

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

17 July 1874

BoT Report into Accident at
Waterloo.

(2 Pages).

failed to stop at the repeater of this signal, but was running at a speed of at least ten miles an hour, when he came into collision with the waggons 210 yards inside it. The probability is that it was only upon seeing the waggons in his path that he realised the fact that he had to stop.

There was doubtless also want of promptitude in the guard in applying the powerful breaks under his control; had he done so upon first catching sight even of the repeater of the distant-signal the train might have been stopped before reaching the waggons. The rebound of the train and the snapping of the coupling between the engine and first carriage lead to the inference that the breaks could not have been had on when the collision occurred.

The signaller at Halifax station acted most improperly in allowing a train to commence shunting on the up main line only eight minutes before an up express train was due. Whatever the exigencies of the traffic there can be no excuse for such a rash proceeding.

Improvements are now fast approaching completion at Halifax station which will make the recurrence of a similar collision to the present very improbable. The points and signals at the Bradford end of the station are all being concentrated and interlocked in a raised cabin, from which an up distant-signal will be carried through to the Bradford side of the tunnel, and "line clear" to the Bradford end of the tunnel will not be given while anything is occupying the up line at or near the cabin.

In conjunction with these improvements it is greatly to be desired that arrangements should be made to avoid the necessity of the constant use of the main lines for shunting purposes. There is, I understand, a mole by which the increased siding accommodation can be obtained, and no unnecessary time should be lost in making it available.

I have, &c.,

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

C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Six,

Liverpool, August 1st 1874.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 23rd of July, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the accident which occurred on the 17th of July near the Waterloo station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case, the 10.0 p.m. passenger train from Crosby for Liverpool came into collision with the 10.10 p.m. goods train (which had been sent away in front of it) from Crosby for Liverpool, about 230 yards within the distant-signal, which is 466 yards from the end of the Waterloo passenger-platform. Two passengers have complained of injury.

The Waterloo station is about five miles on the north of Liverpool, and the Crosby station is about three-quarters of a mile further northward. The Waterloo station is protected by a home-signal 96 yards on the north of the passenger-platform, and by a distant-signal 370 yards further towards Crosby. These signals are both visible in clear weather from the Crosby station, the line being quite straight between the two stations. This portion of the line is not yet worked on the block-system, but there is an electric communication between the Crosby and Waterloo stations, used for announcing the departure of trains in either direction.

The 10.0 p.m. passenger train left Crosby at 10.1 p.m., one minute late, consisting of a tank-engine, nine passenger-carriages, and a break-van, of which five were coupled together with Fay's continuous break, three were without breaks, and the other was a carriage with a break-compartment, and a break attached to it. The train had only arrived at Crosby from Liverpool four minutes previously, and it returned (at 10.1) towards Liverpool, as soon as the engine had been got round it. In running towards Crosby from Liverpool the engine-driver met a goods train on its way from Crosby for Liverpool, and he believes about half-way between Waterloo and Crosby. Before leaving Crosby at 10.1 he looked up towards the distant-signal from Waterloo, and he noticed that it was at danger, but he did not then see the goods train. He approached the distant-signal at a speed which he believes to have been seven or eight miles an hour, which the fireman believes to have been 10 miles an hour, which the head-guard states was 22 miles an hour, and which the under-guard states was 15 miles an hour. When he (the driver) was within about 200 yards of the distant-signal he saw the red lights at the tail of the goods train, and some person with a hand-lamp. He at once reversed his engine, and whistled for the breaks two or three times, but the train did not

slacken speed as it ought to have done. He is confident that the breaks were not applied on the carriages. He was then unable to bring his train to a stand before it struck the van at the tail of the goods train, at a speed of perhaps five miles an hour.

The fireman states that the steam was shut off and the engine reversed outside of the distant-signal, but he cannot say how far outside of it, and that he applied the tender-break when the train was outside of the distant-signal.

The head-guard rode in the break-van next behind the engine, and the under-guard was riding with him, which he admits was against his rules. He has been in charge of the same 9.30 p.m. train from Liverpool for Crosby one week in every four since last May. He has frequently had an under-guard with him, but has more frequently gone without an under-guard, because the under-guard did not return from other duties in time. He states that the under-guard went on this occasion in his own van to Crosby, but got into his (the head-guard's) van on leaving Crosby, and they were both in the same van at the time of the collision. The head-guard heard the break-whistle, but he did not see any signal, nor did he see the goods train; he was entering the time in his book when he heard the break-whistle. He jumped up from the floor of his van, but is not sure whether he applied the break or not, his head having been knocked through the window; he knew nothing further until he found himself on the bank after the collision.

The under-guard heard the break-whistle whilst standing on the floor of the head-guard's van eating his "luncheon." He did not see the signal, or the lights at the tail of the goods train. He was stunned at the moment, but got up again, and ran back and lighted the lamp at the tail of the train, which had been knocked out by the shock of the collision. The under-guard attempts to excuse himself for being in the front van, by saying that he commenced locking the doors from the tail of the train, and arrived at the front van just at the time when the train was about to start. He jumped into it, and intended to ride in it to Waterloo, and there to join his own break-carriage again. The head-guard and the under-guard both state that this has been a frequent practice at Crosby.

There were three passengers riding in the head-guard's van besides himself and the under-guard; they were John Pally, engine-driver in the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's service, a person whose name is unknown, and a Mr. Wilson, of Tatton Hall near Chester, who has sent in a claim for injury. The head-guard says that it is a common practice for passengers to ride in his van, and that they continually

jump into it just as the trains are starting. He knows this to be against orders, but states that he cannot stop it. He has had a printed notice prohibiting the practice.

