

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

2 February 1874

BoT Report into Accident at
Accrington.

(2 Pages).

undue risk, and especially where shunting-sidings are interposed between the block-cabins, and when the security of the traffic depends solely upon a certain number of beats on a gong, as between a shunting-porter and a signalman, at a time when it is barely possible to shunt a goods train out of the way of a passenger train due, or nearly due, to pass at 50 or 60 miles an hour. Safety is certainly better secured with the block-system than without it; and for any companies who are unable to use it under safe conditions, there appears to be only one alternative left, namely, as their traffic increases, to provide and to run their fast and their slow traffic on separate lines of rails. What may be called the exigencies of the traffic were apparent in this case from the evidence of the men concerned. The signalman at Slough was naturally unwilling further to detain the Bristol goods train, which was already 3 hours and 50 minutes late; and he would by doing so have got into difficulties, as already explained, with another goods train, for which an engine was waiting, or with other following passenger trains. The signalman at Langley, knowing how closely the Exeter train would be following the Bristol train, actually telegraphed back to ask if he should shunt it; and was informed in reply that he could not do so, because it was a broad-gauge train. The signalman at West Drayton would have shunted it back into the Uxbridge branch if he had not for the same reason been prevented from doing so. The Great Western

Company have thus, in their present transition state, the further difficulty to contend with of working two gauges. A broad-gauge goods train is obliged to go, after leaving Slough, to a greater distance for refuge than a narrow-gauge goods train.

The considerations, therefore, to which this collision principally lead, are,—(1) that gong-levers should not be left unlocked or unpadlocked at points where signalmen are not permanently stationed; (2) that it is desirable, in working under any system, and especially in a thick fog, that more margin should be preserved between a goods train sent to shunt and an express passenger train travelling at the highest speed; (3) that it is not wise to allow an express train to run at the highest speed through a thick fog; and (4) that on lines worked under the block-system, when connections with the main line are interposed, for shunting-sidings or otherwise, between the block-cabins, are unprotected by signals, are not under the charge of regular signalmen, and are worked by shunting-porters, carrying a key from the block-cabin for the purpose, the line should not be considered clear until the shunting porter has, after making all safe, returned the key to the signalman who has entrusted it to him.

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 4th March.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Sir, *Chester, 7th March 1874.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 12th ultimo, 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 collision that occurred on the 2nd ultimo at Accrington station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Four passengers are reported to have been hurt, but their injuries are believed to be very slight.

On the day in question, the passenger train, which was timed to leave Preston at 9.25 p.m., consisted of an engine and tender, a horse-box, a third-class carriage, a composite, a first-class carriage, and a guard's van, with a guard in charge. The coaches were coupled together in the order that they are given, and the three last vehicles were provided with continuous breaks.

This train arrived at Accrington at its proper time, 10.20 p.m. As soon as the passengers had alighted and the station work was completed, the foreman in charge rang the bell for the passenger train to proceed forward on its journey, and the engine-driver started the train, without getting the signal from the signalman, who is posted in the junction-cabin at the north end of the station.

The line from Colne to Preston is joined by the line from Manchester at the north end of Accrington, which is a one-sided station. The signalman in charge of the junction points and signals is posted in a raised cabin opposite to the junction points, which are arranged on the locking principle.

On the night in question, while the passenger train was standing in Accrington station, the signalman on duty in the junction cabin had lowered the junction-signals for a goods train, that was coming from Colne, to pass towards Preston. This goods train consisted

of an engine and tender, eighteen loaded waggons with one break-van. There was a breakman in front and another in rear of the waggons. As the goods train was running through the junction at the north end of Accrington station, at a speed of about eight miles an hour, the engine of the train was run into by the engine of the passenger train which had just started from Accrington station. The leading wheels of the engine of the passenger train were thrown off the rails, and the engine and tender were slightly damaged, but no vehicles of the passenger train were injured or left the rails. The engine of the goods train did not leave the rails, but it was somewhat damaged. The break-van and the waggon next to the goods engine were thrown off the rails and damaged, and two other waggons of the goods train had their leading wheels thrown off the rails.

The accident was caused by the engine-driver of the passenger train starting his train from Accrington station while the junction-signal for the line on which he was travelling was at danger. The position of the engine of the passenger train, while it had been standing at Accrington station, was about 14 yards south of the fouling points of the junction crossing, and not more than 35 yards from the junction signalman's hut and the junction-signals. The engine-driver of the passenger train excused himself for having started his train before the junction-signal was lowered, by stating that he could not see the signal from the place where he stood on his engine. This is the case, owing to the station having been improved, and the platform having been roofed over, since the junction-signals were put up. The new roof interferes with the view of the junction-signal from an engine standing at the station platform; but this defect cannot excuse the driver in the present instance, as there is an indicator-signal on the facing points through

which he had to pass, which was plainly visible from where he was standing. This signal stood against him, and the engine of the goods train which he ran into must have been distinctly visible at the time that he started the passenger train. This man's neglect must therefore be attributed to carelessness, or absence of mind at the time that he started the passenger train, and to his total forgetfulness in not looking for the necessary signals.

