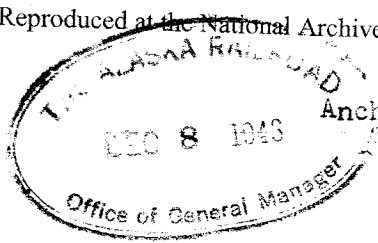


901 v D
553



Anchorage - December 3, 1943

File 010.27

Colonel Ohlson:

Attached is a copy of investigation covering head-on collision between Train No. 23 and Extra 901 North on October 19th at Mile Post 112.5.

Extra 901 North in charge of Conductor Urban and Engineer Aldous, was called at Seward October 18th at 8:00 p.m. and departed from Seward at 8:30 p.m. with 17 loads - 790 tons, passing Tunnel at 2:55 a.m. and on arrival at Portage picked up 5 loads, departing from Portage with 22 loads 1015 tons and while traveling at an estimated speed of 20 miles an hour collided with Train No. 23 at Mile Post 112.5 at 8:36 a.m.

No. 23 handled by Engine 553 in charge of Conductor Scanlon and Engineer Ryan, consisting of 3 loaded freight cars, 2 passenger cars and a caboose departed from Anchorage at 8:30 a.m., on time, and when practically stopped at Mile 112.5 was struck by Extra 901 North at 8:36 a.m.

Approaching the point of the accident from the south, this tangent for 1227 feet followed by a 6 degree curve to the right for 502 feet, then tangent for 1410 feet followed by a 3 degree and 30 minute curve to the right for 1709 feet, then tangent 2516 feet. The accident occurred on the tangent at 200 feet north of the end of the 3 degree and 30 minute curve. The grade at this point is .06 descending for northward trains.

Employee injured in this accident was Engineer Sgt. T. A. Aldous of the 714th Railway Operating Battalion, who was engineer on Engine 901, and sustained back injuries. No other employees were injured. There were 27 passengers on Train No. 23 none of which sustained any personal injuries.

The cause of this accident was the failure of the crew of Extra 901 North to clear the scheduled time of Train No. 23 according to rules, the responsibility of which rests with Conductor Urban and Engineer Aldous of Extra 901 North.

The engine crew of Train No. 23 saw Extra 901 approaching at a distance of approximately 100 feet and made an emergency application. Train No. 23 had practically stopped when they were struck by Extra 901 North. The engine crew of Extra 901 North saw No. 23 approximately the same distance and also made an emergency application but on account of descending grade and traveling at a speed of approximately 25 miles an hour could not stop in time to prevent the collision.

Engine 901 nor cars in that train were derailed. Several cars of lumber and wallboard had shifted loads and a number of cars had draw bars stove-in. Train No. 23, Engine 553 climbed up on the front end of Engine 901 but when pulled back by the wrecker it rerailed itself. One merchandise car, Car 72, next to the engine was turned over and one car of sand, Car 4114, immediately behind merchandise car 72 was completely demolished. There was a small amount of damage to the balance of the equipment.

The front ends of Engines 553 and 901 were badly damaged.

The following is an estimated cost of damage to equipment:

Clearing wreck	\$ 700.00
Repairs to Engine 553	21,000.00
Repairs to Engine 901	1,200.00
Repairs to freight & passenger cars	<u>1,045.00</u>
	\$ 23,945.00

The track was in good condition at the point of this accident. It was authorized for a speed of thirty miles an hour for mixed and freight trains.

Conductor Urban has been dismissed from the service for his responsibility in connection with this accident.

A copy of the investigation was not furnished Colonel H. S. Huron in connection with Sgt. T. A. Aldous but he should be barred from all engine service on The Alaska Railroad.

Concerning the responsibility of the brakemen and fireman on Extra 901 North. Do you wish to assess them any discipline? I would recommend sixty (60) demerit marks for the brakemen and the fireman.


