

Operator Tells Of Train Wreck; Unable to Sleep

Engineer of Michigan Central Blamed for Ignoring Block—Substitute Was in Tower.

By The Associated Press. Porter, Ind., Feb. 28.—Charles Whitehead, telegraph operator in the signal tower which regulates the passage of the trains over the crossing where a New York Central train last night smashed into a Michigan Central train, killing more than 40, tonight gave his version of the events in the signal tower preceding and during the collision.

He substantiated the statement of Joe Cook, signal operator, that the signals were set "against" the Michigan Central train and exonerated Cook of blame.

Whitehead tonight was back at his job, outwardly calm. His eyes, deep set from loss of sleep, darted from one track to the other and many times he paced the floor. To railroad officials he said he thanked God for his own narrow escape and was feeling fine, although his appetite was gone.

Regular Man Off. "I send and received all messages telling when various trains will arrive," he said. "I have nothing to do with the operation of the signals."

"Ordinarily Piering runs the levers, but he wanted to take a night off and hired Joe Cook, who is a substitute operator, to work.

"Because of the mass of switches, detectors and the intersection, both of us must be on our toes and we were ast night.

"Far down each track is an apparatus which rings a bell in the tower when a train hits it. Last night we were waiting for No. 151, the New York Central train. We heard the bell and looked up at the recorder, seeing it was the New York Central. About 30 seconds later the Michigan Central bell rang. Joe set the signals against the Michigan Central and opening the track for the New York Central. We sat peering down the New York Central tracks, watching the headlight grow larger and larger. We hadn't noticed the Michigan Central.

"The New York Central engine gradually grew larger and finally its outlines were visible. Suddenly I heard Joe shout:

Comes Through Block. "My God, Charley, the M. C. is coming through the block."

"I can still hear that shouted warning."

"I turned quickly and there, not 150 feet away, was the Michigan Central No. 20 crashing down at 60 miles an hour. It was so close I could see the spaces between the fender bars. Joe jumped for the door and I jumped after him. Something made us realize that to go downstairs would be fatal. We grabbed the door and held on.

"We heard a terrific grinding smash. There was a hiss of steam, a red glare lighted up the tower and our little building shook. The crashing of glass—the tower windows breaking—tingled in my ears and the tower continued to rock.

"We lay against the door for a moment and then collapsed. A few seconds later Joe got up and dashed downstairs. I followed.

Runs Two Miles. "When I reached the ground Joe was running full speed up the road to Chesterton, two miles away. I am told that he never stopped until he reached the tower.

"I went to the wreckage, the conductor came up and tried to ask me something. He couldn't talk, he was shaking so, and I guess I couldn't have answered. I don't remember much after that. I went home but couldn't sleep. I kept seeing those two glaring headlights—they seemed gigantic—rushing down on me. I dreamed of them.

"I'm all right now, but thank God for my escape. Fortunately the cars fell away from the tower."

Whitehead explained that the signal system was interlocking so that both tracks could not have been open at once. He said that the Michigan Central train probably was making 60 miles an hour, but that the New York Central was traveling slower, probably 40 miles.

Cook Unable to Work. "They always travel nearly full speed, but last night the New York Central seemed to be coming slower. Perhaps the engineer saw the other train and tried to stop," he said.

Cook was unable to work tonight, but was not needed. Every train in both roads were ordered to stop before reaching the wreckage and to proceed only by hand signal. All derailing switches were locked closed and all blocks were set against oncoming trains.

Last night was the first night of the regular tower man has taken in over a month. His job is a seven-day one. Piering was back at work this afternoon.

Train Fireman Says He Has Story of Wreck to Tell

Michigan City, Ind., Feb. 28.—(By The Associated Press.)—"The other fellows can chirp all they want to. We have our own story to tell yet," said George Block, fireman of the Michigan Central train wrecked at Porter, Ind., last night.

William Long, the engineer, and Block were found here awaiting a special train which took them and various Michigan Central officials to Niles, Mich., where an official railroad inquiry was to be held later today.

