

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

11 October 1874

BoT Report into Accident at
Accrington.

(2 Pages).

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Sir, *Accrington, 30th 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 accident which occurred on the 25th September, at the Accrington station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case, as the 6.15 p.m. passenger train from Manchester for Accrington and Colne was passing through the Accrington station, the engine left the rails at a pair of facing-points opposite the passenger platform.

Four passengers have complained of injury. None of the servants of the Company were injured.

There is a signal-cabin at the south end of the Accrington station, near the end of the passenger platform; and 90 yards from this cabin, opposite the platform, and on a line second from it, is a pair of facing-points through which all trains from Manchester running in from the ticket-platform to the passenger-platform pass. These points are worked from the above signal-cabin, and are interlocked with the arrival signals, the apparatus having been constructed by Messrs. Yardley & Co. of Manchester.

The 6.15 p.m. train from Manchester reached the ticket-platform in the ordinary way, consisting of an engine and tender, six passenger carriages, and a

break-van. After leaving the ticket-platform, the engine-driver, Samuel Ashton, proceeded as usual towards the station-platform; and, in passing through the facing-points above referred to, at a speed of four or five miles an hour, in the dark, he felt the leading wheels of his engine strike the points. His engine immediately left the rails with all its wheels, and came to a stand in a little over 20 yards. The carriage next behind the tender was also thrown off the rails, but without passing through the points.

On examination of the points and their connexions after the accident, it was found that the rod by means of which they were worked from the cabin had got off the pulleys for some little distance, and across another rod next to it, employed for working another pair of points. It is not known in what way this rod had been lifted out of its pulleys, but it was supposed that something must have struck it, and this idea was confirmed by its appearance. To prevent the risk of such an accident again occurring it is desirable that the rod should be fastened down over the pulleys, as is commonly done with point-connections of more recent construction.

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

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 27th November.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Sir, *Accrington, 30th 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 accident that occurred on the 11th inst., at the Accrington station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case, seven carriages and a van, which were being run down from opposite to the ticket-platform, on the south of the Accrington station, to a line on the east of the passenger-platform at that station, and were not stopped in sufficient time, came into collision with an engine and some carriages which were standing on that line, and to which they were about to be attached.

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

The Accrington station is approached from the direction of Manchester on a falling gradient of 1 in 40, on which the ticket-platform, 150 yards from the passenger-platform, is situated. It has been for 20 years the practice, when trains arrive at this ticket-platform, to divide them, whether they come from Manchester on the south, or from Colne on the north, and to run separate portions of them forward, or back, as the case may be, to the different sides of the passenger-platform by the force of gravity. When a train is so divided, the engine and some of the carriages run to one side of the platform, and the remainder of the vehicles run to the other side of the platform, according to their respective destinations. Those carriages which are detached from the engine are left under the charge and control of the guard, whose duty it is to employ the breaks at his disposal, as far as may be sufficient to bring them to a stand in their proper positions at the passenger-platform.

On the day in question, the 6.25 p.m. passenger train from Colne, to be divided at Accrington, one part for Manchester, and the other part for Preston, left Colne punctually, and reached Accrington about

20 minutes late. It ran through the Accrington station in the usual way, to the ticket-platform on the south of it. The under-guard, Joseph Holding, applied his break as soon as the train came to a stand; and the train was divided into two parts, the Preston portion, consisting of seven carriages and a van, having been uncoupled from the remainder by a porter. As soon as the train was thus divided, this guard (Holding) released his break, and allowed his portion (for Preston) to run back in the ordinary manner towards the passenger-platform. Holding was riding in a break-van, with three carriages on the north of him, and four carriages on the south of him; and three of the carriages on the south of him were connected with his van by continuous breaks, which had been working efficiently up to the time of the accident. There were three passengers and a goods guard riding in the break-van with him, because they had been "short of room" in the train from Colne, which was composed of 11 carriages and two vans. He asked for extra carriages at Colne, but was informed that there were none available.

Holding states that after first slackening off the break, and allowing the carriages to run back, he at once applied the break again, and continued to do so as his vehicles descended towards the station; but he felt them gaining upon him, and in spite of his applying the break as hard as he could, in which he was assisted by Eastwood, the goods guard riding with him in the van, he was unable to stop them. They therefore came into collision, at a speed of about five miles an hour, with an engine, tender, six carriages, and a break-van, which were standing on the east platform-line, waiting for these other vehicles to be attached to them before starting for Preston. Holding has been 16 years in the service of the company, and has been a guard on this section of the line for two years and nine months. During that period he has been in the habit of performing the same duty under similar circumstances once or twice a day; and the same

operation is, it appears, performed at the station 28 times a day, and has been so for many years. The weather was very bad on this particular night, and Holding must, apparently, have allowed the vehicles to gain a little too much speed before he applied the breaks.