J. T. Cunningham
Sup't. of Transportation

This is an investigation to determine cause and responsibility for head-on collision on October 17th, between Train No. 23 and Extra 901 north at Mile Post 112.5. Those present were:

<u>Crew of Train No. 23</u>		<u>Crew of Extra 901</u>	
A. C. Scanlon	- Conductor	J. E. Vran	- Conductor
T. J. Dorf	- brakeman	H. G. Hobson	- brakeman
Felix Kammerer	- brakeman	Pvt. W. W. Dunn	- brakeman
Jack Ryan	- Engineer	Sgt. T. A. Adams	- Engineer
Mr. Fredericks	- Fireman	W. H. Fare	- Fireman
Mr. Storer	- Baggageman		
		2nd Lt. Ian M. West	- Acting Assist Road Foreman
		Major E. J. Thomas	- Executive Officer, 71st Div. En.
		E. W. Barnett	- Traveling Fireman
		G. F. Chilson	- General Manager
		J. I. Cunningham	- Sup't. of Transportation

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by group:

1. Were you all properly notified to appear for this investigation?
 a. Yes, sir.
2. Were you an employee or officer of your choice present?
 a. Yes, sir. Major Thomas or Lt. West.
3. Why, sir?
 a. Major Major Thomas or Lt. West.
4. Do you require one? (to others)
 a. No, sir. None required. (all)

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Mr. Fredericks:

1. Mr. Fredericks were you fireman on Engine 553 handling Train No. 23, October 17th?
 a. Yes, sir.
2. Did you have a collision with Extra 901 North?
 a. Yes, sir.
3. What time did this occur and what place?
 a. At 1:30 a.m., Mile Post 112.5.
4. Weather conditions?
 a. It was clear.
5. Having and where did you read the train orders?
 a. Yes, sir.
6. Did you train have any orders in connection with Extra 901 North?
 a. No, sir.
7. What was your first knowledge of this impending collision?
 a. Well, I first saw the headlight as they came into sight coming around the curve on about 200 yds. less the south of where collision occurred.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Mr. Fredericks:

1. What speed was your train making about that time?
2. 20 miles an hour.
3. Can you give an estimate of the speed Extra 931 was making?
4. I would say they were going 20 miles an hour.
5. Your train stopped before the collision?
6. Well I couldn't say that, Mr. Lyon said it did. I jumped out of the car either stopped or nearly stopped.
7. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
8. No, sir.
9. Are there any questions anyone wants to ask Mr. Fredericks?
10. No questions.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Harland G. Nelson:

1. Mr. Nelson, was you on Extra 931 North leaving Seward, October 18th?
2. Yes, sir.
3. What was your position?
4. Chief Conductor.
5. At the time of the collision with No. 23, where were you sitting?
6. In the middle of the caboose.
7. Did you have any previous knowledge of this collision?
8. The first thing I noticed, it is natural when you start to slide down you want to see the train is drawn off, it seems like you are slowing down. I noticed that was probably 15 pounds of air gone off and I looked down the track and that is where on a curve there and I couldn't see very far ahead of our train and I still had my eye on the air gauge and noticed less air being let off. Very shortly before the train stopped I thought I would see smoke or steam down the track that might have been from either engine, at that moment you couldn't tell. It was just a few seconds between that time until we got, possibly three or four seconds stopped and that is all I know of in advance of what was going to happen.
9. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
10. I slipped on over the eye.
11. Did you report to the hospital at Anchorage?
12. Yes, I did.
13. Who was in the caboose with you?
14. B. Conductor, Mr. Urban.
15. Did you read the train orders leaving Seward?
16. Yes, I did.
17. Did you get any train orders at any other station?
18. I believe we got an order at Fortage that morning.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Harland G. Holtan:

1. Did you contain the time card at any time on this trip?
2. I have it in my person all the time on the road and I didn't look at it once working on the road, no.
3. Did you at the locomotive tank at any time about 11:30 a.m. or 12:00 p.m. on the hill over Iron River?
4. No, sir.
5. How long have you been in the service of the Railroad?
6. Since the 15th of March 1943.
7. Any questions?

Questions by Colonel Nelson, answers by Harland G. Holtan:

1. What is your estimate of the speed just before the collision occurred?
2. It is hard to say, about 6 or 8 miles an hour, when you are working on a sudden stop with breaking power you can't tell exactly.
3. What is your estimate of the speed of your train before the air was applied prior to the accident?
4. About 20 or 25 miles an hour would be very close.
5. Where were you located in the caboose when you passed Jopell?
6. In the middle looking out.
7. What is your estimate as to the speed at that time?
8. Well far out I suppose we were going maybe 25 miles an hour. There is no way you can tell exactly.
9. Do you consider yourself a good judge on speed?
10. Well maybe if I had been on an engine tank had any speedometer could tell me that you were going I would be familiar with how fast we were going.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Mr. J. J. Urban:

1. Mr. Urban, were you Conductor of Dixie 941 North leaving Denver, January 15, 1947?
2. Yes.
3. Did Dixie 941 have a collision with Train No. 20?
4. Yes, sir.
5. Where was it at that time?
6. At 3:15 a.m. my watch showed when it struck south of Quarter Creek about one-quarter of a mile.
7. What were the weather conditions?
8. Clear.
9. Where were you riding at the time?
10. In the Conductor. I was at the desk in the caboose finishing up my reports.
11. How long were in your train?
12. I don't know I can't know.
13. (Mr. Cunningham) 27 on your report.

