

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

17 April 1873

BoT Report into Accident at

Preston.

(2 Pages).

A labourer, who was working about 80 yards from the spot where the goods engine stopped, says that it stood five or six minutes without being able to start, and that two men were on the ground giving it sand, while there was another man on the engine.

Two other independent witnesses both testify to the fact that the goods train was at a stand-still for four or five minutes before the collision took place.

This collision occurred in consequence of the complete neglect of rules 60 and 65 by the guards of the goods train. Rule 60 prescribes that when a train is stopped by accident or from other cause the guard, if there be only one, or the under-guard if there be two, shall go back with fog-signals, putting down one at 400 yards, a second at 800 yards, and two at 1,200 yards from the train, remaining beside the last one with his hand danger-signal; and rule 65 that the guard of a train proceeding slowly when a quicker train is expected must, if the speed of his train will permit him to alight, place fog-signals on the rails at distances of every 400 yards. There is no doubt from the evidence, both independent and otherwise, that either the one or other of these rules could have been attended to in the present instance, and that both guards are directly answerable for this collision, the under-guard for not having gone back, and the head

guard for not having ordered him to do so. I believe that no attempt was made to protect the goods train until the passenger train was heard to be approaching, and that all the servants of the company with the goods train gave untrue evidence as to what occurred after the train passed Auchendinny.

I think it is by no means certain that there was really 10 minutes interval between the two trains passing Auchendinny signal-cabin, and that, consequently the passenger train ought very likely to have got a caution-signal there, especially as the goods train appeared to be slipping as it passed.

If, as stated by the proprietor of the Auchendinny mill, goods trains are in the habit of sticking in the curve where the collision occurred it would be desirable to reduce the maximum number of waggons to be drawn by one engine on the Penicuik branch.

This collision is of one of a class which could hardly have occurred under a system of block-telegraph working, which mode of working seems especially necessary on a line of steep gradients and sharp curves such as the Penicuik branch.

I have, &c.,
C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the company on the 12th May.

NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 8th May 1873.

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 19th ultimo the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred at the southern entrance to the goods yard at Preston station, on the North Union Railway, on the 17th ultimo, between a passenger train belonging to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, and a goods train belonging to the London and North-Western Railway Company.

Nineteen passengers are returned as having been injured in various ways, though it is hoped that none of the injuries are of a very serious nature. The two guards of the passenger train were also hurt.

The southern entrance to Preston goods yard from the main down line is through a pair of unlocked facing points, situated about a quarter of a mile south of the southern end of the station platform. These points lead into a siding on the west side of the main line, called the "Wall Siding," which, after continuing northward for 150 yards from its fouling point, separates into two, close to the northern side of an over-bridge. The facing points are in charge of a pointsman stationed close to them, who is in communication by means of bell with another pointsman at the over-bridge; the latter, on receiving an announcement by bell of any coming down train, lowers (if clear at his own post) a main line down stop signal, situated 95 yards south of the facing points, and also a distant signal. The stop signal, owing to the intervention of a tank house, is not visible from an engine working in the wall siding, until that engine is about 65 yards north of the fouling point. It is stated to be the regularly observed rule, that no engine shall foul the main line at the wall siding, without the driver receiving express permission from the pointsman in response to a whistle asking for the permission.

On the afternoon in question, a goods train from Birmingham, due at 1.40 p.m., arrived at the entrance to Preston goods yard at about 3.25 p.m.; it consisted of engine, tender, 23 waggons, and a break-van; the engine was in charge of a man named Rumney, who had been a regular driver for about 15 months, an extra driver for two years previously, and fireman

