Anchorage, August 14, 1947 File: 010.27

COLONEL J. P. JOHNSON:

Attached, hereto, is a copy of investigation with Engineer W. A. Smith of Train No. 5, July 15, when they struck an Army vehicle at road crossing at Whitney, and also statement of Archie Peers, driver.

This investigation of driver of vehicle stopped at road crossing and then started across the track just as the engine reached the crossing.

J. T. CUMNINGHAM SUPT. OF OPERATIONS

ATTACH:

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Anchorage, Alaska July 30, 1 9 4 7 File 010.27

The following is statement from Mr. W. A. Smith, Engineer of Train No.5, Engine 1000 July 15, 1947 from Curry to Anchorage. This engine struck Army truck at road crossing at Whitney at 10:35 P.M. July 15, 1947.

Questions by Mr. J. T. Cunningham, answers by Mr. W. A. Smith:

- Mr. Smith, were you Engineer on Train No.5 from Curry to Anchorage July 15, 1947?
- A; Yes, sir.
- 3: Bid your train strike a truck at the road crossing at Whitney Station?
- A: Yes, sir.
- Q: What time did this occur?
- A: 10:35 F.M.
- 3: Describe weather conditions at that time.
- A: It was clear.
- : Was it getting dusk when the accident occurred?
- 1: No, sir, I would not say so.
- : About what was your speed approaching this crossing?
- A: Making 20-25 miles per hour. I applied the air brakes and then released them before coming to the crossing.
- 3: Mas your head light burning when approaching this crossing?
- A: Yes, sir.
- Q: If the weather was clear why did you have your head light burning?
- A: For the reason that trucks fly across the crossing so I put it on so the drivers could see the engine approaching just as a precaution.
- 0: Did you sound your engine whistle when approaching this crossing?
- A: I did.
- id you carry the last blast of the whistle out until you had reached the crossing.
- A: No, sir, I did not. I had kicked the air off.
- 4: How far away were you when the last blast of the whistle was sounded?
- A: About 25'.
- Q: Was the engine bell ringing?
- A: Yes, sir.
- %: That was your first knowledge of striking the truck?
- A: Just as I got across the road crossing the Fireman said "plug her."

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- 3: Did you see the truck at any time?
- A: I did not.
- : The truck, then, approached the crossing on the left hand side?
- a: Yes, sir.
- : How far did you go after you struck the truck before you came to a full stop?
- A: Seventy-five yards. I did not plug her, I made a service application. The Fireman told me to plug her the second time but I went into emergency.
- 3: Did you know the occupants of the car?
- A: No, sir.
- 3: How many were there in the car?
- A: I was told that there were two.
- 3: Did you examine the truck or vehicle?
- A: The right front tire was off the rear of the truck. I did not examine it.
- : Did you notice whether the driver had his window up or down?
- A: No, sir, I did not notice. The door was open when I saw it.
- ?: The door on the driver's side?
- A: Yes, sir. The Fireman talked with the driver of the truck and asked him "you were stopped, why did you go ahead?" The driver of the truck said,
 "I do not know."
- 3: Did you hear the Fireman say that to the driver of the truck?
- A: Yes, sir. Mr. Welch was there, too, and the Brakeman was there.
- 3: Who was the Fireman?
- A: Mr. J. C. Calvert.
- 3: You heard Fireman Calvert say to the driver "you were stopped, why did you go ahead?
- A: Yes, sir.
- 2: And, you heard the driver of the truck say "I do not know"?
- A: Yes, sir.
- 9: Did you talk to the driver of the truck?
- A: I asked him if he were hurt and he said that he was not. I did not see the truck until we stopped. I was looking out on the right side. I struck the truck with the grab iron on the left side.
- Q: Mr. Smith, that is all.

