

Anchorage, Alaska  
January 11, 1949

Mr. J. T. Cunningham  
Acting General Manager


Reference to the attached relative to delay and accident to troop train leaving Fairbanks January 1, 1949.

On my recent trip north I discussed this with most all of the employees concerned or who had any part in the operations of this train. You will please note the statements of various Fairbanks employees.

Through a misunderstanding, no Road Foreman of Engines was riding this train from Fairbanks to Healy, otherwise, I feel that some delay could have been avoided at Nenana. At Healy the clam bucket on the coaling crane was accidentally dropped and broken; this caused by excessive snow and ice and extreme cold weather conditions, and was necessary to call out section men to coal engines.

The delay encountered at Windy and Broad Pass can be charged up to extreme cold weather conditions, causing the freezing of injector equipment, also possibly some account lack of good judgment on engine crew's part although each claim they did their best with what they had and considering the extreme weather conditions.

I have discussed the damaging of troop sleeper and engine 802 at Fairbanks with Roundhouse Foreman McCabe and do not plan on any further disciplinary action. Due to the fact he had been on continuous duty for approximately 36 hours prior to accident with only 2 hours' rest, I feel he possibly did use poor judgment in not providing better protection in going through the steam along the track, but states he was going very slow and ringing the bell and to the best of his knowledge the main line should have been clear at that time. He regrets this accident very much and has assured me that there will be no recurrence of this kind in the future.

  
G. A. Benedict  
Supt., MP&E

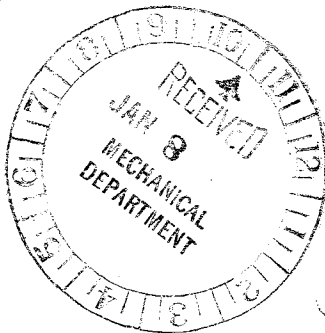
GAB:mg  
Atts.  
Mech.

Anchorage, Alaska  
January 7, 1949

Mr. G. A. Benedict:

Please note AX-700. Engine 802, while being handled by a roundhouse employee at Fairbanks, struck the rear of Second 5, resulting in injuries to three passengers.

Please investigate this accident and let me have results of investigation before any disciplinary action is taken.



*J. T. Cunningham*  
Asst. General Manager

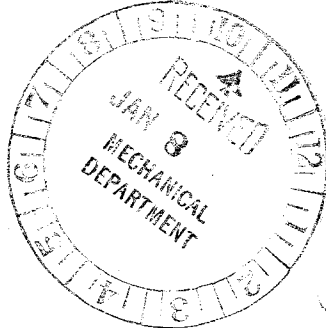
cc: Mr. J. E. Manley

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cc: Mr. J. E. Manley

Anchorage, Alaska  
January 3, 1948  
File: 522.1

Mr. J. T. Cunningham  
Asst. General Manager

The following is a report on the progress of Troop Train departing Fairbanks January 1, 1949, for connection with Troop Ship Eltinge.

This train was called to depart Fairbanks 9:00 a.m. as First No. 5. The train departed Fairbanks after approximately one (1) hour's delay waiting on troop loading, but upon making running air test during departure bad order brakes were revealed. Train was stopped and backed to main line adjacent to Roundhouse in order that carmen could work on brakes. While this work was being performed Roundhouse Foreman, McCabe, while taking Engine 802 over to coach track struck the hind end of the train, causing slight injury to five (5) men. Crew of passenger train was then put on release until these men were checked over at the hospital for possible injury. Mr. Benedict is enroute north to conduct investigation of this incident. Carmen okayed train for departure at 2:10 p.m. and train then departed Fairbanks as Second No. 5, inasmuch as the regular passenger train had been changed to First No. 5 and had departed Fairbanks.

Delay report shows this train was further delayed at Nenana for 1'20" thawing air brakes. It was again delayed at Milepost 369 in order to clean fire. Upon arrival at Healy this train was delayed for 2'10" (crew eating - 30"; changing engine 1'40"). It was necessary to change out engine at this point due to the fact that coaling apparatus had broken down and there was no way to coal an engine except by hand.

At McKinley Park it was necessary to clean the fire on Engine 801 and train then proceeded southward.

At 4:10 a.m., Conductor reported, by phone, that Engine 801 had dumped its fire at Windy, account low water and that what little water was left was badly overheated. Engine 502 was immediately called from Healy as a relief engine and a carman and machinist were sent with it to aid in getting the train on its way. In the meantime troops had disembarked and were shoveling snow for the engine and enabled Engineer Martin to get enough water in the boiler to enable him to rekindle his fire and steam was turned back into the coaches. However, insufficient steam pressure was available to move train. Upon arrival of Engine 502, Engine 801 and train were dragged to Cantwell whereupon Engine 801 took water and started to build up steam while train was being pulled to Broad Pass by Engine 502. However, between Cantwell and Broad Pass both injectors on Engine 801 went bad order and it was necessary to kill the fire in Engine 801 again while enroute. At Broad Pass steam was taken from both the pump station and Engine 502 but it was found that some of the sleepers were frozen and it was necessary to thaw these out. Water was pumped into the boiler of Engine 801 from the pump house and after the boiler had been filled a fire was rekindled it was then reported that the machinist was unable to get the injectors working properly and so Engine 801 was set out in the coal track and connected to the pump house to prevent freezing while Engine 502 proceeded along with the train into Curry.

At Curry two (2) hours were consumed servicing Engine 502 and thawing airbrakes on cars. Trainmaster Scott and Car Inspector Ballard reported that inspection proved that the triple valves had been cut out on both ends of the last four cars. This fact has been reported to Mr. Benedict who will investigate upon his arrival in Fairbanks, inasmuch as it may have a direct bearing on the long delay at Fairbanks.

Train finally departed Curry at 5:25 p.m. January 2, 1949 and arrived at Anchorage at 11:25 p.m. which constitutes normal running time for a 500-class engine.

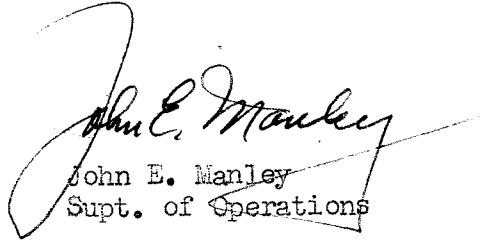
On arrival at Anchorage it was found necessary to set out Troop Sleeper No. 9015 account burned journal. Train departed Anchorage at 12:25 a.m. January 3, 1949 for Whittier and made a normal run to Whittier.

At Whittier Baggage Reefer No. 11517 was derailed when shoving to the dock and train finally reached the dock at 5:45 a.m. January 3, 1949. Derailment was caused by split switch and Trainmaster Boyd is in Whittier at present investigating same.

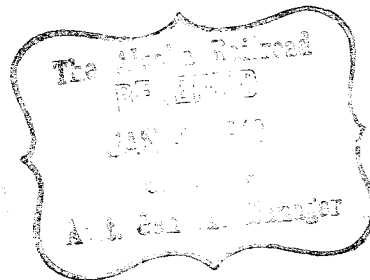
The following are delays on this train:

Fairbanks: 1' - waiting for train; 4'10" - thawing out airbrakes  
Cache: 5" - water  
Menana: 1'40" - (20" water and coal; 1'20" frozen airbrakes)  
Brown: 10" - water  
M.P. 369: 30" - cleaning fire  
Healy: 2'10" - (30" eating; 1'40" changing engine and servicing train)  
McKinley  
Park: 25" - orders and cleaning fire  
M.P. 345.5: 20" - blow up steam  
Lagoon: 20" - trying to get water from frozen pipe  
Windy: 3'40" - killing engine; shoveling snow and waiting for Engine 502  
Cantwell: 45" - water and blowing up steam on Engine 801  
Broad Pass: 4'5" - (eating 30"; balance was described in report)  
Curry: 1'55" (1'15" thawing Engine 502; 40" thawing coaches)  
Montana: 10" - water

Willow: 15" - coal and water  
Birchwood: 10" - water  
Anchorage: 1' - servicing train, changing engine and set out bad order  
Troop Sleeper, transfer troops.

  
John E. Manley  
Supt. of Operations

JEM:glb



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Fairbanks, 1-2-49

Mr. G. A. Benedict  
Supt., MP&E  
Anchorage

Mr. Benedict:

Concerning accident to troop train and engine 802 here January 1, 1949. The troop train left the roundhouse as 1st #5 at about 10:10 a.m. and since I had no helper to work with the hostler, I was working with him to get the engines ready and get the engine on the passenger train 2nd #5. At 10:30 a.m. the hostler, Neal Packer, and I started to put engine 802 on the passenger train which was on the coach track. I was running the engine and Packer was throwing switches. We backed out the north end of the roundhouse onto the main line and started down the main line to put the engine on the south end of the passenger train.