The passenger-engine was thrown off the rails with all its wheels, and the break-van with one pair of wheels. Including the damage to this break-van, to seven goods waggons, and to the engine, the total expense in repairing the rolling-stock is stated to have been under 100l.

The goods train, due as above stated to leave Crosby at 10.10 p.m., started from that station at 9.55 p.m., consisting of an engine and tender, 17 empty waggons, and a break-van. The engine-driver works the same goods train one week in every seven, and has done so for upwards of five years. During that period he has made a practice of starting in the same way before his time from Crosby as often as he was able to do so, in order to reach Sandhills before the East Lancashire goods train, timed to arrive there about 10.30 p.m. His object in attempting to reach Sandhills before that train, is that he may occupy the lines and sidings at that station, and complete his shunting before its arrival. Otherwise, if the East Lancashire train reaches Sandhills first, he is delayed outside of that station until the East Lancashire train has finished its shunting. The goods train, then, having thus left Crosby before the passenger train, instead of following it, as it was timed to do, was not due in the ordinary course to stop at Waterloo at all; and the engine-driver had never previously stopped at Waterloo with it to leave a waggon. On this occasion, a waggon was attached to his train at Crosby for Waterloo, and in place of taking it forward to Sandhills, and then bringing it back to Waterloo, as he had previously been accustomed to do, he stopped at Waterloo, in consequence of orders which he received from the guard. This waggon for Waterloo was attached in front of the engine at Crosby, and the engine pushed it before it to Waterloo. On approaching Waterloo the head-guard, who rode on the waggon in front of the engine, dropped off that waggon, and unhooked the engine from the train, in order that the engine might push the one waggon before it through the station, draw it back over the cross-over-road at the south of the station, and then push it, by means of a through-crossing, into a siding on the east of the main line and the south of the station. The engine-driver intended, when he first stopped his train so far to the north of the station, to have performed the same operation with a view to placing the waggon in the siding through a cross-over-road and a through crossing on the north of the station; but he was unable to do so, because the points at the north of the station were locked, and no one was there to unlock them. He was then beckoned forward by the signalman in the cabin, to run through and put his waggon into the siding on the south of the station. The engine-driver, after he had placed the waggon in the siding, returned to the goods train, to be coupled to it, and to take it forward to Sandhills. In approaching the goods train with this object, he appears to have touched the leading waggon, for the purpose of being coupled up to it, just as the passenger train ran into the break-van at the tail of it. The head-guard was dragged along, but he saved himself from falling by catching hold of the buffer-plank. He was slightly injured in the back, and was off duty for a few days.

The under-guard had been riding in the van at the tail of the goods train, but was standing on the step of the van when he saw the passenger train leave Crosby. He states that he watched the passenger train approach the distant-signal, and noticed, further, that the engine-driver neither shut off his steam nor whistled before he passed the distant-signal. He is confident that the engine-driver had not passed the distant-signal when he left his van to run towards

him, and it was because he did not whistle in approaching the distant-signal that he ran towards him. He ran, he says, about 200 yards, but did not reach the distant-signal before the passenger train passed him, and it was then going, he thought, at the ordinary speed of trains running between station and station; but he cannot give any idea in figures of what that speed might be. The engine-driver did not appear to him to see anything until he caught sight of his (the guard's) hand-lamp. He does not exactly understand what the meaning of shutting off steam is, and therefore his statement as to whether the steam was or was not shut off when the driver was approaching the distant-signal cannot be relied on.

Conclusion.

This collision has evidently been caused, partly by a want of caution on the part of the engine-driver, Pearson, of the passenger train, in not keeping a good look-out; partly in consequence of the goods train, which ought to have followed him, being started in front of him, and having been exceptionally stopped, where he did not expect to find it, between the distant-signal and the home-signal of the Waterloo station; and partly by a want of attention on the part of the guards of the passenger-train, who were, contrary to their instructions, riding in the same break-van, together with three passengers, and who apparently did not apply their brakes on hearing the whistle of the engine-driver.

The engine-driver, Pearson, has been employed in that capacity for 23 years in this Company's service, and has been guilty of no more than one slight irregularity previously during that time.

The goods-guard who ordered the engine-driver of the goods train to stop at Waterloo was only doing duty for the third day with that train as head-guard. Inasmuch as they were running before the passenger train instead of behind it, it would have been better if they had as usual taken the waggon forward to Sandhills, and taken it back to Waterloo, especially as they were not timed to stop at Waterloo on that journey.

No reasonable excuse can be offered for the misconduct of the guards of the passenger train, either for allowing the passengers to travel with them in the front van, or for riding together in the front van, when one of them ought to have been in the hind break-carriage; or for not at once applying the brake when the engine-driver whistled for it.

The question has been raised of working the block-system on this section of the line, and it is proposed to carry it out as soon as other more important sections of the line have been brought under that system.

The use of the block-system might, it is true, have prevented this collision from occurring; but, on the other hand, it is right to add, that unless engine-drivers keep a better look-out than did the engine-driver of the passenger train on this occasion, and unless guards are more attentive to the performance of their duties, no system can possibly be contrived which will provide for the safety of railway traffic.

The engine-driver in this case started in full view of a distant-signal at danger, and of three red lights on a goods train within half a mile of him on a straight line; and the guards appear to have been equally inattentive.

With reference to the assertion that is frequently made, that engine-drivers and guards are liable to become less cautious and less attentive in working under a block-system, in consequence of the extra security that it affords, it may be observed that these men, working without the block-system, were certainly not on this, as on many other occasions, made more cautious or more attentive by the absence of it.

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

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