The accident was thus occasioned by a want of sufficient care on the part of the guard in not applying his break so soon or so firmly as he ought to have done as his vehicles ran back down a gradient of 1 in 40 for about 100 yards, to a portion of nearly level line, combined with the fact that the rails were in a slippery condition, and the night was a very bad one. The guard, on measuring the distance from the point at which his vehicles started to the point at which the collision occurred, found it to be 180 yards.

I learn that there have been several accidents of

the same description, though not attended by serious results, on previous occasions, within the last 20 years, in working in a similar manner. This mode of working cannot be considered satisfactory. It need not be so much resorted to; but it can hardly be altogether avoided as long as the station remains in its present condition. The true remedy that is required, in order that the mode of working may be improved, is a general re-arrangement of the station, which would entail much expense, but which is urgently required for other reasons as well as with a view to the prevention of accidents of this description.

I have, &c.,

H. W. TYLER.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 27th November.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

SIR, *Plymouth, 21st November 1874.*

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 29th ult., the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended a collision that occurred on the 24th ultimo, between a passenger train and a coal train, near Miles Platting station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, when ten passengers are stated to have been injured, but most of the injuries received are believed to be slight.

The main line of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway between Victoria station, Manchester, and Miles Platting station, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles apart, is worked, with the assistance of the electric telegraph, on the absolute block system; but as there are extensive sidings and loop lines at Miles Platting, the working on this system is suspended between Miles Platting junction signal box and the Brewery siding signal box, which is about 687 yards to the east of the former. There are also advance or starting signals at the eastern end of the Miles Platting station down platform, worked from the Miles Platting junction signal box, and distant 210 yards from it; and 47 yards beyond the down starting signals, there is a down distant-signal worked from the Brewery siding signal box, besides two down home-signals at the Brewery siding signal box, one of which is for the main down line (the upper), and the other for the down loop line, which lies on the north side of the main down line, and is entered by a pair of facing-points on the main down line, situated opposite to the Miles Platting station down starting signals.

On the evening in question, an engine and tender, with 14 loaded waggons, reached Miles Platting junction by the branch up line from Ardwick, and after waiting some short time, this train was backed across to and then pushed along the main down line past the Miles Platting starting signals, and stopped on the main down line between the down distant and down home-signals worked from the Brewery siding signal box; the engine and tender which had brought the train from Ardwick, and had pushed it back along the main down line, standing 180 yards inside or east of the down distant-signal. This train would have passed along the down loop line, and thence been shunted into the down sidings, if the down loop line had not at the time been occupied by a special goods train for Normanton, which was being marshalled on the down loop line and adjacent sidings.

This Ardwick goods train was signalled forward to the Brewery siding signal box at 5h. 45m. p.m., and when it stopped on the main down line, it was protected by the Brewery siding down distant-signal, and

by a red light on a tail lamp belonging to the guard of the train, which had been placed on the tender so as to show a danger-signal towards Miles Platting station, the tender being behind the engine.

The 5.45 p.m. down passenger train from Victoria station to Oldham and Rochdale consisted of a tank-engine and six carriages. It reached Miles Platting station at 5.52 p.m., and left at 5.54, the signalman on duty in the junction signal box taking off the down main line starting signal for the train to proceed, observing, at the same time, that the Brewery siding down main line distant-signal was on at "danger" against this train.

The driver of this passenger train had, in the first instance, stated that all the down-signals were off for him to proceed; but, when questioned, he informed me that the Brewery siding down main line distant-signal was on at "danger," but that he could not see it, nor the light on the tender of the Ardwick goods train, until he got to within 20 yards of the distant-signal, on account of steam from the engine, and from a pilot engine which was on the up loop line. Subsequently, he declared, contradicting what he had previously stated, that the Brewery siding main line down distant-signal was on, and he saw it before he started from Miles Platting station, but that the down home-signal was off, and he took it to be a signal for him to proceed, and that he was not running more than five miles an hour when the collision took place, about 5.55 p.m.; his engine was thrown off the rails, and had both buffers broken, while the other engine was slightly damaged.

There is no doubt that the main line down home-signal was taken off, but not until after the collision had actually taken place,—and then it was taken off, as a signal to another pilot-engine which had come off the down loop line at the Brewery siding junction, and had then been backed along the down main line to hook on to the Ardwick goods waggons, and haul them ahead for the purpose of shunting them into the down sidings.

The collision was undoubtedly caused by the neglect of the driver of the passenger train engine in not keeping a proper look out ahead, and in running past the distant-signal standing at "danger" without apparently taking any notice of it; but it seems that this distant-signal, placed only 47 yards beyond the Miles Platting down starting signals, is constantly passed by trains whilst standing at "danger," and the Company's regulations are indefinite, and, to a certain extent, sanction the practice.

So long as railway companies by their regulations, and the officers of those companies by supporting these