and turner since 1861. On the arrival of the train it was left standing on the main down line, while the engine ran round it, and then pushed it through the facing points, held open by pointsman Cumpsty, into the wall siding. The waggon next the station was first shunted into the warehouse siding, (one of those into which the wall siding forks), in doing which the engine stopped at a point about half way between the facing points and the entrance to the warehouse siding. The driver states that he then got a signal from the north end of the train to return towards the facing points, so as to get the front waggon of his train clear of the warehouse siding points, and push it further northward along the continuation of the wall siding; that he accordingly started without any intention of fouling the main line; but that while looking northwards for a signal to stop, he had allowed his engine to approach so near the fouling point that, upon his attention being attracted by a shout, he was unable to stop, though he used every effort to do so, until he had reached the main line, just at the time when a down passenger train, for which he had not observed that the signal was lowered, came up, and a collision ensued; the engine of the passenger train struck the rear of the tender of the goods engine. The trailing wheels of this tender left the rails, and its tank had its end stove in.

The fireman states that though he was looking southwards as they were setting back, he did not observe that the main line down signal was lowered for the coming passenger train, owing to the tank house, and adds that he thought the signal to set back permitted them, if necessary, to foul the main line; that just before the collision he saw the pointsman Cumpsty making signs to them to stop, and heard some one else shouting just before this; and that he barely had time to apply his break before the collision.

The passenger train was the 2.30 p.m. fast train from Manchester to Fleetwood, due at Preston at 3.40. It consisted of engine, tender, two coaches, break-van, eight coaches, break-van, and one other coach, 13 vehicles in all, the front and rear vans, in each of which there was a guard, being coupled with continuous breaks to two and four coaches respectively. The train started punctually, and was approaching Preston at correct time, when the driver, a man of 28 years' service as such, saw, when about 20 yards from the goods-yard facing-points, the points-

man Cumpsty making signals, and almost immediately afterwards the corner of the tender of the goods engine coming in sight from behind the tank house. He states that his speed was at this time about 10 miles an hour, steam having been shut as usual a long way back, and that he had just time to whistle, reverse, and apply steam the reverse way, and his fireman to get his break on, when the collision occurred. The driver and fireman both remained on the engine, and escaped without injury.

The front guard states that he had just time to apply his break before the collision, the force of which broke the break wheel, knocked him backwards and forwards, and stunned him. He received a cut on his forehead. The rear guard, who got his break partly on, was knocked down, stunned, and injured in the head.

The engine of the passenger train had its left cylinder broken, and framing cleared away. It ran forward a few yards with one carriage attached to it, the remainder of the train having stopped short of the tender of the goods engine. No wheels left the rails.

The collision occurred at 3.37.

The pointsman Cumpsty noticed that the goods driver was coming back too fast to stop clear of the fouling point, when the engine was some distance from the main line, which he had no right whatever to enter without first obtaining his (Cumpsty's) permission; that he shouted and signalled to him, and that the driver tried to stop, but in vain; that at this time the engine of the passenger train was close to the home signal, which had been lowered for two or three minutes previously; the speed of the passenger train he estimates at six or seven miles an hour.

A pointsman at German's bridge had lowered the down signals for the passenger train on its being rung on to him by Cumpsty. After this he walked southward to speak to a policeman, and noticing that the goods train was moving backwards much faster than he thought right, he shouted to the driver, who (as well as the fireman) was looking northward, to try and stop him, and then remarked to the policeman that he was sure the fool would be the cause of a collision with the coming passenger train, or words to that effect. There was nothing further he could do, as the passenger train was close at hand.

There was a second pointsman at German's bridge, whose evidence is of a similar character.

This collision was directly due to the incautious proceeding of the London and North-Western Company's goods driver, in having allowed his attention to be so absorbed by the shunting operation in which he was concerned, as to have made him lose sight of the fact that he was fouling the main line without permission. He had hitherto borne an unblemished character.

Had there been a trap siding at the fouling point of the wall siding the collision would have been prevented, and one has since been put in since its occurrence. There are, however, in the Preston yard, plenty of similar points of danger which, when the station is re-arranged, will cease to exist. It is greatly to be regretted that such slow progress is being made in the execution of these new works.

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

I have, &c.,
C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the London and North-Western, Lancashire and Yorkshire, and North Union Railway Companies on the 28th May.