It would be desirable that the junction signal-post at Accrington should be moved, so that the view should not be interfered with by the station buildings.

Accrington has the great defect of being a one-sided station; consequently, all trains from Preston and from Manchester have to be backed from the down to the up-line to reach the station platform; and these trains, when starting for Colne and the North, have to run through facing-points, and re-cross from the up to the down line by a cross-over road at the north side of the station.

I have, &c.,
 F. H. RICH,
 Colonel R.E.
 The Secretary,
 (Railway Department),
 Board of Trade.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 8th April.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

SIR, *Queen's Hotel, Chester, 7th March 1874.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 12th ultimo, 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 collision that occurred on the 4th ultimo at Bury station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

The passenger train from Manchester, which is due at Bury (Lancashire and Yorkshire) station at 9.10 a.m., ran into a goods train which was standing on the line at the east end of the station. Eleven passengers are reported to have been shaken, and the guard of the passenger train was also slightly shaken.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company have two stations at Bury. They are distinguished as Bury station, Lancashire and Yorkshire, and Bury station, East Lancashire.

There are four lines of rails through Bury (Lancashire and Yorkshire) station. The loop lines which make up the four lines commence at the east junction cabin, which is about 400 yards to the east of the passenger station, and they extend to a junction cabin at the west end of the yard, which is called the west cabin.

A branch to the Bury station on the East Lancashire Railway, joins the main lines to Bolton, opposite to the west junction cabin. The points and signals in both the east and west cabins are arranged on the locking principle, and the facing points are provided with locking bars.

The sections of railway to the east and west of Bury (Lancashire and Yorkshire) station are worked on the block system, but the railway through the station and goods yard, which is a little over a quarter of a mile long, is not worked on the block. In clear weather there is an uninterrupted view from one end of the station yard to the other, and engine-drivers have a clear view of the signals and of any trains that may be on the railway between the east and west cabins.

The down home-signal in the east cabin serves as the down distant-signal for the west cabin, and the up home-signal in the west cabin serves as an up distant-signal from the east cabin. These signals are slotted, so that it requires both signalmen to place them at all right, but the signalman in either cabin can place them at danger.

On the day in question a goods train, which consisted of an engine and tender, 26 waggons, and a break-van, arrived at Bury (Lancashire and Yorkshire) station at 9.0 a.m. This train was two hours late in consequence of its having been delayed on the road by the fog. It was allowed to pass the east cabin as the passenger line was clear, but it was detained at the east end of the station, as the road was not clear for

it to go forward. The goods train had been turned on to the passenger line, as the goods line was occupied at the time with another goods train which had arrived there about three minutes before.

The 8.35 p.m. passenger train from Manchester consisted of an engine and tender, four carriages, and a break-van, with a guard in charge. Three carriages of the train were coupled to the break-van with continuous breaks.

This train left Manchester one minute late, and it arrived at and passed the Bury east cabin at 9.11 a.m. The signalman on duty there had lowered his distant-signal for the passenger train to approach and he had pulled over the lever of the home-signal with the intention of lowering it, but this signal remained at danger, as the man in the west cabin, who has also got control of it, did not pull the lever in his cabin which would have lowered it, as the line at Bury station was blocked with the goods train. The passenger train passed the east cabin at a speed which is stated to have been about seven or eight miles an hour. The engine-driver reversed his engine, whistled for the guard's breaks, and applied contrary steam as soon as he noticed the home-signal at the east cabin to be at danger; but he could not stop his train before his engine ran into the van at the tail of the goods train, which was standing about 150 yards inside the east junction home-signal. The speed of the passenger train at the time of collision is reported to have been reduced to about four miles an hour. No part of the passenger train left the rails, but the engine and two of the carriages were slightly damaged. The guard's van at the tail of the goods train was considerably damaged, and one waggon of the goods train, which was about the fourth from the van, was thrown off the rails. The guard of the goods train jumped out of his van just before the collision occurred.

The signalman on duty in the east cabin, when he lowered his signal for the passenger train to approach, was under the impression that the goods train, which had passed his cabin about 11 minutes before, had gone forward to Preston. This man stated that he saw the goods train pull up immediately after it passed his cabin, but that on looking for it, before he lowered his signal for the passenger train, he could not see it, and he thought that it had gone forward.

The signalman stationed in the east cabin has a bell communication to the west cabin, by which means he notifies the man on duty in the west cabin, when trains pass the east cabin going westward; but the man in the west cabin does not communicate to the east cabin when these trains have passed the west cabin and gone forward, as under ordinary circumstances the whole of the line between the two cabins is distinctly visible. On the day