

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

2 September 1876

BoT Report into Accident at
Accrington.

(2 Pages).

what he was doing. After the accident neither he nor any of his gang touched anything at the spot where the engine first got off the rails, either when Hinks and Robson arrived or at any other time, except to carry the gauge there for Hinks to take the gauge and level of the road. He got the gauge from the Frome side of the bridge, near the spot where the accident occurred. Hinks and Robson were at the point where the engine left the rails when they asked for the gauge, and he fetched it from a spot half-way between the bridge and where the engine stood after the accident. He now corrects his statement that he was under the bridge when Hinks and Robson arrived. They got down opposite the engine, and he walked towards them and met them half-way between the bridge and the engine. He did nothing whatever before he met Hinks and Robson, except to look on.

Conclusion.

There is, in this instance, no suspicion, or imputation of any kind, against the engine. It was travelling

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 12th November.

along, round an easy curve of about 30 chains radius, and up a rising gradient of 1 in 70, at a speed of about 15 miles an hour, when, first the leading, and next, as they dropped, the trailing wheels left the rails. Nothing was found to be wrong with it after the accident, and it has ever since been continuously at work. There can be no doubt that in the course of the repairs which were in operation on that part of the line, the platelayers allowed the train to approach them without any warning to the engine-driver, at a time when the rails were not in a sufficiently good condition of adjustment to allow the engine to pass over it safely. The evidence, above quoted, of the inspector and others connected with the permanent-way, was conflicting, and was given in an unsatisfactory manner.

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

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

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

SIR, *Birmingham, October 7th, 1876.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in the Order of the 4th inst., 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 which occurred on the 21st ultimo at Snow Hill station, Birmingham, on the Great Western Railway.

A passenger train from Hatton to Birmingham ran into a train of empty coaches which was standing at the down-line platform at Birmingham station.

Two passengers in the Hatton train complained at the time of being shaken, but they appear not to have been injured, as they have been satisfied, by one of them being provided with a new hat in place of the one that was damaged in the collision.

On the date in question, the 10 p.m. train from Hatton consisted of an engine and tender, a break-van, five passenger coaches, another break-van with the guard in charge, and a slip-coach at the tail of the train.

It left Hatton 10 minutes late, and arrived in Birmingham about 10 minutes late.

The approach from Hatton to Snow Hill station, Birmingham, is through a tunnel in which there are two lines of rails. The station commences at the mouth of the tunnel where the two lines diverge into four lines of rails through the station. The two central lines are through lines, which, in addition to the loop-junctions at the mouth of the tunnel, are also provided with scissor crossings about the centre of the station. Trains can be diverted to the platforms on entering the station, or they can be run over the central through lines to the centre of the station, and then turned at the scissor crossing to the upper end of the platform. The points and signals

are interlocked, and are worked from raised signal-cabins placed at each end of the station. The signalman at the south end of the station, after giving "line clear," and taking on the train from Hatton, lowered his signals for the train to run in to the down-line platform, through the junction at the south end of the station. When he did so, he had altogether forgotten the train of empty coaches which was standing at the platform close by and within sight of his cabin; a part of this train had been brought to the platform through the points which he had worked from his cabin. The train of empty coaches had been made up, and placed at the down-line platform about 10.15 p.m. The passenger train arrived about 11 p.m., and ran into the train of empty coaches at a speed of about five or six miles an hour. The engine of the passenger train was slightly damaged, and the last coach of the train of empties was damaged and thrown off the rails.

The signalman who committed this mistake bears a very good character. If he had looked along the railway, as he should have done, before lowering his signals for the passenger train, he would have seen the train of empty coaches at the platform.

He has been 20 years in the Company's service, about 13 years of that time signalman, and he has been employed for two years as signalman in the south cabin at Snow Hill station. He should have turned the passenger train through the scissor crossing to the upper end of the down-line platform, instead of turning it through the junction at the east end of the station.

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

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 26th October.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department,
25th September 1876.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the order of the 6th instant, the result of my inquiry into the

circumstances connected with the accident which occurred on the 2nd instant, at Blackburn junction, Accrington, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case, as an excursion train from Ewood Bridge to Blackpool and back was proceeding on its return journey through facing-points at the Blackburn

junction, Accrington, five carriages and the front wheels of a sixth left the rails, in consequence of the signalman shifting the facing-points.

Seven passengers have complained of injury, the most serious case being one of fractured ribs. No servants of the company were injured. Some of the carriages were slightly damaged.

