



No 93-122

Masterton-Wellington Freight Service

Train No. 685

Collision with Person on Track

Trentham

18 November 1993

ABSTRACT

An intoxicated person lying close beside the track was struck and killed by a freight train. It is probable that the person fell from the station platform. No issues of public safety are raised in this report.

TRANSPORT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

RAIL ACCIDENT REPORT NO. 93-122

Train Type and Number: Masterton-Wellington Freight Service Train No. 685

Locomotive: DC4191

Date and Time: 18 November 1993, 2240 hours*

Location: Trentham
29.40 Wairarapa Line

Type of Occurrence: Collision with person on track

Persons on Board: Crew: 2
Passengers: Nil

Injuries: Crew: Nil
Passengers: Nil
Others: 1 Fatal#

Nature of Damage: Nil

Information Sources: Transport Accident Investigation
Commission field investigation

Investigator in Charge: Mr W J D Guest

*All times in this report are NZDT (UTC + 13 hours)

#Person lying on track

1. NARRATIVE

1.1 Train 685 was a Masterton-Wellington Freight, with a gross weight a little over 300 tonnes. There were two crew on board: a Locomotive Engineer and a Train Operator, sitting on opposite sides of the cab.

1.2 As the train approached Trentham Station, the Locomotive Engineer slowed down to less than 50 km/h in preparation for the restricted speed crossover to the Up Main line in the duplicated track which commences at the south end of Trentham Station.

1.3 Approximately 50 m from the northern end of the station platform, both crew members noticed a person lying along the sleeper ends beneath the edge of the station platform.

1.4 The Locomotive Engineer immediately sounded the horn and applied the emergency brakes, but there was insufficient space for him to stop, and the person

was struck. The train was brought to a halt approximately 80 m further on.

1.5 The deceased was an elderly man known to the Police as an alcoholic who had no fixed abode. He had been drinking earlier in the evening in a nearby hotel, and Police believed he was grossly intoxicated at the time of the accident.

1.6 The reason for the man's presence on the station platform was not clear, but as he normally slept outside, it is probable he was intending to cross the tracks to enter the Trentham Race Course opposite to find shelter.

1.7 There were no witnesses to say exactly how the man came to be lying on the track, but it seems most likely that he fell from the edge of the platform. The fall on to the hard track could have stunned him. There was no reason to suspect foul play.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 The train was being operated normally prior to the accident.

2.2 The Locomotive Engineer and the Train Operator were keeping a lookout, and took prompt action when the person was sighted lying beside the track.

2.3 The Locomotive Engineer was unable to stop the train in the space available.

2.4 The elderly man was intoxicated, and probably fell from the edge of the platform.

9 February 1994

M F Dunphy
Chief Commissioner