on the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville Railway near Bedford, Ind., on June 8, 1912.

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On June 8, 1912, there was a head-end collision on the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville Railway at Sand Pit, near Bedford, Ind., which resulted in the death of 1 mail clerk and the injury of about 50 passengers, only one of them being serious. After investigation of this accident the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

North-bound train No. 8 was running from Louisville, Ky., to Bloomington, Ind. It consisted of one combination mail, express and baggage car, and three coaches, hauled by engine No. 71. This train left Louisville at 2:25 p.m. At Orleans, 11 miles south of Sand Pit, the crew in charge of this train received train order No. 131, reading as follows:

No. 8, Eng. 71, take siding and meet No. 5, Eng. 412, at Sand Pit.

Train No. 8 arrived at Sand Pit at 5:45 p.m., and the brakeman had just opened the switch in order to allow the train to enter the siding when the collision occurred.

South-bound train No. 5 was running from Chicago, Ill., to Louisville, Ky. It consisted of one mail car, one baggage car, two coaches, and one parlor car, hauled by engine No. 412. This train left Chicago at 9:03 a.m., and prior to its departure from McDoel, Ind., the Bloomington yards of the C., I. & L. Ry., 28-1/2 miles north of Sand Pit, at 4:58 p.m., received a copy of train order No. 131. Train No. 5 left Bedford at 5:37 p.m., and reached Sand Pit, 3-1/2 miles south of Bedford, at about

5:45 p.m., colliding head-on with train No. 8. The speed of train No. 5 at the time of the collision was estimated to be about 30 miles per hour.

Both engines were considerably damaged, while the combination car of train No. 8 was telescoped and destroyed. The mail car on train No. 5 was also damaged.

The division on which this accident occurred is a single track line. No block signals are in use, trains being operated by train orders. The collision occurred on a curve of 4°, in a cut the walls of which are about 10 feet high. The engines of south-bound trains are on the outside of this curve. There are some trees and bushes on the inside of this curve, which to some extent obscure the view of approaching engines. There is a descending grade for south-bound trains of about 1 per cent. The weather at the time of the collision was clear. Sand Pit station is located just at the beginning of the northern end of the curve.

Engineman Briggs, of train No. 5, stated that he had a copy of order No. 131, and that both he and his fireman knew that their train was to meet train No. 8 at Sand Pit. The engineman said that he had thought of the meeting with No. 8 when his train was about a mile distant from Sand Pit, but after whistling for the station he forgot about it. He did not sound the whistle signal required by the rules when approaching a meeting point, neither did he hear the conductor give him a stop signal with the air whistle. A few seconds after whistling for Sand Pit station he thought of the meet with No. 8 and at once applied the brakes.

Conductor Ellsberry, of train No. 5, stated that approaching Sand Pit he was busy taking tickets, and at the same time listening for the whistle signal for Sand Pit station. After this signal was sounded he did not hear the signal sounded for the meeting point with No. 8 and at once signaled the engineman to stop. At about the same time the emergency brakes were applied.

Fireman Owens stated that he had been attending to the fire and that the station signal sounded just as he was finishing. He then looked out to see where the train was and thought that it was time for the engineman to apply the air brakes if he intended to stop at Sand Pit. He called to the engineman and at the same time the latter seemed to think of it, as he at once applied the brakes.

Head Brakeman O'Connell was riding in the baggage car approaching Sand Pit. When the engineman did not sound the usual signal for a meeting point, after whistling for Sand Pit station, he reached for the air whistle cord, but before he could get to it, the emergency brakes were applied. After the brakes had been applied, the engineman sounded two or three short blasts of the whistle.

All of the employees involved were experienced men with good records, and none had been on duty in violation of the provisions of the hours of service law.

This accident was caused by the engineman of train No. 5 temporarily overlooking train order No. 131 and failing

to have his train under such control as to enable him to bring it to a stop before passing the switch leading to the side track at Sand Pit.