

BOY KILLED IN SWITCH YARDS

Oscar Johnson, North American Messenger, Hit by Car, Dies Almost Instantly.

While on his way to deliver a message to Rubf Wieman, 148 St. Croix avenue, Oscar Johnson a North American messenger boy 13 years of age, living with his mother at Tenth street and Twenty-sixth avenue west, was struck by a box car, which was making a "flying switch" in the Northern Pacific yards, and almost instantly killed, at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon. He was knocked down and pushed half a block by the brake beam, but owing to the snow was not badly disfigured.

It seems that the lad was on his way down with the message, and finding St. Croix avenue closed by a long string of cars, went to the next block in order to get around more quickly. One of the switch engines in the yard was shunting cars from one track to the other. Oscar in his hurry to get across did not notice the single car running down the track, and did not hear the warnings of Sigmund Zalk, foreman of the Duluth Iron and Metal company, who was in the yards.

Back Was Broken.

He was going eastward to get by the string of cars on one of the tracks, and was hit in the back. Coroner McCuen said last night that his back was broken, life being crushed out in a moment. Mr. Zalk hastened to the boy without the loss of a moment, and with the aid of the switchmen carried him into the office of the iron company. The police were summoned, and Capt. Resche hastened to the scene of the accident. Not a spark of life remained, and the body was taken to the undertaking rooms of Durkan & Crawford.

The mother of the boy is grief stricken. When the news was imparted to her by a messenger boy she fell fainting to the floor.

Target of Misfortune.

The iron hand of misfortune has fallen heavily upon Mrs. Johnson. Her husband deserted her some years ago, another son met a violent death, and she has a 15-year-old daughter, Ida, in the institute for the feeble minded at Faribault. She is nearly 60 years of age, gray and feeble, and dependent for support upon her children, the oldest of whom now living is 21.

Oscar had been employed at the North American telegraph office for the last month and a half as a messenger. Previous to that time he did rough work at the Ouellette & Baxter mill, having left school last year to make his own living, as he felt that he did not wish to be a burden upon his mother.

Cars Roll Noiselessly.

When he left the office shortly before 4 o'clock he had three messages to deliver, one to the First National bank, another to the Phillips-Bell Shoe company, and the other on St. Croix avenue. He had delivered the first two, and was on the way down with the third when he was struck by the car. Single cars switched ahead by the engine roll very quietly, and can scarcely be heard in the midst of the other noises incident to a switching yard at that time of the day.

The men on the switching crew were Fred McCormick, 29 Eighteenth avenue west; R. A. Conklin, Lewis Sternal, Peter Peterson, fireman, and Gust Johnson, engineer.