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LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

5 September 1874

BoT Report into Accident at
Maudland, Preston.

(2 Pages).

PRESTON AND WYRE RAILWAY.

SIR, *Preston, 31st October 1874.*

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the accident that occurred on the 5th September, on the Maudland viaduct, north of the Preston station, on the Preston and Wyre Railway.

In this case, the 10 a.m. express passenger-train from Blackpool for Preston and Yorkshire came into collision with an empty-carriage-train, standing 110 yards within the distant-signal worked from the Wellfield Bridge cabin, on the north of the Maudland junction.

Eleven passengers have complained of injury. No servants of the Company were injured.

The site of this collision was 1,830 yards on the north of the Preston station. There is, running southward, a rising gradient of 1 in 350, for 440 yards from the point at which the distant-signal is first visible. The line is then level for 220 yards, and it falls 1 in 377 past the distant-signal to the point of collision. This spot is approached on a curve of 65 chains radius, on which the view is somewhat obstructed. The distant-signal referred to is worked from a cabin, at what is called the Wellfield Bridge, from which cabin it is 660 yards; and the Wellfield Bridge is 1,170 yards north of the Preston station. This distant-signal is visible to an approaching engine-driver for 440 yards. This portion of the line is not worked on the block-system.

Evidence.

The engine-driver of the Blackpool express train, Thomas Roscow, who has been an engine-driver for three years, and has been running over the Blackpool line as fireman or driver for seven years, states that he left Blackpool at 10.1 or 10.2, one or two minutes late, on the morning in question. His train consisted of an engine and tender, seven carriages, and a break-van, which was the last vehicle in the train. The van was connected with two of the carriages by Newall's patent breaks. They were three minutes late in leaving Kirkham, and they approached the Wellfield Bridge distant-signal several minutes late, having lost time on the journey. This engine-driver says he was running about 30 miles an hour when he came in sight of that distant-signal. Before sighting it he whistled, in the usual manner, three times for the junction; and he was about to open his whistle a second time for the same purpose, when he came in sight of it, and observed that it was at "danger." He at once whistled for the guard's breaks, the tender-break having been previously applied, and the steam having already been shut off three-quarters of a mile north of the signal. After running 20 or 30 yards from the point at which he sighted the distant-signal, he saw the tops of some carriages which appeared to be on the main line, and in his way. It was then that he whistled for the breaks. About 30 yards before he reached the distant-signal, he reversed his engine, and applied his steam, and sanded the rails; but he was unable to reduce the speed below eight or ten miles an hour, at which speed his engine came into collision with the vehicles that were standing on the main line in front of him.

The fireman, Wm. Elston, confirms in the main the statement of his engine-driver. They shut their steam off at the usual place, about three-quarters of a mile north of the distant-signal, and before coming in sight of it. They were both looking out for it, and saw, in rounding the curve, that it was at "danger," and he immediately applied his break. Shortly after seeing the distant-signal they came in sight of the train in front, and the driver at once whistled for the guard's breaks. The engine was not reversed until about a hundred yards from the obstruction, but the engine-

driver then reversed it, and applied his steam; and they sanded the rails. They did not reverse their engine sooner because they thought they could have pulled up without doing so; and he believes that they did not receive all the assistance they ought to have had from the guard.

The guard of the train, Joseph Webb, has been a guard in the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's service over a period of 27 years, and has run, in the summer season, for five or six years over the Blackpool line, so that he is thoroughly well acquainted with it. During the 27 years he was, however, a station-master for eighteen months or two years. In consequence of misconduct 17 years ago he lost his situation; but he was afterwards again employed as a guard. He states that it was not until the train was within 200 yards of the distant-signal that he heard the engine-driver whistle for the breaks, and he was then already in the act of applying his breaks. He put them on as hard as he could, and he kept them on until they struck the carriages in front.

The chimney of the engine was knocked off, and some of the taps of the cylinders were destroyed, in consequence of the wheels of the van which was struck having got under the front part of the engine. The leading wheels of the engine were thrown off the rails, but the other wheels remained on the rails, as well as those of the tender and the carriages of the train.

The empty carriage-train in question left Blackpool at 9.50 a.m., after running "special" to Blackpool with passengers. The engine-driver, Richard Wood, states that he reached the distant-signal from the Wellfield Bridge about 10.32, and found it at "danger," and drew within it as far as he could. He stopped within about eight yards of a goods train which stood on the line in front of him. He looked at his watch, and said to his mate, "The 10 o'clock express from Blackpool is about due;" and he whistled to let the signalman know that there was a train behind the goods train. Immediately afterwards, he said again to his fireman, "And here's the train coming very fast." The fireman replied, "He does not look as if he was going to stop;" the driver drew ahead until his engine touched the van of the goods train; and as it did so the express train came into collision with the tail of his train.

The fireman with the last witness, James Mort, states that they had seen the goods train in front of them at Kirkham, and followed it all the way towards Preston; and when they reached the Maudland viaduct they found the goods train standing on the viaduct. They, therefore, drew up to within nine or ten yards of the van at the tail of it. He got off his engine, and saw the express coming behind them, and called the attention of his driver to it. The driver left the engine, but got up again to start it forward towards the goods train. The fireman remained on the ground till the collision occurred.

The head-guard with this empty passenger-train, Wm. Bannister, was riding in the van next behind the tender. There were altogether 15 vehicles and a break-van behind his van. He left Blackpool at 9.38 a.m. On reaching the Maudland viaduct he left his break-van, and, as soon as he had done so, he saw the express train approaching. After saying to the fireman that the express train was not likely to stop, he ran back to the hind van, and told his assistant-guard to jump out as quickly as he could. He had, before leaving his own van, heard a whistle for the breaks from the express train. The collision occurred at 10.36 by his watch.

