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REPORT OF ACCIDENTS

ISSUED BY

The Colorado State Railroad Commission

FOR THE YEAR ENDING

December 31, 1909

AND

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATION

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To His Excellency,

JOHN F. SHAFROTH,

Governor of the State of Colorado:

Sir—The Colorado State Railroad Commission herewith submits its Annual Report of Accidents occurring on the various transportation lines operating within the State of Colorado, for the year ending December 31st, 1909, and at the same time respectfully outlines and submits certain recommendations pertaining to this subject, which, in the judgment of the Commission, should receive the favorable consideration of our legislature at as early a day as possible. These recommendations will tend, in a measure as least, to lessen our casualty record, and, at the same time, afford the traveling public and railway employes some additional assurance of safety other than they now enjoy on many of our railroads.

It seems to us that this is a matter of such vital importance to the people of this state that a special law covering this subject should be enacted at the very earliest possible moment, and, as we understand there is to be a special session of the legislature called for the purpose of enacting other important measures dear to the people, we urgently request that, inasmuch as the law under which we are acting is not at all clear or specific on the question of block signals, a law similar to the one attached to this report be brought to the attention of the legislature and it be asked to enact a law in conformity therewith.

Respectfully submitted,

THE COLORADO STATE RAILROAD COMMISSION,

By A. P. ANDERSON,

President.

WORTH L. SEELY,

Secretary.

Report of Accidents

The following statement of accidents is taken from the reports filed with the Commission for the year ending December 31st, 1909. Said reports date from June 8th, 1909, at which time the Commission, in order to facilitate the forwarding of reports of accidents as provided for under Section 27 of the act to regulate common carriers in this state, issued a circular order addressed to all carriers, and sent blank forms of reports to fill out and forward to the office of the Commission immediately after an accident occurred wherein there was loss of life or injury to any person.

Prior to the sending out of this circular order and the form of reports, our records in some instances had not been as complete as they should have been. Therefore, possibly some accidents where there was a loss of life or an injury may not have come to the notice of the Commission. However, the statistics given in the table are approximately correct.

The chief benefit of statistics of railway accidents is to point out to those in charge of railway operations and to the people of the state, that class of accidents which may be lessened by greater care on the part of railway employes, or greater uniformity in railway equipment and conditions of management. To render this service, it is necessary that casualties should be classified according to the class of persons by whom they are sustained and according to the kind of accidents from which they result.

The summaries of accidents in this report present statements of accidents resulting from the movement of trains, locomotives or cars only. Accidents arising from causes other than those resulting from the movement of trains, locomotives or cars *are not included in this report.*

The total number of casualties to persons on account of railway accidents, as shown by the reports filed with the Commission for the year ending December 31st, 1909, was 229, and this number would undoubtedly have been greater had they been reported to the Commission during the first part of the year prior to our sending out forms.

The number of persons killed during the year was 113, all of which have been reported. The number reported as injured was 116.

The figures show a large number of employes killed and injured, a result due, in part, to the heavy volume of business being done by the roads of this state, and the further fact that many of our mountain roads have long, heavy grades, and not infrequently the air pumps or brakes, for some unaccountable reason, fail to respond at the critical period, with the result that

the train is lost control of and rushes down the grade at such speed that it finally leaves the track and crashes into the abyss below, killing or maiming some or all of the crew. The employment of unskilled and untried men is often the cause of the most serious accidents. The operating officials of a railroad should use great care in selecting the men who are to have charge of trains. In many instances the most serious accidents where the loss of life is greatest, the same could have been averted had the men in charge of the train's movements exercised the authority and assumed the responsibility they are supposed to exercise. No man should be placed in charge of a train who is of a hesitating or doubtful nature; they should understand that upon them, to a very great degree, the safety of the train and its load of human freight depends. It is such thoughtlessness or negligence as this that, in a measure at least, is responsible for some of the most serious accidents in this state, and to some extent the operating departments of the roads are responsible, for the reason that greater care and better judgment should be exercised on their part in the matter of promoting men to positions of such importance.

We give below the statistical table of accidents above referred to: