

TWO MEN KILLED IN C.N.R. CRASH ON SARNIA LINE

Fast Manifest Freight Ran Into Another Train

Engineer Walker and Fire- man Van Horn Dead

Fifteen Cars Demolished and Some Burned Up

December
14
1927

Sarnia

Sarnia, Ont., Dec. 13.—William Walker, 45 years, engineer, and G. Melvin Dan Horne, brakeman, were both killed, and Arthur Henry, conductor, all of Sarnia, was seriously injured, in a rear-end collision between two westbound C.N.R. manifest freight trains, at 8.15 o'clock tonight, about three miles east of Sarnia.

A London-Sarnia passenger train following ten minutes later was stopped in time to avert a second disaster. This train carried Mrs. Van Horne, wife of the dead brakeman, and when the passenger train stopped, the first news she learned was of the death of her husband. He had served throughout the whole war without being injured.

The cause of the wreck was the pulling apart of a coupling, which applied the brakes automatically and brought the first freight train to a standstill. Freight No. 2 was following five minutes behind No. 1, and before it could be signalled, it crashed into the detached rear portion of No. 1. The two men killed were of the crew of freight No. 2.

The two rear freight cars of train No. 1 were loaded with matches, which became ignited. At 10 o'clock these two cars were still burning fiercely. Traffic on both east and west sides of the accident were blocked, and routing was effected via Sault Ste. Marie. Passengers from the London-bound train were brought into the city by busses. Wrecking trains were dispatched from Hamilton and Stratford.

So terrific was the impact that the engine of train No. 2 crashed through a dozen cars of train No. 1 and then turned over. Fourteen or fifteen cars piled up in a tangled mass of wreckage. Owing to the heavy rainfall, relief work was greatly hampered, and it is feared that the track will not be cleared for twelve hours. In the meantime the westbound passenger train is held up.

The body of G. Melvin Van Horne, brakeman on No. 2, was burned almost to a cinder when recovered from the wreckage. Up till 11.30 p.m., Mr. Bart, member of the crew on train No. 1, was still missing.

The rain, which hindered the relief workers, providently assisted in extinguishing the blaze. By 11 p.m. the fire was almost out, though still smouldering.

It was reported that train No. 2 was travelling at a 25-mile rate when the crash occurred. Arthur Henry, conductor on No. 1, jumped, but sustained serious injuries to his back. Both trains were consigned to Sarnia.