

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

2 September 1874

BoT Report into Accident at
Accrington.

(2 Pages).

signal, and perhaps the repeating-signal, before it was placed at "danger," and that having found the distant-signal at "all right" he assumed that the road was clear up to the station. He could have seen the home-signal, which was at "danger," for 300 yards before he reached it, and for about 230 yards before he reached the place where he struck the engine of the train from Birmingham; and if he had been approaching the station at a speed of about six miles an hour, as he stated that he was, he might have stopped his train before reaching the crossing where his engine struck the engine of the train from Birmingham. This man has been 23 years in the company's service, and 15 years of that time he has been a driver. He bears a good character.

The guard of the train from Gloucester did not see the signals, and did not apply his break until after he passed the stop-signal, when his train was about 100 yards from the point of the collision. This man stated that he was busy sorting the parcels at the time, and consequently could not look out for the signals.

Although the accident was caused by the neglect of the company's servants, I think it right to remark that the public travelling on this railway are subjected to unnecessary danger, in consequence of the very inadequate accommodation at Barrs Court station, which is a one-sided station, and totally unfit from its size and accommodation for the traffic which is brought to it.

The station should be re-arranged, and the points and signals should be interlocked and worked from proper cabins.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the London and North-western and the Great Western Railway Companies on the 30th October.

The passenger train was not provided with a sufficient amount of break-power, as it had only one break-van to nine vehicles, and this break-van was comparatively inefficient, as the guard in charge stated that he was so occupied with parcels that he could not look after his train, or even keep a look out for signals when approaching a crowded and dangerous station like Hereford.

I consider that all trains should have at least one guard, whose sole duty should be to look after the safety of the train.

I informed the Mayor of Hereford of the time of my inquiry, and that gentleman and some members of the Corporation, as well as the Clerk of the Peace, met me at the station and again called my attention to the very defective and insufficient accommodation at Barrs Court station. The inconvenience and insufficiency of the station accommodation at Hereford was reported on by me in December 1872.

The company's rule about keeping the lines clear for ten minutes before passenger trains are due is a dead letter. In the present case the train was being shunted across the passenger lines six or seven minutes after the passenger train was due, and the people who are charged with working the station state that it is impossible to carry out the rule with the present accommodation and traffic.

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

I have, &c.,
F. H. RICH,
Colonel R.E.

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 2nd September at the Accrington station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

On this occasion, a corpse-van, which had been started out of a siding, and had fouled the passenger line leading from Preston to Colne, was run into by a passenger train arriving at Accrington on that line from Preston.

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

The two passenger lines between Colne and Preston run past the Accrington station on the west of the passenger-platform on a curve; and there are three sidings, of which two are through-sidings, and one has a blind end, on the west of these lines. The two through-sidings join the passenger line from Colne at the north end of the passenger-platform, and it was at this junction, which is also close to the junction of the line from Preston to Colne with the line from Manchester to Colne, that this collision occurred.

The train from Preston for Colne started punctually, or nearly so, at 7.40 p.m., consisting of an engine and tender, six carriages, and two vans; and it approached Accrington about 8.50 p.m.

The engine-driver, John Bentham, states that he brought his train nearly to a stand, in obedience to signals, about 250 yards from the siding-junction above referred to. The signals having been lowered, the engine-driver re-applied his steam, and proceeded forward to the station at a speed of about 8 miles an hour. In approaching the junction, he heard a whistle from an engine standing at the station-platform. He shut off his steam, and in another moment saw a van immediately in front of him on the line on which he was travelling. His engine immediately afterwards struck this van, threw it off to the left, broke it to pieces, and knocked

it through the fence at the side of the line. His engine, which was not much damaged, left the rails with all its wheels, as well as the tender, and the carriage next behind the tender with its leading wheels. It was a dark night, and it was impossible for the engine-driver to see the van until he was within a few yards of it. The fireman did not see it until the engine struck it.

The guard, John Eastwood, was riding in a break-van in the middle of the train. He heard a whistle from an engine which he thought was not his own, and immediately afterwards he heard a whistle from his own engine. He applied his break, and found his train come quickly to a stand; but he did not feel any shock from the collision, or know, until he went to inquire, that anything of the sort had happened.