The train in question left Blackpool at 7.25 p.m., 10 minutes late, and consisted of engine, tender, and 26 vehicles, including three break-vans (with a guard in each), there being two coaches coupled to each break-van with continuous breaks. There were about 900 passengers in the train, which arrived at Accrington station (where it was not timed to stop) at 9.30 p.m., about three-quarters of an hour late, time having been lost at Preston junction—in collecting tickets—and at other stations. In consequence of the signals being against the train at the Manchester junction (which is at the Manchester end of the Accrington triangle), the driver, after passing the Blackburn junction, where he had been checked, stopped clear of the fouling point of the Manchester junction, when, owing to the length of his train and the short distance between the two junctions, half of his train, from the 14th vehicle backwards, was on the Blackburn side of the Blackburn junction facing points. After a detention of two or three minutes the driver again started—on the Manchester junction signal being lowered—but immediately feeling a check, stopped as soon as he could, after having proceeded six or seven carriage lengths. It was then found that the engine, tender, and 13 vehicles next in order were on their proper line, that the 14th was off the rails, the 15th off the rails and canted over, the 16th turned over on its left side, the 17th off the rails and canted, the 18th off the rails, the 19th off the rails with its front wheels and its hind wheels on the Colne line, the 20th on the Colne line, and the six rear vehicles still on the Blackburn side of the facing points.

The signalman on duty in the Blackburn junction cabin had acted as a signalman for six years, and had been employed there for 14 months; he had come on duty at 2 p.m. to remain till 10 p.m. He was alone in the cabin at the time of the accident. He got the “be ready” signal for the excursion train at

9.26, and “train on line” at 9.33; but the Manchester junction not being clear he made the road right by pulling over his facing-point lever (the points in their normal position standing right for Colne) but kept his signals at danger, and after having brought the train nearly to a stand, called the driver forward with a green hand light. He was perfectly aware the train had stopped, and was standing with nearly half its carriages on the Blackburn side of the facing-points (which were almost directly under the cabin windows), and he consequently would not accept another train for which he got the “be ready” signal. He then entered the time of the excursion train’s arrival (9.35) in his register, and turning round and seeing the facing-point lever out of its place, he, without thinking of what he was doing, put it back into its normal position a short time before the train again started. When it did so, some men in the yard called out to him, and then, remembering what he had done, he tried to reset the facing-points, but was unable to move them.

This accident, then, was caused by a very singular act of forgetfulness, frankly acknowledged, on the part of an experienced signalman of (as I am informed) previously unblemished character.

There cannot be a stronger instance than the present of the value of some arrangement, such as a locking-bar, by which a signalman can be prevented from moving facing-points while a train is standing on or passing over them. Had a locking-bar been fixed at this junction, the present accident could not have occurred; and it is much to be regretted that the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company should have allowed so long a time to elapse since the value of locking-bars was fully recognized, without having had one fixed at this important junction.

Although the present accident was not caused by the want of proper accommodation at Accrington station, I cannot refrain from again drawing attention to its admitted inadequacy for its large and increasing traffic, and from urging upon the Company the necessity of losing no unnecessary time in remodelling it.

I have, &c.,

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

C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Colonel R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 7th October.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department,
21st September 1876.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the order of the 13th instant, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision, which occurred on the 5th instant, at Halifax station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case, a special goods train, consisting of engine, tender, six waggons, and a van, on its return journey from Lowmoor to Liverpool, ran with considerable force into a train of empty carriages standing in a loop line at Halifax Station.

The driver and fireman were injured.

The engine (which mounted the platform) and three waggons were damaged, one waggon having been completely broken up. Thirteen empty carriages (eight belonging to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company, and five to the Great Northern Company) were also damaged, three of them having been broken to pieces.

The approach to Halifax station from the Lowmoor direction is through a tunnel, nearly three-quarters of a mile in length, terminating about a quarter of a mile from the Lowmoor end of the

platforms. The line through it falls towards the station, on a gradient of 1 in 235, the same gradient prevailing for some distance on each side of the tunnel. The distant-signal is fixed on the Lowmoor side of the tunnel, and the home-signals 300 yards from the tunnel mouth. In the tunnel, and 600 yards from the Halifax end of it, there is a fixed green light and audible treadle-signal, to give drivers an intimation of their position. About 100 yards inside the home-signals, there are facing points leading to the loop line in which the empty carriages were standing. The points and signals at the Lowmoor end of Halifax station are interlocked, and the traffic is worked on the block system, Hipperholme, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Halifax, being the next block station in the Lowmoor direction.

The evidence is as follows:—

John Wadesworth, signalman at Ovenden junction, Halifax, stated as follows:—I was on duty on the night of 5th September. I received the “be ready” signal for a goods train at 11.35 p.m., and the “on line” signal at the same time. My home and distant-signals then stood at danger, because I had the Lowmoor to Halifax goods train standing upon the main line at the east end of the station with the brake-van