

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

25 September 1858

BoT Report into Accident at
Preston.

(2 Pages).

should all be so altered as to make the ringing of the bell at the station a subsequent (instead of a simultaneous) operation to the placing of the signal at danger, so that the bell should not be rung by any possibility until the signal is at danger; and thus when a train arrives at the station without the previous ringing of a bell positive proof will be afforded that the signal is not in proper working order.

This will be far better than having a second bell to be rung by the arm of the signal flying up to danger.

I would also recommend, for the consideration of the directors of the North London Railway, that they should direct their attention to the working of their

line by the assistance of the telegraph, as, under proper arrangements, there is no doubt it can be safely worked, also that they should put up clocks at all their stations, which can be seen by their servants while in the execution of their duty on the platforms, and cause registers to be kept at all stations of the arrival or passage of all trains, in order to ensure the proper carrying out of their regulations for the observance of certain prescribed intervals of time between following trains.

I have, &c.

Captain Galton, R.E.
&c. &c.

W. YOLLAND,
Lieut.-Col., R.E.

NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
SIR, *Whitehall, October 22, 1858.*

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 Captain Tyler, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 25th ult. at the Preston station of the North Union Railway.

My Lords direct me to observe, that a somewhat similar accident occurred near the same place in the year 1856, and they trust therefore that this repetition of the accident will cause the North Union Railway Company to take steps to prevent trains from starting from the Preston station until the line is clear at the sidings.

I am, &c.

The Secretary to the
North Union Railway
Company.

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, R.E.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
SIR, *Whitehall, Oct. 13, 1858.*

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the accident, that occurred on the 25th ultimo, near the Preston station of the North Union Railway.

At 260 yards to the south of this station, certain sidings, called the *north* sidings, because they are used for waggons from the north, join the line over which the *up* passenger trains travel in proceeding to the southward; and at 30 yards to the south of the point of danger of this junction, between the goods sidings and the passenger line, there stands a fixed signal, which is always kept "at danger," to warn the passenger trains, and which is "whistled-off" by the passenger drivers as they start from the station.

On the evening in question, the 9.45 P.M. passenger train for London, which left the up-platform at 9.57, twelve minutes late, came into collision with some waggons which were being shunted into the sidings above referred to, with sufficient violence to throw four of the wheels of the engine off the line, to break up three of the waggons, and slightly to injure two out of the fifteen passengers which it contained.

The goods train consisted of an engine and tender, 24 loaded, and 13 empty waggons. It left Carlisle at 12.45, punctually, but it lost a great deal of time in shunting at Lancaster, in consequence of the line having been blocked up at that place by another

shunting engine, and it reached Preston 55 minutes late. It came to a stand on a through line to the west of the up-platform line, and the driver proceeded to shunt 4 loaded and 6 unloaded waggons into the north sidings.

There is an over-bridge immediately to the south of the junction above referred to, between the north sidings and the up-platform line, and beyond this bridge the line curves round to the eastward, so that the goods driver was unable to see anything that happened to the waggons which he was pushing, in obedience to the signals which he received from the pointsman, backwards into the siding. He was, therefore, unaware of the approach of the passenger train until he and his fireman were suddenly knocked backwards into the tender.

The passenger train consisted of an engine and tender, 5 carriages, and a break-van, and, as I have already stated, it was 12 minutes after its time in leaving the station. The driver admits that the signal near the junction with the sidings was at danger, and it is evident, both that he expected that it would be turned off for him to pass, and also that he did not exercise as much caution as he ought to have displayed in approaching this dangerous point.

The evidence given by this man and his fireman, that of the passenger guard and goods breaksmen, and that afforded by the pointsmen and others who were near the spot, is of a conflicting character; but it is clear that the driver was deficient in caution, and that the pointsmen trusted to his being stopped by the fixed signal after he had started from the station, until they saw that a collision was imminent, when they and others made use of their hand lamps and their voices to afford him additional warning.

These pointsmen appear to be in the habit of carrying on their shunting operations when trains may be expected to pass them from the station, and not to have considered that they were doing anything unusual or dangerous on this particular occasion. They have not, indeed, the means of knowing when a train is likely to pass them with any great degree of accuracy; they are only able to surmise, after dark, when they see a neighbouring signal, intended for the East Lancashire line, turned to danger, that a train has arrived from the north, and that it will, probably, before long, come down upon them on its way southward.

I enclose a list showing the arrival and departure at and from Preston of this particular passenger train for the 28 days previous to the collision, by which it will be seen that time was but an uncertain indication of its approach, and that the pointsmen could not have told within 15 or 20 minutes when they ought to expect it. An anomaly of a nature which should not be permitted, will also be observed from the list, in the fact that this train is timed to take its departure for London at 9.45, two minutes earlier

than the period, 9.47, at which it is due to arrive from the north.