Anchorage, Alaska July 30, 1 9 4 7 File 010.27

the following is statement from Mr. M. A. Smith, Engineer of Train Mo.5, Ingine 1000 July 15, 1947 from Jurry to anchorage. This engine struck army truck at road crossing at Whitney at 10:35 P.M. July 15, 1947.

usstions by Mr. J. T. Conningham, answers by Mr. W. A. Smith:

- 12. Mr. Smith, were you Engineer on Train No.5 from Curry to Enchorage July 15, 1947?
- at Yes, sir.
- : Did your train strike a truck at the road crossing at Thitney Station?
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- secribe weather conditions at that time.
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- : Bed you examine the truck or vehicle?
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- Jid you notice whether the driver had his window up or down?
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- g The door on the driver's side?
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- A Mid you hear the Fireman say that to the driver of the truck? Les, sir. Er. Relch was there, too, and the Brakeman was there.
- de do was fine Fireren?
- a. de. J. J. Jalvert.
- I You heard Fireman Colvert say to the driver "you were stopped, why did you go thead"
- at Zea, sir.
- The end, you heard the driver of the truck say "I do not know"?
- da Jes, sir.
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- a Dr. Guith, that is all.

Anchora e, Aleska Fuly 30, 1 9 4 7 Dile 010.27

The following is statement from Mr. W. A. Smith, Engineer of Train Ho.5, angine 1900 daily 15, 1947 from Farry to anchorage. This engine struck army truck at the rose procesing at Thitney at 19:35 P.M. July 15, 1947.

most one of the J. T. Approinches, enswers by Mr. C. A. Seith:

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- and the sir, a did not. I had bicked the sir off.
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Anchorage, Alaska August 4, 1947 File 010.27

The following is statement from Mr. J. C.Calvert, Fireman, Train No.5, Engine 1000, July 15, 1947, from Curry to Anchorage. This engine struck Army truck at road crossing at Whitney at 10:35 P.M. July 15, 1947.

questions by Er. J. T. Cunningham, answers by Mr. J. C. Calvert:

- C: Mr. Calvert, were you Fireman on Train No.5, Curry to Anchorage, July 15, 1947?
- A: Yes, sir.
- 2: Did your train strike a truck at the road crossing at Whitney Station?
- s Yes, sir.
- : That time did this occur?
- 4: 10:35 P.M.
- : Describe weather condition at that time.
- A: It was clear.
- 33 Bhat was the speed of your train when approaching the crossing?
- A: About 15 miles perhour. We had just come through Whitney Station.
- I: Las the engine bell ringing at the time?
- a: Yes, sir.
- 3: Las the whistle sounded for the crossing?
- A: I pelieve it was we whistled for the station.
- 3: Were you riding on the lefthand side of the engine?
- A: Yes, sir.
- q: Did you see this truck approach the crossing?
- 4: Yes, sir.
- : How fareway was the train from the crossing when you saw the driver of the truck approaching the crossing?
- A: At least 100 yards. The truck pulled up to the crossing and stopped and then when he had almost reached the crossing the driver of the truck pulled up in front of us.
- : Then he came to a stop how far away was he?
- 4: 4bout 300'.
- : How many passengers in the truck?
- A: Two.

Questions by Mr. J. T. Cunningham, answers by Mr. J. C. Calvert, (continued):

- it Did you see the driver of the truck come to a full stop?
- E: Yes, sir.
- : Now long did the truck stop before he started to go across the road crossing?
- 4: Well, he stopped long enough for us to almost reach the crossing.
- Was the head light burning on the engine?
- a: Yes, sir.
- : Did you talk with the driver of the truck after the train came to a stop?
- A: Yes, sir.
- : What did you say to him?
- A: I said "you stopped and then pulled right in front of us." He said, "yes, I guess that is just what I did."
- 3: Mere the door windows up on both sides of the truck?
- A: I do not know.
- : Did you notice whether the windows were dirty or fogged up?
- is I didn't notice.
- : Did the driver of the truck say why he pulled in front of the train.
- helped seeing us. The head light was on and the bell was ringing.
- : Here you ringing the bell when going through Whitney Station?
- Exert Ser. If the driver of the truck had looked in both directions he could have seen us.
- : That is all.