After we pulled out on the main line Packer lined the switch and gave me a signal to come ahead. I moved ahead slowly and picked Packer up in the cab as it was -30° and the fire needed tending in the engine. The troop train had backed up and come to a stop while Packer was getting on the engine. The steam from the relief valves on the 802 and from engine 552 on the coach track right alongside made it impossible to see the front end of the engine. I had moved the engine about 150 ft. when the steam cleared a little and I noticed the men around the coaches on the coach track giving stop signals. I shut the throttle off and applied the brakes. I still could not see the troop sleeper ahead as the main line curves there - then I saw a man jump out of the steam ahead. I reversed the engine and opened the throttle. The engine had almost stopped when it coupled into the troop sleeper. It did not move forward after striking. I had to move forward before the coupler pin could be lifted.

There was no damage to the sleeper other than one window broken. The pilot beam on engine 802 was broken on either side of coupler.

Four or five men on the troop train were injured to the extent of cuts and bruises.

It was about 10:35 a.m. at the time of the accident, and it was on the main line right by the oil house about 200 ft. from the switch to the roundhouse track.

It is my desire to waive investigation and accept full responsibility for this accident.

/s/ C. E. McCabe

On January 1st at about 10:30 A.M. Mr. McCabe and I were taking the 802 from the Roundhouse over to the coach track to put it on the passenger train.

I lined the switch to go down the main line so that we could back in on the south end of the coach track. At that time the main line was clear as far as I could see. This was at 10:35 A.M.

The troop train had left at 10:10 A.M. for Anchorage, then having air trouble, had backed up the main by the roundhouse. This train was not back when we left the roundhouse with the 802.

There was an engine on the north end of the passenger train keeping the coaches hot, and the carmen were thawing coaches with the steam-hose, causing a great deal of steam and poor visibility.

When we started down the main, I got in the cab to fix the fire; I looked out the window and did not see anything on the main line until Mr. McCabe had started to stop when someone near the coach flagged him. Mr. McCabe was not going fast, but could not stop in time because of cold weather and snow on the wheels and brakes, until we coupled into the troop sleeper.

/s/ Neal Packer



January 5, 1949

On January 1st we got a troop train out at 10:10 A.M. and immediately went to thawing steam line on passenger that was on the coach track which is about 30 ft. from the main line. We had an engine on the passenger for heat which all caused a lot of steam and poor visibility.

At about 10:30, the troop train returned account air trouble. Mr. McCabe was bringing the passenger engine out. I saw the troop train but the steam was so bad I never saw the passenger engine until they coupled in.

/s/ M.S. Jackson  
Car Foreman

January 5, 1949

On January 1st after we got the troop train out of town, I went back to work on the passenger train on the coach track. After the troop train left, I saw the passenger engine backing out from the roundhouse, and after the engine passed the water tank on the roundhouse lead, it was impossible to see it because of steam blowing across the main line from the passenger train, and the engine that was coupled to the train for steam heat. Just after I saw the passenger engine backing out, the troop train returned to town and stopped with the rear car by the water tank on the main line. Just shortly after it stopped the passenger engine came through the steam on the main line and coupled on to the rear end of the troop train.

/s/ Gerald Hudson  
Carman

Anchorage, Alaska  
January 10, 1949

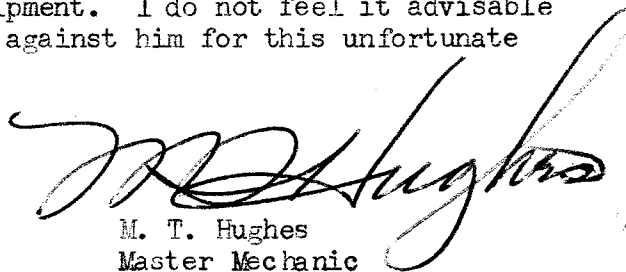
Mr. G. A. Benedict  
Supt., MP&E

The following and the attached are regarding collision between engine 802 and troop train at Fairbanks, January 1, 1949.

In reviewing statements from Roundhouse Foreman McCabe, Car Foreman Jackson, Carman Hudson, and Engineer-Hostler Packer, I find they do not reflect any instance of negligence on part of Roundhouse Foreman McCabe.

From all appearances, Mr. McCabe was making every effort to expedite movement of Train No. 5 by helping the Engineer-Hostler get this locomotive on train. As was stated, the weather was very cold and severe with visibility almost impossible. As is known, in yard limits it is not compulsory to protect rear end of train, but due to the fact that first No. 5 had left and then returned, the trainmen on this train should have made some effort to protect themselves, especially with the visibility as it was.

Mr. McCabe has been a very loyal employee who has worked well over his assigned hours, making every effort possible to expedite movement of equipment. I do not feel it advisable to take disciplinary action against him for this unfortunate accident.



M. T. Hughes  
Master Mechanic

TLH:mg  
Atts.  
Mech.