Questions of Mr. Cunningham, answers by Mr. J. D. Urban:

1. Did you feel the air go on immediately prior to this collision?

a. Yes, sir.

2. Have you an estimate of the speed the train was making immediately prior to the collision?

a. Between 20 and 25 miles an hour.

3. Is Train No. 23 a superior train to your train?

a. Yes, sir.

4. Did you receive any orders on the trip with respect to Train No. 23?

a. No, sir.

5. Did you consult your time table concerning this train?

a. No, sir, I did not.

6. Did you talk with any of the members of the crew regarding Train No. 23 from time of leaving Seward until time of collision?

a. No, sir, never thought of it.

7. Did you overlook Train No. 23 entirely?

a. Yes, sir.

8. Do you know what time you passed Rainbow?

a. Unknown. I don't remember exactly but I knew we were on the ditcher's track when we slowed down and saw the ditcher in the clear and proceeded.

9. What is your estimate of the maximum speed from Fortage to point of collision?

a. About this time, maximum speed of 25 miles an hour.

10. How long at Turnagain Arm?

a. Pretty near all the way.

11. After reaching the top of Potter Hill did you observe the speed?

a. Leaving Potter Hill we traveled pretty fast, little better than 25 miles an hour, little better than 25 when we passed Campbell.

12. Were brakes working on all cars in this train?

a. Yes, sir.

13. Did you sustain any personal injuries?

a. No, sir.

14. Any questions?

Questions of Colonel Nelson, answers by Mr. J. D. Urban:

1. Mr. Urban, can you state the approximate distance in car lengths that the train traveled after the air was applied just prior to the collision?

a. Well, I can't figure exactly, I felt the air go into emergency immediately you can feel when it hit and I hollered at the brakeman, what did it hit? What has it done, broke in two? He said, I don't know. It hit and that is all I know. Well, tell me how far it was as I was sitting at the desk.

Questions by Detention Warden, answers by Mr. E. S. Urban:

- Q. If you are not able to tell the distance, can you figure, or do you figure out the length of time that elapsed from the time that the air went on in warnings until the collision occurred?
- A. I don't know about a minute and a little over because I had time to get up and sit down again and brace myself and didn't realized what was happening until the air went down again it shook threw me over to the end of the caboose.
- Q. Was damage sustained from the impact of the engine?
- A. The damage that I could see so far as my eye could see. I examined three or four cars with the draw bars drove in and the front end of the engine was pushed up as far as I could see. There was nothing on the ground, no wheels on the ground I could see.

(Mr. Urban's name) any further questions with Mr. Urban?

None.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by L. S. Scamion:

- Q. Mr. Scamion, were you conductor of train No. 23 leaving Anchorage on October 1922.
- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Can you give any train orders with respect to Engine 901 North?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. How many cars in your train?
- A. 12.
- Q. Did you have a collision with Extra 901 North? Where did this occur and on what line?
- A. On my collision before it shows Mile Post 112.8, it was actually at 112.5.
- Q. How time?
- A. 11:30 A.M.
- Q. Where were you riding at the time of the collision?
- A. In the coach collecting tickets.
- Q. How many passengers?
- A. Between 25 and 30.
- Q. What was your first knowledge of the impending collision?
- A. I could feel the air was down, he blew the whistle and I started to brace myself thinking we were hitting stock or gas car which we have done before, in fact I didn't think we would be hitting anything.
- Q. What was your estimate of the speed immediately prior to the collision?
- A. No, I couldn't say. I was in the coach and never gave a thought to the speed.
- Q. Do you know whether your train was fully stopped before the collision?
- A. No. In the excitement I went out and looked Fredericks if we came to a complete stop and my skin we got to a stop.

