

The  
**VIRTUAL MUSEUM**  
of the  
**LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY**

Accident Reports.

20 May 1872

BoT Report into Accident at  
Blackburn.

(1 Page).

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

SIR,

*Carlisle, 22nd June 1872.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 23rd ult., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision that occurred on Whit Monday, the 20th ult., at the mouth of the tunnel at the east end of Blackburn station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

An express train, which was due to arrive at Blackburn at 9.41 a.m. did not reach the station until 9.53 a.m. A number of people were waiting at the station to proceed by the express. There was not room for all of them in the train, so the inspector ordered some empty carriages to be brought from the sidings at the south side of the station, for the purpose of being attached to the express.

The tunnel next to Blackburn station is supposed to be worked on the block-telegraph principle. The block stations are Daisy Field cabin, which is about 300 yards from the east end of the tunnel, and Blackburn East cabin, which is at the west side, at the mouth of the tunnel. The custom appears to have been to give "line clear" on the block instruments at Blackburn East End cabin, whilst the tunnel was obstructed at the Blackburn end; and to trust to a distant-signal which is placed at the east end of the tunnel, and to a ground-signal which is placed inside the tunnel, about 120 yards from the west end, to stop trains that approach the station from the east.

In order to get the empty carriages from the siding at Blackburn to the express train, it was necessary to draw them across the up line into the mouth of the tunnel, and then back them through a pair of slip points on to the express train, that was standing on the up line, at the south side of the centre platform. The siding signal was lowered for the train of empties to come out.

The inspector went to the tunnel cabin, at Blackburn station, east end, when the empty carriages were being brought out of the siding.

The signalman on duty in the cabin told the inspector that a special excursion train from Mirfield had been telegraphed to him from Daisy Field cabin, and that he had allowed the train from Mirfield to come on past Daisy Field cabin.

The inspector asked the signalman three times whether his signals were at danger against the Mirfield train? The signalman told the inspector that the signals were at danger, and the empty carriages were allowed to cross the main lines. As they went into the tunnel they were run into by the train from Mirfield, at a speed of four or five miles an hour.

Three or four of the empty carriages were broken, and one of them was thrown over on a guard, who was standing on the footboard, at the opposite side of the train to that which was struck by the train from Mirfield.

The guard was very much hurt.

The engine of the Mirfield train was damaged, and some of the handles were broken off the coaches of this train, but none of the vehicles left the rails, and none of the passengers complained of having been hurt.

The train from Mirfield consisted of an engine and tender and 25 coaches. Three coaches at the front end of this train, and three coaches at the tail of the train, were fitted with Fay's continuous breaks. There was also a single break-van about the centre of the train. The signals at Daisy Field cabin were lowered for this train to pass.

The engine-driver and guards of the Mirfield train stated that the train pulled up outside the east end of the Blackburn tunnel, as the signal at the entrance of the tunnel was at danger. They stated that this signal was lowered, and that the train proceeded forward into the tunnel about two minutes after it had stopped.

The tunnel is about 470 yards long. The gradient falls 1 in 120 towards Blackburn station. The engine-driver did not see the ground-signal,—which is about 120 yards from the west end of the tunnel, and which was at danger,—until he was close to it. The light in the signal-lamp was obscured by the smoke and steam from the engine that was attached to the train of empty coaches.

The driver of the Mirfield train saw the train of empty coaches crossing the line on which he was travelling at the same moment that he saw the ground-signal. He and the guards did their best to stop the train, but they could not prevent the collision.

The signalman at Blackburn East cabin asserted that he did not lower his distant-signal, which is at the east end of Blackburn tunnel, for the Mirfield train. The only manner in which this statement can be reconciled with the statements of the driver and guards of the Mirfield train is, that the signal must have been lowered when the train was admitted within the telegraph block between Daisy Field and Blackburn East cabin, and that it was raised again to danger after the Mirfield train had passed the signal, and at the time when the inspector brought the train of empty coaches from the siding.

One thing is certain, that the block-telegraph system in Blackburn tunnel has been nominal, not real; and, further, it appeared from the evidence, that engine-drivers have frequently run forward into the tunnel when the distant-signal at the east end of the tunnel has been at danger against them. The block-telegraph and the signals should always be worked in unison, to announce "danger" or "line clear," as the case may be.

The accident was the consequence of a very improper and lax system of working, for which the men cannot be blamed, when they are encouraged, if not ordered by the inspectors, to commit the irregularities and disregard the Company's rules.

The points and signals at Blackburn should be rearranged on the locking principle, and if the sidings are controlled by dead-ends, trains can not be let out of the sidings, when the signals are lowered for main line trains.

I have, &amp;c.,

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

F. H. RICH,  
*Lieut.-Col. R.E.*

Copies of the above report were sent to the Company.

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,  
(Railway Department),  
Whitehall, 18th June 1872.*

SIR,

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 24th ult., the result of my investigation into the circum-

stances attending a collision which occurred near Preston station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway on the 22nd ult., from a passenger train being run into by a pilot engine, which was on its way to assist the train up a bank.

Six passengers have complained of slight injury. The guard of the train had his head cut.