

Statement of Engineer William Markness, Engine 502,
Train No. 11 ex Nelson, October 28th, 1924.

82-112
11718



We left Nelson fifteen minutes late and made the run to Farron without incident, arriving there on time. Did our usual work of cleaning fire, taking water, picking up cafe car, and left Farron about 24.53k.

Just inside the west mile board at Farron about 24.57k I heard a very heavy explosion, the emergency brakes automatically set, we were running about twenty miles an hour at the time, and I would say that we stopped in about three coach lengths. I looked back and saw a coach on fire, I reversed the engine, set up independent brake, and the fireman and myself went back and assisted to get the passengers out of the burning coach. We both worked together with the other members of the train crew, doing all we could to help.

While I was in the burning coach I distinctly heard a number of small explosions that sounded like dynamite caps or small cartridges exploding. I did think at first that there was trouble with the gas tanks exploding, the only reason I thought of this was because there was nothing else around the train that could explode, and as soon as we had all the passengers out I went and made a personal examination of the tanks before the burning car was got away from the sleeper and found them undisturbed in any way, being intact and in position. After this I went to the engine to pull the burning car away from the sleeper, which I did, moving up about a car length or so. Then we got clear of the burning car entirely, and moved ahead. There was nothing more that I could do and in the interest of safety, I stayed with my engine, as we were standing on a descending grade, and I remained on the engine until we proceeded to Midway. In the meantime, I allowed my fireman to go back and continue working with the train crew.

I saw a hole through the floor of the car, about the centre, and the ~~passenger~~ pipes underneath it were bent down from what appeared to be concussion. While I was around

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the burning coach I smelt gas escaping. I did not remember seeing any gas
flame but the gas odor was strong in the east end of the coach. I drew the
conclusion that the pipe leading up into the coach had broken off, ~~leaking~~ ^{allowing} gas
to escape at that end.

W. Harkness

Dated: Nelson, B.C. October 30th, 1924.