Questions by Mr. J. J. Scanzion, answers by L. J. Scanzion:

1. Did this collision move your train backwards?
 1. I moved out about two car lengths.
2. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
 1. Yes, sir - I got knocked up against the door.
3. Did you report to the Anchorage hospital?
 1. Yes.
4. Did any of your passengers sustain any personal injuries?
 1. Yes, sir. I saw one man fall. He was starting to stand up and a soldier helped him. I ran up to see if anyone was in the engine because I knew he would be taken care of.
5. What was his name?
 1. I don't know who I came back. They took him in the ambulance. I was trying to find out if any one was hurt afterwards.
6. Did you inquire of the passengers if they sustained any personal injuries?
 1. Mr. Murray and Mr. Delaney took care of all the passengers and took care of them.
7. What damage was sustained to the equipment in your train?
 1. The third car, which was a merchandise car 72 had the front end in the air because the tender, scuffed car all a load of sand was made obsolete, completely demolished. Some damage done to coach 81.
8. Did you observe the damage to the engine?
 1. Yes, sir.
9. What was that?
 1. One pair of wheels from 72 was underneath the engine tender and they were derailed and the front end of the engine was badly damaged.
10. Are you sure?

Questions by Colonel Nelson, answers by L. J. Scanzion:

1. Mr. Scanzion can you state whether the air brakes on your train were still applied at the time the collision occurred?
 1. Oh, yes, because I felt the brakes working.
2. In other words the engineer did not have time to release his brakes before the collision occurred.
 1. He set the air and got off just in time.

Questions by Mr. J. J. Scanzion, answers by V. H. Dyer:

1. What was your position on extra 701 before?
 1. I was the fireman.
2. Were you on this engine when you had a collision with No. 67, number 1921.
 1. I was on our train prior to the collision.

Interrogation of Mr. Cunningham, Witness to No. 11, Part:

- Q. Did you read the train orders leaving Seward?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Did you read the train orders at any other point?
 - A. Yes. I had a work order on Seward 104 and I checked that and I think we got a car lower check at Seward and other than that I don't think I did.
- Q. Did you consult the time card on the trip over from Seward?
 - A. Not until I remember.
- Q. Did you discuss Train No. 23 or mention it to your engineer or members of the crew?
 - A. I never mentioned it.
- Q. Who was on the engine with you?
 - A. Head brakeman and engineer.
- Q. How was your first knowledge of an impending collision?
 - A. When the engineer gave an exclamation and looked out the window and looked through out of the window than usual. Tended my fire to see what was going on and when he applied the air and by that time I was clear of the engine.
- Q. Did you jump?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- Q. When you saw the engineer look out the window a little further than usual did he call to you to jump?
 - A. No, he didn't he made an exclamation as anyone would seeing impending danger.
- Q. About what speed was your train traveling at that moment?
 - A. Probably between 18 and 20 miles an hour I would say. He made an application slowing train down as we entered the curve.
- Q. How did the train pass you before they came to a stop?
 - A. I couldn't observe, due to the fact that I was trying to get in and clear in case I was burned over.
- Q. After you stopped did you observe that?
 - A. Yes, I went back to the engine and never went back to where I jumped.
- Q. From the time the engineer gave this exclamation until the collision, have you any idea how long that interval of time was?
 - A. Between one and two minutes I would say because I shut off the steam on the steam jets, got up and opened the door and looked out the door as I couldn't see out the window, also put on the injector, so I would say I was seen one and two minutes.
- Q. Between time engineer gave exclamation until collision occurred?
 - A. Until I left the engine, because after I left train went on down and collided.
- Q. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
 - A. No, sir.

Question No. 17. Continues, answers by T. H. Davis:

1. Did you know the distance from where you jumped until the place where the engine went to rest?
2. Yes, sir, I did not.
3. Did you have estimates of the number of cars by you?
4. Not over 2 and 15 cars at the most.
5. What is your estimate of the speed this train was making from top of letter hill through Campbell to point of collision?
6. About 45 miles an hour.
7. Any questions.

The next chart was brought in.

Mr. Davis, I believe that within the two months and a half that I have been on this job that in the first time we have had to run against a fire car train and the last that we get in Anchorage between 1:00 and 3:00 and that might possibly add to the fact that it was overlooked.

