

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

5 September 1853

BoT Report into Accident at

Euxton.

(2 Pages).

NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, October 25, 1853.*

SIR,

I HAVE been directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, to transmit to you the accompanying copy of a report they have received from their inspecting officer, upon an accident which occurred at the Euxton junction on the North Union Railway, on the 5th ultimo, in consequence of an express train having run through some facing points.

My Lords are strongly impressed with the danger which is incurred by the use of facing points upon a main line of railway, which is frequently traversed by trains at high rates of speed, and they trust that the committee of management of this portion of the line will take into their serious consideration the recommendation of the inspecting officer as to the removal of these points; and my Lords request that they may be informed at the earliest period of the steps that shall have been taken by the committee.

I have, &c.,
JAMES BOOTH,

*The Secretary of the
North Union Railway Company.*

North Union
Railway.

SIR,

October 8, 1853.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that in accordance with the instructions of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, I have inquired into the circumstances which attended the accident which occurred at the Euxton junction on the North Union Railway on the 5th September, in consequence of a passenger train belonging to the London and North Western Railway Company having run into a siding through some facing points.

The North Union Railway is worked jointly by the London and North Western and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies, and the portion of the railway from a point a short distance south of the Euxton Junction to Preston is managed by a "committee of management," appointed under the provisions of the Act 9 and 10 Vict. cap. 231.

The facing points are on the portion of line under the committee of management; and, in order to explain their position, I have annexed the accompanying sketch.

From this it will be seen, that these facing points are close to the junction between the line from Warrington to Preston with the line from Bolton to Preston. They are situated at about twenty-five or thirty yards from the junction signal man's box and stage from which the junction points are worked. The lever handle of the facing points is not let into this stage, but the signal man is obliged to go to them in order to work them. A lamp is attached to the handle of the points, which moves with it, and when lighted at night it exhibits a red light to approaching down trains when the points are open into the siding. It has been the practice to keep the points locked at night, but during the daytime this was not done until after the accident.

The siding into which the points lead is partly used for goods trains to shunt into, out of the way of passenger trains; and it is also used as a convenient place for weighing the coal trains, for which purpose a weigh bridge has been provided there. The coal trains are weighed in order to afford a check upon the coal owners, and it is therefore the custom to weigh only one or two trains selected at random in the course of the day. It would appear that the main use of the facing points is to admit the coal trains (which all come from the south) into the siding; and it was stated that if these points were removed, great inconvenience would result in the case of more than one train being required to wait to be weighed. The siding is of considerable length, and would accommodate two or three trains at the same time, and it is furnished with two outlets into the main line in addition to the facing points.

On the 5th of September the goods train from Preston, due to reach Euxton at 1.15, arrived at about its proper time, and was shunted in order to allow a passenger train to pass it, after which it went forward through the points. The signal man did not hold these points, because he was occupied in holding the other points, to turn the train on to the up line.

North Union
Railway.

The signal man does not appear to have noticed the facing points (which are professedly self acting) after the passage of the goods train at about 2.20, p.m. The express train, timed to reach Preston at 2.35, came up, and on its approach the junction signal was lowered, in token that all was right. The driver had shut off the steam when he first came in sight of the junction signal; but on receiving the "all right" signal he proceeded at his usual speed. Immediately after he had passed the junction he perceived that his train was turned into the siding, and he used every endeavour to stop; but before he could succeed, the train came into collision with some empty carriages which were standing at about 150 yards from the entrance to the siding.

The train consisted of seven carriages and a break van, which was next to the engine. There were two guards, one of whom rode in the van, and the other in a break compartment of a second class carriage which was in rear of the train.

This accident occurred solely in consequence of the facing points not having been properly closed, and it is possible that if they were always kept locked, a similar accident might not occur again. But I am of opinion that the existence of facing points upon a main line of railway is highly objectionable, and that they should only be permitted under very special circumstances near large stations.

In the present case they are situated upon a main line of railway, at a place which express trains are timed to pass at considerable speed. They lead into a siding which is of sufficient length to permit of two trains at least being in it at the same time. This siding is furnished with two other outlets into the main line, which are not laid through facing points, and the number of these outlets might be easily increased, so as to render it possible for any train in the siding to leave it without waiting for a train in front to pass out first; and this would do away with any inconvenience to which coal trains which required to be weighed might otherwise be subjected if the facing points were removed.

Inasmuch, therefore, as the down line approaches the junction up an incline, the line adjacent to the siding being nearly level, and as the junction signals are amply sufficient to protect the siding, there does not appear to me to be any reason why trains which require to pass from the down line into the siding, should not be shunted through one of the outlets above mentioned, instead of through the facing points. Hence I am of opinion, that the safety of the public requires that these facing points should be at once removed—a through crossing, if necessary, being laid into the up line.

I have, &c.,

*The Secretary of the
Railway Department, Board of Trade,*

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain Royal Engineers.

*North Union Railway, Lessee's Office,
Preston, November 14, 1853.*

SIR,

WITH reference to your letter of 25th October, I am directed by the Committee of Management to acquaint you, for the information for the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that, in conformity with their Lordship's request, the facing points at Euxton siding were taken out on the 3d November, and a stop block was completed at the south end of the siding on the 9th instant.

*James Booth, Esquire,
&c. &c.*

I am, &c.,

J. CHAPMAN,
Secretary.

DUBLIN AND KINGSTOWN RAILWAY.

SIR,

September 10, 1853.

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, to transmit to you the enclosed copy of the report made by the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into the circumstances attending a fatal accident to a boy named M'Daniell, a third class passenger by one of the trains on the Dublin and Kingstown Railway, on the 3rd of August; and to point out the very serious responsibility which must attach to the directors, if, after the

Dublin and
Kingstown
Railway.