

No. 28000 (SUB-NO. 207)

IN THE MATTER OF APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF
 PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS OF SYSTEMS OR DEVICES
 UNDER PARAGRAPH (b) SECTION 25 OF THE INTER-
 STATE COMMERCE ACT, AS AMENDED

DELAWARE, LACKAWANNA & WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY

Decided June 2, 1960

Application of The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company seeking approval of the discontinuance of automatic block-signal system between Andover Junction, N.J., and Warbasse Junction, N.J., and modification of interlocking at Andover Junction, all on the Sussex branch of the Morris and Essex division, granted.

Harold T. Gilmartin for applicant.

Donald W. Bennett for protestants.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

DIVISION 3, COMMISSIONERS HUTCHINSON, WALRATH, AND WEBB

BY DIVISION 3:

By application filed November 6, 1959, The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company seeks approval of the discontinuance of automatic block-signal system between Andover Junction, and Warbasse Junction, N.J., and modification of interlocking at Andover Junction, all on the Sussex branch of the Morris and Essex division. Hearing has been held. The application is opposed by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen, the Order of Railroad Telegraphers, and the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen. The parties waived the issuance of an examiner's report.

The Sussex branch is single track extending, in order, west from Andover, N.J., through Andover Junction, Newton, and Warbasse Junction, to Branchville, N.J. Only a part of this branch is involved in this application. The segment here involved is 7.6 miles long beginning at Andover Junction, milepost 56, and extending west from there to Warbasse Junction, milepost 63.6. Present operation on this segment is by timetable, train orders, and an automatic block-signal system. Present signals consist of 19 one-arm style B semaphore signals and 1 two-arm style B semaphore signal, all lower quadrant signals. They are electrically lighted, operated by primary batteries, and controlled by a preliminary overlap sys-

310 I.C.C.

tem. They were installed in 1909, and parts for their maintenance and replacement are no longer available. Replacement with signals of current manufacture, assuming 100-percent replacement, would cost approximately \$140,000. The Sussex branch is already operated by timetable and train order, only, on the segment beyond Warbasse Junction. This Warbasse Junction-Branchville segment is 5.83 miles long.

Speed limits are 40 miles per hour between Andover Junction and Newton, milepost 60, and 35 miles per hour between Newton and Warbasse Junction. Local restrictions apply through Newton Station, 30 miles per hour, and through Trinity Street Crossing, near Newton, 10 miles per hour. The maximum grade on the segment here involved is 98 feet per mile. Generally the track curvature is less than $3^{\circ} 30'$, but four curves near Newton range between 5° and 7° . The rail in this section ranges between 101 and 105 pounds, laid on treated ties and cinder ballast. Rails are tested twice yearly and the line is patrolled twice weekly.

Train density was 12 scheduled trains in each direction daily, plus locals at the time the present signals were installed. Today train density is greatly reduced. Present movements consist of one local freight train daily in each direction 3 days a week; one passenger train in each direction Monday through Friday between Andover Junction and Newton; one passenger train in each direction over the entire line on Saturdays and Sundays; and, on weekends in the summer season, a second passenger train in each direction over the entire branch. In addition, a milk train operates over parts of the involved segment as traffic needs require. Train order stations will continue at Andover Junction, Port Morris, Newton, Branchville, and Netcong. The three last named are usually open during the daytime only, but Andover Junction and Port Morris are open continuously.

There are five switches on the involved line, all in the vicinity of Newton. If this application is granted, applicant proposes to install an electric switch lamp at each of these switches, and they will be lighted continuously. The 20 semaphore signals described above will be removed, but a new style R color-light approach signal is to be installed in approach to the interlocking at Andover Junction. Additionally, the end of signal territory is to be marked by clearly visible signs. With these changes, applicant proposes to operate by timetable and train orders, only, as it already does over the 5.83 mile segment beyond Warbasse Junction to Branchville, and as it does on 291 miles of single track in other areas of its system. There are no scheduled meets on the involved line, but trains not exceeding 10 cars in length could meet at Newton or Branchville.

Protestants point out that weather conditions on this branch are occasionally severe and that visibility is sometimes reduced to a few car lengths. In view of these unfavorable conditions, and the inherent safety features of the present automatic block signal system, the protestants insist that the proposed changes should not be approved.

As seen, nearly half of the Andover Branch is already operated under timetable and train orders only; namely, the 5-mile segment beyond Warbasse Junction. This operation has apparently been safely conducted, and the proposed operation contemplates nothing materially different, or unique, which would change the operating situation. Train density is relatively light, the train-order station at the entrance to the proposed nonsignal territory is continuously open, and speed limits are reasonable. All things considered we are persuaded that adequate control and safety will continue under the proposed changes.

We accordingly find that the proposed modifications will not decrease safety and that the application should be granted.

An appropriate order will be entered.

310 I.C.C.