Question No. 18. Continues, answers by Sgt. T. H. Davis:

1. Were you engineer on extra 901 North leaving Seward, October 14th?
2. Yes, sir.
3. Did your train have a collision with Train No. 23?
4. Yes, sir.
5. At what place and what time?
6. About 1 1/2 according to the time given 8:30 a.m.
7. What was your first knowledge of the impending collision?
8. I was going down the other side of the curve and I thought might have seen the car on the way.
9. Was there any smoke off when you first came in sight of it?
10. I saw no smoke.
11. What speed were you making at that time.
12. I don't estimate around 25 miles an hour. We were slowing down at that time. We were in the curve.
13. How many cars in your train?
14. 23 cars.
15. Do you know whether the air brakes were working properly on all these cars?
16. Well, to say as I know they were working, yes.
17. In making stops at different points on the road, did you observe whether the train was braking properly?
18. I don't say as I know it.

Questions by Mr. Cummings, answers by Sgt. T. A. Aldous:

1. What was the reason?
 - a. I have no idea, just the fact that - I wouldn't say.
2. Was your way difficult in making this train from Unalakleet to Kessel?
 - a. No, not difficult.
3. Any difficulties making any stops anywhere?
 - a. Not that I recall, no.
4. Approaching the point of this accident, the tangent of the three degree 30 minute curve, how far were you around this curve when you first came in sight of No. 23?
 - a. I do not recall because at that time just as soon as I saw he's there put the brakes in emergency and I wasn't estimating distance.
5. When you first saw this train were you close on the end of the curve?
 - a. In the curve.
6. Was the other train, No. 23, on the tangent north of the curve?
 - a. No, I believe, he was right up on straight track.
7. The point I want to bring out, were you on the tangent north of the curve on straight track, what is right when the collision occurred, did it occur on curved or straight track?
 - a. Right at beginning of north end of the curve.
8. How far away was this train No. 23 when you first saw it?
 - a. I wasn't running distance, more interested in stopping.
9. Have you an estimate of that distance at all?
 - a. No. I really haven't.
10. From the time you first saw this train until collision, have you any estimate of the interval of time?
 - a. I do not know that, I cannot say.
11. Did you jump off?
 - a. Yes, I did.
12. How far beyond where you jumped did the collision occur?
 - a. About one car length.
13. Do you know whether No. 23 was stopped?
 - a. No, I don't.
14. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
 - a. Yes, I did.
15. What do they consist of?
 - a. Badly sprained back and general shock.
16. What hospital and what doctor?
 - a. I reported to the Army hospital at Fort Richardson. Captain Rosenberg.

Questions of Mr. Cunningham, answers by Sgt. T. A. Aldous:

1. Are you still under the care of the doctor?

a. Yes, Sir.

2. Would you please inform me if you have any orders with respect to Train No. 237?

a. Yes, Sir.

3. Did you receive any orders at any time?

a. I received an order at Fortage on the ditcher and Extra 411 at Ladson, I believe that was.

4. Did you receive any orders for 411 at Tunnel.

5. Is No. 411 a superior train to your train?

a. Yes, Sir.

6. Did you consult the time table respecting Train No. 237?

a. No, Sir.

7. Did you talk with the conductor or any other members of the crew regarding Train No. 237?

a. No, Sir.

8. Did you carefully overlook Train 237?

a. I don't recall it was a lapse of memory on the part of the entire crew.

9. Do you know what time your train passed Rainbow.

a. No, Sir, I do not except it was after time ditcher went to work.

10. The ditcher was in the side track?

a. Yes, Sir. As prepared to stop.

11. What speed were you making with this train after you passed near Center Hill running from Center Hill to Caspell?

a. I would estimate around 25 miles an hour.

12. Any questions?

Questions of Colonel Wilson, answers by Sgt. T. A. Aldous:

1. How long had you been on duty from time you went on duty at Ladson until the time collision occurred?

a. 24 hours.

2. What time were you called at Newark?

a. 7:45 P.M.

3. How long did you arrive Newark on scheduled trip prior to loading northbound?

a. 7 hours. 45 min.

4. Did you have ample rest prior to reporting for duty on your trip north?

a. I believe I had, yes.