Engine-driver Benjamin Kershaw brought his engine out of the shed at Accrington about 8.20 p.m.; and, after drawing up to the station-platform, backed into the siding as usual, for the purpose of standing in the siding until the Manchester train arrived at the platform. In going into the siding, he did not, as far as he is aware, push back the stop-block, or feel anything to indicate that he had pushed it back. He went in with the funnel of his engine first, and found some vehicles in the siding. His engine-buffers touched the buffers of the nearest vehicle, but he did not push the vehicles any further up the siding. There was room for his engine and tender to stand clear of the main line in the siding without pushing those vehicles. After standing in the siding for about 20 minutes, during which time the Manchester train arrived, he left the siding again in accordance with the instructions of the signalman, who lowered the signal for the purpose, and he joined the Manchester train at the platform. Just as he was joining his own train, he saw the Preston train approaching. He noticed that the corpse-van followed his engine out of the siding; and, seeing the Preston train about to strike it, he opened his whistle to warn the engine-

driver of that train. Immediately afterwards the collision occurred.

The foreman-porter at the Accrington station, Edward Barber, states that the corpse-van arrived at the station with a train about 7.30 p.m., and that, assisted by other porters, he pushed it back into the siding in question. He saw a porter named Alexander turn the stop-block across the siding to keep the corpse-van in. He saw the Manchester train arrive at the platform about 8.50 p.m., but he did not see the engine intended to take that train forward go into the siding; nor did he see that engine leaving the siding to join its train, because he was engaged in calling out on the platform, "Change here for Blackburn and Preston, right for Burnley and Colne." Just as the Manchester portion of the train was starting, he caught sight of the Preston train coming in, and in the act of striking the corpse-van. He could only suppose that the corpse-van had escaped from the siding because the engine must have pushed the stop-block open in going into the siding.

This accident would appear to have been occasioned by the escape of the corpse-van from the siding in consequence of the engine of the Manchester train, in going into the siding in the usual way, having opened the stop-block turned across the siding to prevent vehicles escaping from it; and it is obviously useless for the porters to turn the stop-block across the siding if the stop-block is afterwards to be removed by engines passing into it, and to be left open as they leave it again. To avoid the risk of such an accident in future, it is desirable that safety-points, interlocked with the signals, should be added to the siding, and the Company is, I understand, prepared to carry out this improvement at once. I have referred in another report of this date to the urgent necessity that exists for a general re-arrangement and enlargement of this important station.

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, *Manchester, October 13th, 1874.*

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 25th 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 between a goods train and a passenger train, that occurred on the 19th ultimo between Salford and Victoria stations, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Six passengers and two of the company's guards, who were travelling in the train as passengers, and the guard of the passenger train, were injured.

On the day in question a goods train, which consisted of an engine and tender, 32 waggons, and a break-van, was stopped when its van was about 120 yards inside the Salford distant-signal, as the line through Salford station was occupied by a passenger train, which was due to start from that station for Colne at 10.45 a.m. The goods train had been stopped on the line about four minutes when it was run into by the passenger train which is due to leave Victoria station, Manchester, at 10.45 a.m. for Bolton. This passenger train left four minutes late, owing to the train not being ready. It consisted of an engine and tender, five passenger carriages, and a break-van with a guard.

According to the evidence of the fireman of this train, the engine-driver and himself observed the Salford distant-signal to be at danger when they got about half-way between Victoria station and the signal. This signal is a good signal, and can be seen by an engine-driver the moment he leaves Victoria station. The fireman further stated that the driver whistled at this time for the signal to be lowered, and drove on at a speed of 10 or 12 miles an hour towards Salford station. The driver then stooped down to put on the injector, and was in that position when his engine

passed the distant-signal. The fireman, immediately afterwards, while looking out for the home-signal, noticed a goods train on the line in front, and called the driver's attention to the fact. This man reversed his engine at once, whistled for the guard's break, and the fireman applied the tender break, but the speed of the passenger train was hardly checked before the engine ran into the break-van at the tail of the goods train. The engine of the passenger train had its buffer broken, but neither it nor any of the carriages of this train left the rails. The guard of the goods train was standing on the railway near his van at the time of the collision. His break-van was damaged, and two of the waggons about the centre of the goods train were pushed together and became buffer-locked by the collision. One pair of wheels of one of those waggons was lifted off the rails. The accident appears to have been caused by the gross neglect of the engine-driver of the passenger train, who continued to run on towards Salford after he had observed the Salford distant-signal to be at danger. He appears to have seen this signal in sufficient time to have stopped his train had he been attending to his duties. This man has been 10 years in the company's service, and for the last year and a half he has been a spare engine-driver. He bore a good character up to the date of this accident. He was summoned before the magistrate by the company's officers, and was committed to gaol for one month. He did not appear before me to give his evidence.

I have, &c.,

F. H. BRON,
Colonel R.F.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 5th November.