Long was told he had been accused of responsibility for the wreck by the Porter towerman and it had been reported also that the police officials were seeking him, but he made no reply.

Morris Plant at St. Louis Suffers \$500,000 Fire Loss

East St. Louis, Ill., Feb. 28.—The building housing the offices and casing rooms of Morris & Co., packers, was destroyed by fire today. Officials estimated the loss at \$500,000.

It is believed the fire was caused by crossed electric wires. About 2,000 men will be thrown out of work said.

No Word Heard From Engineer in Wreck

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operator on duty last night, had closed the crossing against the Michigan Central train and opened it for the New York Central train. Trammien pointed to cuts in the Michigan Central ties as proof that the train had been derailed by the derailing switch and then had climbed back on the track when it hit the "diamond" at the intersection.

Cook's statements were substantiated by his fellow worker, Charles Whitehead, also on duty in the tower. Possibility of an immediate inquest was set aside today when Dr. H. O. Seipel, county coroner, said he would not attempt to start an inquest until identification was finished.

No Fire in Ruins. Town Trustee R. Huff, first town official on the scene, announced today he intended to move toward limiting the speed at which trains passed the crossing.

Though this is the greatest disaster Porter has ever had, it lies within one of the busiest railroad sections in the country and almost at Porter's doors an even greater wreck occurred 15 years ago. This was the destruction of a Baltimore and Ohio immigrant train which ran head-on into a freight train and took fire three miles east of here.

Failure of fire to break out last night was a saving boon. The town marshal had placed his fire department's hose on one side. Chesterton's department soon appeared on the other. But electrification of the train lighting probably prevented this disaster, officials said.

New York Central Plows. The New York Central had plowed through the middle of the other train. All except the two baggage and mail cars of the New York Central train remained upright, although bits of the wooden coaches of the Michigan Central train were scattered for 50 yards. Passengers in the four

Rail Commission Planning Appeal From Injunction

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coaches of the Michigan Central train behind the two death cars were unhurt except for the shakeup and all of the passengers on the New York Central escaped.

For no reason that railroad officials could assign almost all of the dead taken to the little morgue at Chesterton, across the tracks from Porter, received their fatal wounds in the head. Some were decapitated, accounting for the failure to identify nine of the 25 which had been taken there up to 6 o'clock.

Towerman Blameless. "I was not to blame," Towerman Cook told an Associated Press representative at his home in Chesterton early today. "I threw the block against the Michigan Central train while it was two miles back from the crossing. I do not know why they failed to catch the signal."

An official statement issued from the office of the chief dispatcher of the Michigan Central at Chicago also declared the Michigan Central engine crew apparently failed to observe that the crossing signal was set against them.

The steel forward coaches of the New York Central train were almost unscathed, while the New York Central engine ran off the rails and turned over, tangled in a heap with the Michigan Central engine.

Aged Engineer Killed. A pathetic incident was revealed in the death of Albert Van Riper. He was an engineer employed by the Michigan Central and was to have been pensioned soon, having spent 50 years at the throttle, without having met with a mishap. He had spent Sunday in Chicago visiting relatives and was returning home.

American Heiress to Wed Count Jacques of France

Paris, Feb. 28.—Announcement of the engagement of Elizabeth, daughter of Mrs. Hehr Ridgway, to Count Jacques, is made in the Paris edition of the New York Herald. The bride-elect's mother is a former American girl, while the mother of Count Jacques was formerly Miss Lita Garner of New York.

Rail Commission Planning Appeal From Injunction

Case of Order Restraining Body Interfering With Rate Raise, to Be Taken to Supreme Court.

Lincoln, Feb. 28.—(Special.)—The Nebraska Railway Commission is perfecting an appeal to the United States supreme court from the temporary injunction granted the carriers at a federal court hearing in Omaha, Monday, February 21, restraining the commission from interfering with interstate freight and passenger rate ordered by the Interstate Commerce commission, to supersede state rates on or before March 22.

The railroads immediately put the passenger fare increase into effect—changing from 3 cents a mile to 3.6 cents. The authorized increase in freight rates, amounting to 10 per cent, is expected to be installed early this week throughout the state.