Questions by Michael Wilson, answers by Det. T. A. Alouist

1. What is your estimate of the speed of your train passing through Campbell?
 - a. Approximately 25 miles per hour or may be a little bit less because we were on a slight grade that rise in there.
2. Did you make an air application before you passed through the six degree curve south of the collision?
 - a. Yes, I made one right out at Campbell.
3. Unless I show him the track chart.
 2. Here is the six degree curve just south of Mile 112, did you make an air application?
 - a. Yes, I made a 15 pound test, not before.
 3. Did you apply your air while on the curve or prior to getting to the curve?
 - a. To apply the air before I entered the curve.
 4. When do you release your air after making that application?
 - a. I still got the brake valve
 5. Did you make a brake application going into the three degree thirty minute curve?
 - a. About two-thirds of a mile before the six degree curve. See here is this curve at Mile 112, your accident occurred right there, when you came to this curve, how you claim -
 - a. I said I made approximately two ten pound applications, if that is out of context.
 6. How far is two miles from this point. This six degree curve just south of Mile 112.
 - a. Approximately one and one-half miles from point where collision occurred I made one application before going through the three degree thirty minute curve.
 7. At what particular point did you observe Train No. 23?
 - a. In the curve.
 8. How far a distance then of approximately 1000 ft. You stated that the speed of your train at the time you observed No. 23 approaching, was not such?
 - a. About, close as you or very close to.
 9. You advised that you had some difficulty with the brakes on that 17 car train.
 - a. I wouldn't say difficulty. I will say -
 1. You did not know how the train properly going down grade at Siviak and Grandview.
 - a. It handled as well as other trains I have handled.
 10. Did you ask the engineer over with the conductor?
 - a. No, I don't recall doing that because I maintained control of the train.

Questions by Colonel Johnson, answers by Sgt. T. A. Aldous:

1. You are not in a position to state the distance the train traveled from time you made last application prior to collision?
a. No, I am not.
2. Mr. Cunningham, for the record he should indicate the distance from the curve to point of collision. It occurs to me several car lengths either 12 or 15 car lengths from curve to where he had a clear view of approaching Train No. 23.
(Mr. Cunningham) From point of collision south the distance of 15 rail lengths that is 450' you can see out on the tangent and north of Chester Creek bridge a distance of 2,000 ft. and the collision occurred on the tangent immediately north of the three degree and thirty minute curve approximately 100 ft.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Sgt. T. A. Aldous:

1. Were you working steam coming around three degree thirty minute curve?
a. Only enough to get cylinder lubricated.
2. Did you shut throttle back?
a. I could say before the sharper curve the other side of this is two degree curve.
3. Estimate how about one-half mile?
a. Yes, I could estimate one-half mile.
4. What damage did engine 901 sustain?
a. As far as I could see on the front end and at that time I noticed one spring hanger on the left trailer truck.
5. Did you inspect the damage on engine 553?
a. No, sir.
6. Any other questions to ask any questions?

Questions by Mr. Barnett, answers by Sgt. T. A. Aldous:

1. The distance between the two engines was so short that you were quite sure that they would collide?
a. Yes.
2. And when you got off this locomotive were you able to hold your feet or were you lurching?
a. I lamed wide ways. I fell.
3. Did you fall?
a. I rolled over once. Yes.
4. Any further questions?

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Pvt. L. A. Dunn:

Q. Pvt. Dunn, were you on Extra 901-North leaving Seward, October 18th?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What position?

A. Head end man.

Q. Where were you riding immediately prior to the collision at Mile Post 112.5?
A. I stepped from my side so over behind the Engineer.

Q. What was your first knowledge of the impending collision?

A. I heard him put the brakes in emergency and I still didn't know what was happening as I couldn't see. I looked out the window and saw the train ahead of us.

Q. What is your estimate of the speed the train was traveling immediately prior to when you hit?

A. 25 miles an hour.

Q. Did you remain on the engine?

A. No, sir.

Q. Jumped off?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Which side did you jump off on?

A. Engineer's side.

Q. Jump before or after?

A. After.

Q. How much time elapsed between time you first had knowledge of train No. 23 and time of collision?

A. Not very much as I was last one to see it.

Q. What was your estimate of the time? Any estimate?

A. I don't know. From the time I saw the train until I got off it wasn't over thirty seconds may be a matter of seconds.

Q. How far did train travel after you got off?

A. I just got off, just before, may be a car length.

Q. Did you sustain any personal injuries?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you read train orders you received at Seward, Tunnel and Fortage?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was there anything in those orders with respect to Train No. 23?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you consult the time table?