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The following is statement from Mr. J. J. Salvert, Threman, Train 70.5, augme 1900, July 15, 1947, from Jurry to anchorage. This engine struck Tray trans at rock to the first struck of the party of the party of the struck of t

pertions of the J. C. Camingham, ensures by Eg. J. C. Calvert:

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- o like your train strike a wrack at the road crossing at Whitney Station? at Tes, sir.
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- 10:35 (....
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- Ive as the capine bell ringing at the time?
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- s There the chiefle sounded for the crossing?
- .. I . Tiero it was we wistled for the station.
- e care you riding on the lo**ft**an**nd side o**f the engine?
- ... Yos, sir.
- The wild you son whis truen approach the crossing?
- L: Los, sir.
- to wor darmage was the train from the crossing when you saw the driver of the wrack expressing the crossing?
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- : Than he came to a **stop** has for every the het
- r loost 330 .
- is then many postengers in the bruck?
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westfore by Mr. J. T. Conningham, answers by Mr. J. C. Calvert. (continued):

- in this year see the driver of the bruck come to a fall stop?
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- the long that the bruck stop before he started to go across the road crossing?
- are gall, is esopped long enough for us to almost reach the crossing.
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- and the monagetice whether the windows were dirty or fogged up?
- us i didn's notice.
- Old the driver of the truck say why he pulled in front of the train.
- and, sir, but evidently he did not look down the track because he could not have believed seeing us. The head light was on and the bell was ringing.
- Is the you ringing the bell when going through Whitney Station?
- of Yos, sir. If the driver of the truck had looked in both directions he coult have seen us.
- They is all.

Fort Richardson, Alaska - 16 July 1947 STATEMENT OF ARCHIE PEERS, CIVILIAN WAR DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE OF POST ENGINEER, FORT RICHARDSON, ALASKA, MALE, AGE 25, WITH ABOUT FIVE YEARS' DRIVING EXPER-IENCE.

On 15 July 1947 at approximately 2230 hours while I was driving a Government \frac{1}{2}-ton Dodge truck, the number of which I do not remember, I was involved in an accident which occurred in the following manner:

I was on night duty for Post Engineers and had gone out to SP-14 to take a night watchman and to bring back the man he replaced. As we approached the double set of railroad tracks at Whitney Crossing, I came to a complete stop, looked both ways, and heard no signal of any kind or any sound of an approaching train so I started up again and proceeded across the tracks. As I came onto the second set of tracks I was aware of lights coming from a right rear direction, but having been followed by another car I first thought the lights came from it. I had a choice either of stopping or of getting off the tracks as quickly as possible, and I took the latter course; however, the next thing I knew a train had struck the cab of my truck just behind the right door. It pushed us down the tracks about 150 yards, and all of this time I was trying to get the truck off the tracks and out of the path of the train but I had no control over the vehicle. It suddenly made a sharp left turn and stopped of its own accord on the other unoccupied railroad tracks. The train stopped shortly thereafter.

My passenger, Philip Byrtus, and I got out of the truck, and the train crew also got out. Both Byrtus and I were somewhat shaken up although neither of us seemed to be actually hurt. However I talked with Byrtus today and he stated that his rib was sore and that his right arm was swollen.

A major who was driving by (whose name I do not know) took Byrtus back to the Post and reported the accident to the Military Police, and I remained with the vehicle until they arrived. The MP's and Safety Director made an investigation and had sent for a photographer when I left. I filled out an accident report and turned it in to the Post Engineer Motor Pool. I did not notice the damage tothe truck at the time since I was feeling dizzy.

The weather was fair but the atmosphere was smoky and murky, visibility

was below normal, but the road condition was good.

Neither Mr. Byrtus nor I had been drinking. I was on an official business trip and had a trip ticket.

I hold Motor Vehicle Operator's Permit #13185 which permits me to drive passenger cars and 1/4 to 22-ton trucks; the permit was issued 8 July 1946.

This is the first accident in which I have been involved.

I have carefully read the foregoing statement and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

/s/ Archie Peers

ARCHIE PEERS, WD CIV. EMPLOYEE OF
POST ENGR., FT. RICHARDSON, ALASKA

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

Captain CMP
Claims Officer