The assistant-guard with this train, Samuel Patchett, was riding in the van at the tail of it. His train had just come to a stand behind the goods train (which he was aware they had been following from Kirkham), when he looked round and saw the express coming.

He heard the engine-driver of the express whistling for the breaks when he was apparently 300 yards from him; and he thought the express would have pulled up short of his train; but seeing, when the express came within 50 yards of him, that it was not likely to stop, he jumped out of the van, and thus escaped the shock of the collision. His break-van was smashed to pieces, and the next vehicle in front of it had its end knocked in.

The signalman, William Gerrard, who was on duty at the Wellfield Bridge, has been a signalman there for 13 months. He did not then keep any record of trains in his cabin, but he believes that the goods train, due there about 10.5 from Fleetwood, stopped short of the cross-over-road near his cabin, about 10.25, and had been standing there seven or eight minutes before the empty carriage-train arrived behind it. The empty carriage-train was telegraphed to him from Lea Road, about 10.40, as far as he can remember, but he did not know that the empty carriage-train came up and stood behind the goods train before the collision occurred, nor did he hear anything of the collision, or know that it had happened, until the guard of the goods train came and told him of it.

A platelayer, Thomas Carter, was at work at a bridge near Cottam Bank, about a mile and a quarter from Preston. He saw the goods train pass him, but does not know exactly at what time. He saw the empty carriage-train pass about five minutes, as well as he could judge, after the goods train; and he saw the express train following the empty carriage-train, but he cannot say at what interval. It appeared to him, however, that the empty carriage-train was not likely to be able to get out of the way of the express train; and he, therefore, made a signal, by holding up his arm, to warn the driver of the express train; but he does not know whether the driver saw him. (The engine-driver Roscow, states that he did *not* see this man give any signal.) It struck him that the express

train was coming at a good brisk speed, rather more so than usual round that curve.

Conclusion.

From the above evidence, it would appear that the engine-driver of the express train was approaching the Maudland viaduct at a somewhat incautious speed, though not perhaps at a higher speed than was necessary to enable him to keep time with his train. According to his own account, he did not reverse his engine as soon as he might have done; and if he had reversed his engine sooner, he might, apparently, have avoided the collision. He seems to have relied more than he ought to have done upon the effect of the guard's breaks in assisting him to stop his train; and it is a question whether the guard rendered him as much assistance in this respect as it was in his power to do, or as he ought to have done.

There is no blame to be attached to the signalman, whose distant-signal was at "danger;" and he was not even aware of the presence of the empty-carriage-train within it before the collision occurred. Nor can any blame be attached to the guards with the empty-carriage-train, who appear to have had no time to go back for its protection, inasmuch as their train had only come to a stand within a very short time before the collision occurred.

It would not, evidently, have happened if the line had been worked under the block-system; and, considering the vast amount of traffic which is carried over it, and the difference of speed between the trains running over it, it is of great importance that no further delay should be allowed to take place in the introduction of that system on this section of railway.

I have, &c.,
H. W. TYLER.

The Secretary,
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Preston and Wyre, and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies on the 1st December.

SOMERSET AND DORSET EXTENSION RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, London, S.W.,
27th October 1874.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 7th instant, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the accident that occurred on Monday the 5th instant, near the Evercreech Junction station, on the Somerset and Dorset Extension Line to Bath, when the driver of a passenger train, George Carter, was unfortunately killed; the fireman and guard of the train were injured, and an inspector was slightly bruised. It is stated that no passengers were hurt.

From the evidence brought before me it appears that No. 1, or the 6h. 20m. a.m. up passenger train from Templecombe to Bath reached Evercreech Junction station at 7h. 3m. a.m. and left at 7h. 4m. a.m.

It consisted of an engine and tender, break-van, one second-class, one third-class, and one first-class carriage, arranged in the order in which they are here written; and the station-master at the junction informed me that in about 15 or 20 minutes after the train had left, the guard returned, and told him that an accident had occurred at a spot which is nearly three quarters of a mile from the junction station.

The fireman of this train was in hospital, and unable to attend; and the guard of the train, although summoned by the officers of the Company, was not

present at my inquiry. But one of the Company's inspectors, who was riding in the guard's van from Evercreech Junction station to Bath, stated that nothing unusual occurred until they reached the spot where the accident took place; that they were travelling at 15 or 16 miles an hour, and the guard was looking out of the window, when he called out, "My God, we are off the line," and he jumped to his break; but he did not think that the guard had any chance of using it, as they were thrown into the bottom of the van as it fell over the viaduct; and he said there had been no warning or whistle from the engine-driver, to indicate that he was aware of any danger, until the accident took place.

The spot pointed out to me as that at which the accident occurred is situated close to the upper end of a rising gradient of 1 in 206, at about 36 chains from the commencement of this extension line, where it is on an embankment between an under-occupation under-bridge of small span at 34 chains, and the commencement of the Pecking Mill viaduct (67 yards in length, and consisting of five spans of 30 feet.) at 36.06 chains, and at the beginning of an easy curve to the left of 40 chains radius. No marks were found on the rails, marking the exact spot where the engine got off the line, on the outside of the curve, or right side of the line, as the engine was then running; but it continued to run on the outside of the curve, and gradually diverged from the right rail, until it came in contact with the right parapet wall of the viaduct, broke it down, and fell over the eastern side of the