A. My time table is practically impossible to read. It is in bad shape.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Pvt. L. B. Dunn:

1. Did you ever ask for another one at the Yard Office?
2. Yes, sir. I asked the Crew Dispatcher.
3. Who is the Crew Dispatcher?
4. Pvt. Kyle.
5. Did this train make a rear end brake test at Divide and Grandview?
6. Yes, sir.
7. Where were you when this brake test was made?
8. At Divide I was about back ten car lengths and at Grandview middle of the train.
9. Did you know of any excessive piston travel in the train?
10. No, sir.
11. Did you observe anything unusual in the braking of the train?
12. Some were right ahead and others take long. We never did get out of control.
13. Any remarks about brakes on the train.
14. Not that I remember.
15. Did you talk with any member of the crew regarding Train No. 238?
16. No, sir.
17. Any questions? Any further questions with Pvt. Dunn?
18. None.

Questions by Mr. Urban, answers by Pvt. L. B. Dunn:

1. What time did you say the wreck occurred in the morning?
2. I had no idea.
3. Have you a watch?
4. I do not have a watch.

(Mr. Cunningham) Doesn't the Army supply you with a watch?

1. Firemen and brakemen are not supplied with watches.
2. Time table you couldn't read.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Pvt. L. B. Dunn:

1. When did you ask for a time table.
2. I remember I asked for one, at that time it was getting early morn. Crew Dispatcher said he would try to get one.
3. Did you mention this to the conductor? How long have you been with Mr. Urban?
4. Several days.
5. Do you want to ask a question? (To Mr. Scanlon)

Questions by Mr. Scanlon, answers by Mr. Urban:

1. How much rest in Seward?
2. I had about four hours.

Questions of Mr. Scarlion, answers by Mr. Urean:

Q. Did the switch engine move your caboose while you were sleeping?

Questions of Mr. Cunningham, answers by Mr. Urean:

Q. How long were you off duty from time of previous service?

A. 8 hours.

Q. 8 hours and 30 minutes giving the engineer the 15 minutes each night?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Did you have a crane inspection of this train at Divide and Grandview and re-rod test?

A. Yes and that at both places personally myself. We gave the tail end test.

Q. Do you know whether all air brakes were operating?

A. As far as I know they were in good condition.

Q. Did you observe anything unusual in the braking condition of the train on the way over?

A. No unusual and held up very good going up on both hills held fairly well coming down the hills.

Q. Now, your last trip seems to be a long trip. Sounded Divide hill, time to rest, 2 hour rest and I would say we got four and four one-half hours sleep. We had no trips one hill coming to Divide 901 doesn't pull and double the other hill. We worked a lot of hours and miles and not much rest in between.

Q. Now, how do they do the calling?

A. Well, sometimes they call the orderly room. Sgt. Brown sometimes comes over himself. They call as soon as they get the call, I guess.

Q. (Mr. Cunningham) Where did you stay at Seward?

A. (Mr. Urean) At the barracks.

Questions of Mr. Cunningham, answers by S. S. Dorf:

Q. Were you assigned on Train No. 23, October 1938?

A. Yes.

Q. Which end of the train were you working?

A. I am the head brakeman, but I was in the caboose.

Q. Did your train have a collision with Extra 901 worth?

A. Yes.

Q. Where?

A. Approximately mile Post 112.5.

Q. What time?

A. I do not know. About 17 minutes after leaving here. We left here about 8:31.

Q. What was your first knowledge of the collision?

A. Well, I didn't know we had a collision until I got up to the engine. There was so much smoke I couldn't see the other train.

Questions of Mr. Cunningham, answers by R. S. Dorr:

1. Didn't you find that hit?
2. Yes, but I thought the engine went in the ditch.
3. Did your train receive any orders with respect to Extra 901 North?
4. No.
5. Any instructions you want to relay (to Mr. Barnett)?
6. No, sir.
7. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
8. No.

Questions of Mr. Cunningham, answers by Jack Ryan:

1. Mr. Ryan, were you Engineer on Engine 553 handling Train No. 22, October 19th.
2. Yes, sir.
3. Did you have a head-on collision at Mile Post 112.5 with Extra 901 North?
4. Yes.
5. What time did you leave Anchorage?
6. Practically 8:30 or 8:31, practically on time.
7. What time did the collision occur?
8. I was in around about 8:35, didn't look at my watch until a few minutes after it happened.
9. Did you have any orders in connection with Extra 901 North?
10. No.
11. What was your first knowledge of this train?
12. Well, when the fireman hollered for me to plug her and didn't stop. He hollered that and started leaving I figured something was wrong. I moved the throttle and blew the whistle and then I left.
13. Did you see the 901 coming before you jumped off?
14. It was practically staring me in the face when I left.
15. How fast was you going?
16. I was stopped.
17. Before that.
18. I was about 15 or 18 miles an hour.
19. Did you come to a full stop before you jumped off?
20. Yes.
21. Any idea how fast they were traveling when they hit you?
22. Traveling pretty fast alright when he hit, 25 or 30 miles an hour.
23. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
24. Well, nothing serious. Bruised up a little, sprained my ankle, cut on my leg.