The carriers were required to give a joint \$200,000 to reimburse shippers and travelers in case, on the final hearing on its merits, the state commission should win in its contention that the government had no authority to upset established intrastate tariffs.

Important to Nebraska. Decision of the United States supreme court, upholding the validity of the federal farm loan act, is of vast importance to farmers of Nebraska and Iowa, and indirectly to all business interests of agricultural sections.

The Omaha farm loan bank, organized under the act, loaned over \$20,000,000 to farm owners in its district before the attack upon the law made it impossible to sell bonds with which to finance further loans. For more than a year no applications for

Farm Loan Banks Valid; Millions Are Released

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the farm loan banks. The government, the Federal Land Bank of Wichita, Kan., and the First Joint Stock Land bank of Chicago, on their own application, were made defendants in order that the entire question might be settled finally in one suit.

Counsel for Mr. Smith asserted in substance that the farm loan act was an exercise of power which congress did not possess under the constitution. Further ground for attack was found in the exemption of the farm loan securities from taxation, as "instrumentalities of the government."

William G. McAdoo, former secretary of the treasury, submitted the government brief as special assistant to the attorney general in the argument of the case. He asserted that the banks were created as "fiscal agents" of the government and that congress had the clear right to set up such institutions. Since assistance to agriculture pertains to the general welfare, it was argued, congress could have made direct appropriations for the purpose in view, but chose to create these special agencies to provide the necessary funds.

With regard to the tax exemption feature Mr. McAdoo contended that it was "simply a question for congress to determine when the usefulness of its agencies would be enhanced by exemption."

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Marshall Is Given Silver Loving Cup

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Washington, Feb. 28.—A tall silver loving cup was presented to Vice President Marshall today by the senate as a "going away" gift, the republican and democratic leaders, Senators Lodge of Massachusetts and Underwood of Alabama expressing the esteem and good wishes of the membership in presentation speeches. A gold eyeglass case, a cigar holder and a box of cigars also were presented to Mr. Marshall, who will leave Washington March 5 for a six weeks' lecture trip, traveling from coast to coast.

After a visit with Mrs. Marshall's mother in Arizona, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall will sail for Europe May 14, going first to Switzerland in company with others representing the northern jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite Masons at a world conference at Lausanne.

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Youth Is Under Arrest For Shooting Brother

Pontiac, Mich., Feb. 28.—Warren Branfield, 11, was detained by the police here today, pending investigation into the killing in a woods near Farmington yesterday of his 9-year-old brother, Clare. The older boy shot and killed his brother, "to put him out of his misery," he said, after accidentally wounding him. He said he fired the first shot "to see how close he could come to his brother without killing him."

See Want Ads—little, but mighty.

Out to-day New Victor Records for March

When Toscanini and La Scala Orchestra came to tour this country, it was a foregone conclusion that they would also make Victor Records. The first two records are now announced and they afford music-lovers everywhere the opportunity to hear this famous organization. In this list also appears a new tenor, Beniamino Gigli, who has scored a triumph with the Metropolitan Opera, and in addition there are new offerings by such favorites as Alda, de Gogorza, Galli-Curci, Heifetz, Homer, and McCormack—a truly impressive company of great artists. Wherever there is a Victor dealer, you are welcome to hear any of these records.

Table listing Victor Records for March, including titles like 'Thoughts of You', 'John Peel', 'Interludium in Modo Antico', etc., with artist names and prices.

Any Victor dealer will gladly give you an illustrated booklet describing these new Victor Records and play any music you wish to hear. New Victor Records on sale at all dealers on the 1st of each month. Victrolas in great variety from \$25 to \$1500.



Victrola Victor Talking Machine Co. Camden, New Jersey

Advertisement for Thompson, Belden & Co. featuring 'Black Silk Lisle Hose 75c a pair', 'Children's School Umbrellas', and 'The Store for Blouses Has Varied Spring Displays'.

Large advertisement for Columbia Records featuring 'A Lower Price on 130 Retired Popular Columbia Records' and 'For a Limited Time Only 59c'.