I understand that this discrepancy arises from a difference between the bills of the Lancaster and Carlisle, and the London and North Western Companies, and that it is of some standing; but it should not be allowed to exist any longer. It makes an error of some 8 or 9 minutes on the average in the running of the train, inasmuch as the average stoppage of the train at Preston amounts to upwards of $6\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, as taken from these 28 days.

The principal cause of this accident has been a want of caution, and a want of obedience to the fixed signal, on the part of the driver, who is an old servant of the London and North Western Company; but another cause, and one which requires correction, is the want of better arrangements for the working of the junction between the main line and the *north* sidings.

It would be better if the fixed signal were removed from its present position, where it is 30 yards on the wrong side of the first point of danger, and if it were placed considerably nearer to the station platform, and worked by the siding pointsmen with a wire. No train should then be started from the platform until the signal was turned off; and a bell or other means of communication should be provided, with which the pointsmen might be warned to have the road clear, and to turn off the signal, previously to the starting of every train for the south. There would then be less risk of two trains meeting, as they did on the present occasion, whilst passing in opposite directions over this important goods-siding junction.

I have, &c.
 H. W. TYLER,
Captain, R.E.

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

Enclosure.					
Date.	Arrival from Carlisle.		Departure for London.		Detention.
	Proper time.*	Actual time.	Proper time.†	Actual time.	
	h. m.	h. m.	h. m.	h. m.	minutes.
Aug. 24	9 47	9 55	9 43	9 56	0
25		9 53		10 4	11
26		9 55		10 3	8
27		9 46		9 53	7
28		9 52		9 53	3
30		9 49		9 53	5
31		9 47		9 59	3
Sept. 1		10 0		10 11	5
2		9 46		9 40	3
3		10 17		10 24	7
4		9 50		9 55	5
6		9 48		9 54	6
7		10 12		10 17	5
8		9 47		9 52	5
9		10 5		10 10	5
10		10 21		10 23	5
11		9 59		10 3	4
13		9 48		9 53	5
14		9 47		9 52	5
15		9 46		9 52	4
16		9 55		10 0	5
17		10 20		10 57	28
18		9 49		9 55	6
20		9 48		9 53	5
21		10 4		10 9	5
22		10 22		10 50	8
23		10 1		10 9	8
24		10 25		10 46	21
					23)187
					6.67

* By London and Carlisle bills.

† By London and North Western bills.

*Lessees of the North Union Railway,
 Secretary's Office,
 Preston, Oct. 29, 1858.*

SIR, YOUR communication of the 22d instant, together with the copy of Captain Tyler's report of his inquiry into the circumstances attending the slight collision within the limits of the Preston station on the 25th September, were under consideration of the committee of management of this line of railway at their meeting yesterday.

I am directed to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that the directors have determined to adopt the suggestion of Captain Tyler, R.E., in regard to the interchange of communication by signal between the passenger platform and the siding points abreast of the goods station, previously to the starting of any train from the passenger platform for the south.

I have, &c.
 RICH. DAWLINGS,
Secretary.

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

OXFORD, WORCESTER, AND WOLVERHAMPTON RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
 Whitehall, Oct. 16, 1858.*

SIR, In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the accident that occurred on the 23d August, between the Round Oak and Brettel Lane stations of the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton Railway. These two stations are situated, respectively, at $2\frac{1}{4}$, and 4 miles to the south of Dudley, and at 25, and $23\frac{1}{4}$ miles to the north of Worcester. The line runs between them, for a mile and a quarter, over a series of curves on which the view is much obstructed, and on a gradient of 1 in 75.18 falling towards the south.

On the day in question, an excursion train returning from Worcester to Wolverhampton reached Round Oak at 10 minutes past 8. It was composed of two engines and tenders, 28 carriages, and 2 break-vans,

one of these latter having been placed immediately behind the engine, and the other at the rear of the train. Shortly after it arrived at this station, the couplings gave way near the middle of the train, and 17 carriages, containing about 450 passengers, with a van behind them, began to run back down the incline towards Brettel Lane.

A second train, also full of excursionists, was following the first one, with an interval of 11 or 12 minutes between them; and the loose carriages ran back upon the second train with great violence. The engine in front of the second train, which lost its funnel and its buffers, was so little injured in other respects as to be able afterwards to proceed on its journey; but the three last vehicles of the first train were broken all to pieces; and the most dreadful consequences resulted to the passengers, 14 of them having lost their lives, fifty others having been more or less severely injured, and upwards of 170 persons, altogether, having applied for compensation, on account of injury to their persons or their clothes. I append