

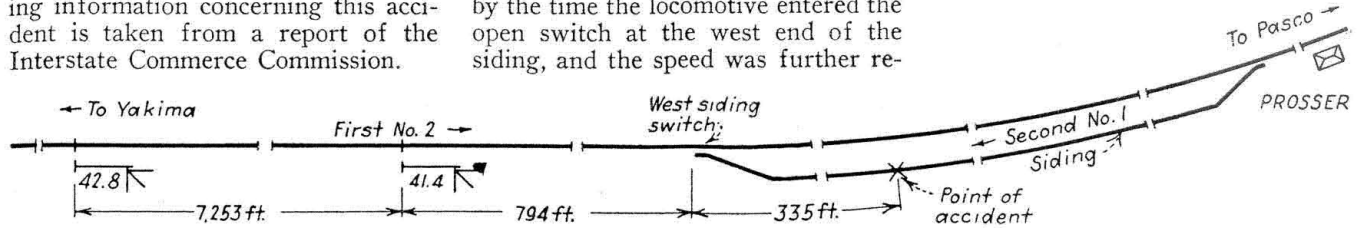
Accident on Siding Results in I. C. C. Recommendation for Locks

ON September 23, 1945, there was a head-on collision on a siding between two passenger trains on the Northern Pacific at Prosser, Wash. The following information concerning this accident is taken from a report of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

the aspect changed from green to red, and the engineman moved the brake valve to the emergency position. The speed was reduced to about 40 m.p.h. by the time the locomotive entered the open switch at the west end of the siding, and the speed was further re-

accidents resulted in the death of 28 and the injury of 313 persons.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the present accident, the average daily movement on this district was 16.8 trains. The maximum authorized speeds in this territory are 70 m.p.h. for passenger trains and 50 m.p.h. for freight trains. If the west siding-switch at Prosser had been provided with electric switch locking, it



Track and signal plan of layout at Prosser, Wash.

This accident occurred on that part of the Idaho division which extends between Pasco and Yakima, Wash., 89.5 miles, a single-track line in the vicinity of the point of accident, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. At Prosser, a siding 3,224 ft. in length parallels the main track on the south. The east switch and the west switch of this siding are, respectively, 350 ft. and 3,574 ft. west of the station. The accident occurred on the siding at a point 335 ft. east of the west switch.

The automatic block-signal system is arranged on the absolute-permissive principle and consists of double-location signals near sidings and intermediate signals between stations. Signals 42.8 and 41.4, governing eastbound movements, are, respectively, 8,047 ft. and 794 ft. west of the west siding-switch. These signals are of the one-arm, three-position, upper-quadrant, semaphore type, and are approach lighted.

At Prosser, the crew of the westbound train, Second 1, received copies of train order No. 211, reading in part as follows:

"Second 1 take siding meet First 2 at Prosser instead of Mabton . . . hold main track meet No. 6 at Byron Second 1 gets this order at Prosser."

The westbound train, Second 1, departed from the station at Prosser, entered the siding at the east switch and pulled on down and stopped about 4:10 a.m. with the engine 335 ft. east of the west switch.

The eastbound train, First 2, left Mabton, 11.6 miles west of Prosser, at 4 a.m., and while approaching Prosser at a speed of about 60 m.p.h., this train passed signal 42.8 which was displaying green. Signal 41.4 also was displaying green, but when the engine was about 150 ft. west of this signal,

duced to about 30 m.p.h. by the time this train went on down the siding and struck the locomotive of westward train, Second 1, which was standing still. The accident occurred about 4:14 a.m. which was about 4 minutes after the westbound train had stopped on the siding.

"The investigation disclosed that the front brakeman of Second 1 had read train order No. 211, but he said he thought the order contained the provision for his train to hold the main track at Prosser to meet First 2. During the time station work was being done, the conductor opened the east siding-switch for his train to enter the siding, and the flagman closed the switch after the train was into clear. From the time the train left the station until it stopped near the west end of the siding, the front brakeman was walking through the train. Soon after his train stopped into clear on the siding he proceeded toward the west switch, and, when he saw the reflection of the headlight of the engine of First 2 as it was approaching signal 41.4, he lined the switch for First 2 to enter the siding. He was positive in his statement that he believed his train was occupying the main track and that he was to line the west siding-switch for First 2 to enter the siding. The conductor of Second 1 was in the fifth car, the flagman was in the vicinity of the rear end of the train and the enginemen were on the engine, and they were not aware of the action taken by the front brakeman until immediately prior to the collision.

"In addition to the present accident, during the past 14 years the Commission has investigated eighteen accidents which resulted from switches being opened immediately in front of approaching trains, similar to the accident here under discussion. These

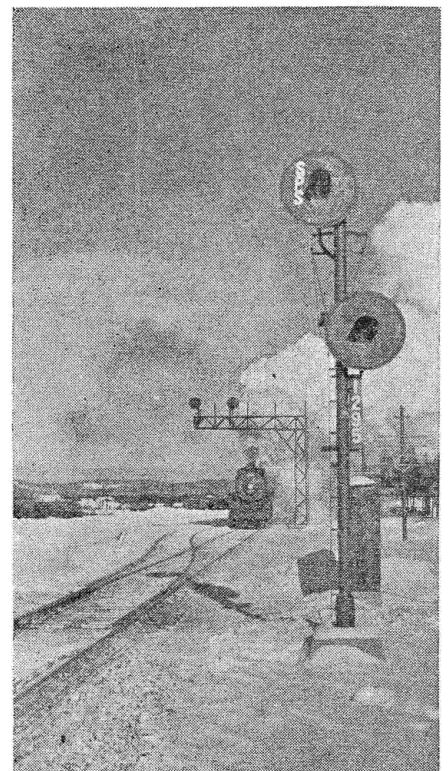
would not have been possible to operate the switch immediately in front of First 2.

"It is found that this accident was caused by a switch being opened immediately in front of an approaching train.

"It is recommended that the Northern Pacific Railway Company install electric switch-locking at main-track hand-operated switches in high-speed automatic block-signal territory."

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-fifth day of October, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.



New signals on Canadian Pacific