

A RUNAWAY TRAIN.

Windsor Evening Record

Further Details of What was a Thrilling Incident.

58061

What was Averted by a Switchman's Presence of Mind.

3/24/1900 Windsor E.R.

The Brantford Courier gives the following fuller account of the doings of the runaway train in that city on Tuesday night:

Shortly after nine o'clock last night a heavily loaded freight left Paris with two engines at her head, number 598 and 757 respectively. Conductor Fitzgerald was in charge and everything seemed to be in first class shape when the train pulled out. There were 52 cars in all, containing for the most part grain of different descriptions, also machinery, bridge supplies and other articles. She was bowling along at a pretty good pace, when at the top of the second hill coming out of Paris, a coupling broke, and the train separated, dividing it up almost evenly. For a few seconds nothing went wrong but presently the runaway portion of the train began to gradually creep upon the first half. It was not long before the engineers realized their danger, and it was necessary for them to put on all steam and run their engines at a higher rate, to keep away from the last half. The brakeman and the conductor in the caboose knew nothing about the break and neither realized their danger until the crash came.

Mr. Jenkins, the Brantford yard foreman, had just let into the yard a west bound freight which had on almost as many cars as the other. There are two switches, one at each end of the yard, and this west bound train was too long for the switches. It was the foreman's intention to allow it to pull up and clear the Market street crossing. He would then stop the east bound train until enough cars were taken off the west. He had just put it on a switch, when he heard the danger whistles of the two oncoming engines. Realizing that something was wrong he ordered Switchman Barche to immediately open a switch and put her on a side track as she came in. He first flagged the west bound train, so that it would not reach the switch which he had to operate, but in stopping it he, a part of, the caboose was left standing on the main track. Barche turned the switch and the incoming train came through at an awful rate of speed, a speed which surprised him, and as he left

and one another, with the result that they became all tangled up and are pretty badly wrecked. The cars which they had broken away from fared a great deal worse. They jumped the switch but failed to land on the main track, and in about one minute the cars were piled on top of one another. Machinery flew in every direction, as did the grain and the other freight which the cars contained.

The track was torn up, the diamond semaphore was smashed and splinters are lying around in heaps, large enough to start a woodyard. It was not many minutes before hundreds of people were on the spot, viewing the disastrous scene.

A house which is situated at the corner of Charlotte and Durham-sts, had a narrow escape. Had the cars gone ten yards farther they would have crashed into it. Several people had narrow escapes. Those wishing to cross at Market-st had to walk around behind the caboose of the train standing in the yard and cross the track on which the runaway train came in. A lady and gentleman were just in the act of passing the caboose when the cars thundered past. It was indeed a close call for them. Another young man was coming along the sidewalk by the track when the cars jumped, and he also had a close shave. He immediately vaulted over a nearby fence or he would have been struck.

Auxiliaries were soon on the scene and men worked all night clearing up the debris. The loss will total several thousands of dollars.

MARC 1/24

1900

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Engines

598

757

Paris