Questions asked, answers by Jack Ryan:

1. Did you report to the hospital here?
 - a. Yes.
2. The same one?
 - a. Yes.
3. Did you talk with any of the crew of the Y11?
 - a. I talked with the fireman and asked him if he got hurt. He said no. I asked him who was the engineer? A man came along and said I am the engineer.
4. Did you ask him why he left Campbell or why he came down there?
 - a. No. I don't think I did.
5. Did he make any statements or did the fireman make any statements of why they were on the line of Train No. 23?
 - a. No.
6. Did you see Mr. Urban?
 - a. I didn't see Mr. Urban.
7. Did this collision knock your train back?
 - a. Yes. I think it did a little ways. It hit about the time I was leaving. I don't pay much attention after that, it hit about the time I hit the ground about a creek through.
8. Were the brakes operating fully on your train?
 - a. Yes.
9. Anything else you want to add?
 - a. When the engineer of the Y11, he he a qualified engineer?
10. Yes.

Questions asked, answers by Pete Samakos:

1. Were you on Train No. 23, October 19th?
 - a. Yes.
2. What job?
 - a. Engineer.
3. Did your train have a collision with Extra 301 North?
 - a. Yes.
4. What time and where did it occur?
 - a. About 8:30 on the morning of October 19th.
5. At what place?
 - a. At Mile Post 112.5.
6. Where was you riding at the time of the collision?
 - a. I was on the top passage, that is, just before my cell.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Pete Demaskos:

Q. Did you have any knowledge of this collision before it occurred?
A. No.

Q. Did you have the train orders that you received at Anchorage for Train No. 23?
A. Yes.

Q. Were any orders received respecting the rights of Train No. 23?
A. No.

Q. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
A. No.

Q. Do you know of any passengers or any body else that did?
A. There were passengers reported to be bruised up.
Q. Do you know who that was?
A. I have the man by sight and not by name.

Questions by Mr. Cunningham, answers by Ed Bittner:

Q. Were you on Train No. 23, October 19th, when it had a collision with Extra 901?
A. Yes.

Q. Where were you riding?
A. In the baggage car.

Q. Did you read the orders of that train before leaving Anchorage?
A. No.

Q. Did you sustain any personal injuries?
A. No.

Q. Do you know of anybody that did?
A. Our engineer, Jack Ryan, showed us his leg before we left the caboose. I saw one between from the other train that had a cut over his eye. That is all I know of.

Q. Do you know of any passengers that sustained any injuries?
A. No, sir.

Q. Any further questions? Anybody wish to make a statement?
A. The whole investigation been satisfactory to all of you?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Mr. Lannon, Mr. Urban?
A. Yes.

Investigation concluded at 4:25 p.m.

Anchorage, Alaska
August 30, 1945

Cpl. Robert W. Duffey, ASN 35423437
Company "G", Adjutant General's School
Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia

Dear Sir:

This acknowledges your letter of August 22 and I am pleased to give you the following information concerning the head-on collision which occurred south of Anchorage in the fall of 1943.

Northbound Freight Extra 901 collided head-on with southbound Train No. 23, a superior train, at Mile 112.5 at 8:56 a.m. on October 19. Train No. 23 was handled by Engine No. 553, which was considerably damaged. Very little damage was sustained by Engine No. 901.

The crew of Train No. 23 were civilians and consisted of Jack Ryan, Engineer; William Fredericks, Fireman; L. J. Scanlon, Conductor; R. E. Dorf and Pete Damaskos, brakeman; and Ed Bittner, Baggageman.

The crew of Freight Extra 901 included Sgt. E. A. Allous, Engineer; Pvt. L. R. Dunn, Brakeman; J. D. Urban, Conductor; R. C. Holtan, Brakeman; and W. E. Ware, Fireman.

The collision occurred on a tangent a hundred feet north of a three-degree 30-minute curve. Cause of the accident was the failure of the crew of Extra 901 North to clear the scheduled time of Train No. 23 according to rules.

Yours very truly

O. F. Olson
General Manager