The

VIRTUAL MUSEUM

of the

LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

13 January 1859

BoT Report into Accident at

Bolton.

(2 Pages).

As a special precaution, in the case of through passenger trains, it is further provided, that notice of their departure from each station should be given to several stations in advance, and the number of stations to which notice is to be given is specified for each particular station on the line.

Thus, on an up passenger train leaving Essendine, a message should be sent to Peterborough and Huntingdon; and, again, on an up passenger train leaving Peterborough, notice should be given to Huntingdon, St. Neot's, Biggleswade, Hitchin, and Kings Cross, some of which are passing and some stopping stations for through passenger trains.

This telegraph system is worked by the Electric Telegraph Company, which has clerks at the principal stations for day duty. At Peterborough the night duty is also taken by an electric telegraph clerk; but this is not the general practice, the telegraph clerk being at most stations relieved at night by servants of the railway company.

At the minor stations the instruments are entirely worked by the railway staff of the station, under the inspection of the Electric Telegraph Company.

It appears by the train books that on the night of the 2d January the Essendine signal man telegraphed to Peterborough the departure of the up mail train from Essendine at 1.16 A.M. By the regulations, notice of the departure of this train from Essendine should also have been given to Huntingdon; and on account of the break of the wires at Peterborough the message, after being received by the Peterborough clerk, ought to have been transmitted by him to Huntingdon.

The train books show that he omitted to forward this message.

Again, on the subsequent departure of the up mail train from Peterborough at 1.37 A.M., the telegraph clerk at Peterborough sent messages announcing its departure, which the train books show to have been received at Huntingdon, St. Neot's, Hitchin, and King's Cross; but the receipt of this message does not appear in the train book at Biggleswade, which is one of the stations to which it should have been sent. The entry of its despatch is, however, properly made in the Peterborough train book.

The mineral train left Huntingdon at 1.18 A.M., and Biggleswade at 2.5 A.M., and a comparison of the times of the two trains shows that had the Essendine message been promptly transmitted from Peterborough to Huntingdon it might possibly have been just in time to make the whereabouts of the mail train known to the guard of the mineral train before the latter left Huntingdon; and, again, that had the subsequent message from Peterborough to Biggleswade not miscarried, the guard might have been made aware at Biggleswade of the necessity that existed for his stopping there to shunt his train.

Call bells are not employed with the double needle instruments of the Electric Telegraph Company.

The telegraph clerk on duty is supposed never to lose sight of the instrument; and a platform porter is detailed for the duty of entering in the train book in the telegraph office the departure of each train as it starts from the station. The telegraph clerk countersigns this entry, adding the precise time when it was made, and proceeds forthwith to despatch his messages to the prescribed stations. The telegraph clerk is, of course, equally at hand for the immediate acknowledgment of any messages he may receive.

This is not the case at the minor stations. A single platform porter at night has to attend to his signals, to clean out the waiting rooms, and to give the best attention he can to the telegraph instrument in the booking office, and to the train book.

This state of things may or may not have been concerned in the second error that led to this accident; but it is satisfactory to state, that the attention of the directors having been called to it, in consequence of the collision, it is understood that they at once decided on adopting the recommendations of the superintendent of the line for its improvement.

They do not at present consider it necessary to work the line from Hitchin to Peterborough on the principle of "intervals of space" as between London and Hitchin. The trains are to follow each other as hitherto. Passing places are appointed in the time tables, and the despatching authorities at intermediate stations, and guards, continue to be held responsible for the shunting, when necessary, of the slower trains.

The train book system in force is, doubtless, an admirable auxiliary to this mode of working, and it is to be hoped that the promptitude and accuracy of its action will be increased by the measures proposed, which consist, I believe, in laying down additional wires for railway purposes, and in the maintenance between Hitchin and Peterborough of telegraph men at the stations, with boxes to themselves for working the instruments, and with no other duties to perform.

I have, &c.

Captain Galton, R.E.
&c. &c.

GEORGE ROSS,
Captain, R.E.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, Feb. 26, 1859.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Ross, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 13th ult. at the Bolton station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

My Lords trust that the directors will cause to be attached to all facing-points indicators, to move with the points, and to show whether they are open or closed, and that they will provide for the pointsman at Bolton a proper position in an elevated box.

I am, &c.

The Secretary to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company.

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, R.E.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, Feb. 22, 1859.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that, in compliance with your instructions, I have inquired into the circumstances attending a collision which occurred on the 13th January on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway at Bolton station.

The station is approached from the westward through a tunnel, and notice is given by telegraph to a pointsman on the station side of the tunnel of the description of train he has to expect, and for which he has to set his points.

The pointsman works twelve pair of points from his box, which is on the level of the ground at the entrance to the station, and of these points the switches leading to the coal sidings and to the goods sidings form facing-points on the main line to trains arriving from the westward.

The pointsman is provided with means for *retaining*

the points open for the sidings. This is objectionable, but it is said that it is absolutely necessary at this busy station, as he could not spare the time to hold open any single pair of points for tedious shunting operations.

A loop suspended to a cross bar is therefore provided for every switch handle, to catch it, and hold it open for a siding when required.

On the 13th January a passenger train due from Fleetwood at 11 A.M. was entering the station from the tunnel, when it ran through the facing-points into the coal siding, instead of keeping its course along the main line. Its speed was not great, and not much damage was done. The pointsman had been some months at his post, and is said to have been well acquainted with his duty; but by the evidence given it would appear that he had passed a "lorry" into the coal siding a quarter of an hour before, and that he had not afterwards unlooped the handle of the switch. He has since been discharged for his fault.

Measures are in progress for attaching indicators to the facing points. There are cotters for keeping the points closed, if desired, when set for the main line; but the amount of traffic I am told would render it inconvenient to lock them, and if the pointsman worked the points properly from his box there would be little advantage in keeping them locked.

It is very important that a pointsman with critical duties to perform should have an *elevated* box, with good command of his work. The pointsman here has not that advantage, and I would strongly urge the expediency of improvement in this respect. It is impossible for him, situated as he is, to exercise the control which he should have over the trains on the portions of main line and sidings under his charge.

I have, &c.

Captain Galton, R.E. GEORGE ROSS,
&c., &c. *Captain, R.E.*

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway,
Secretary's Office, Manchester,
SIR, *March* 3, 1859.

I BEG to inform you that I have submitted to the directors of this company your communication of 26th ult., handing copy of Captain Ross's report as to the accident at Bolton on 13th January last. I am to state that their Lordships' recommendations shall receive from the directors every consideration.

I am, &c.,

The Secretary, W. S. LAWN,
Railway Department, *Secretary.*
Board of Trade.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
SIR, *Whitehall, March* 3, 1859.

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Ross, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances attending the accident which occurred on the 1st ultimo at Dixonfold, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

My Lords direct me to call the attention of the directors to the remarks of the inspecting officer upon the circumstance of the doors of the carriages on the reverse side of the train not having been locked.

I am, &c.

The Secretary to the DOUGLAS GALTON,
Lancashire and Yorkshire *Captain, R.E.*
Railway Company.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
SIR, *Whitehall, Feb.* 26, 1859.

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that, in compliance with your instructions, I have inquired into the circumstances attending an accident which occurred at Dixonfold, upon the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, on the 1st instant.

The 8.15 A.M. up passenger train from Southport to Manchester consisted of an engine, tender, two first-class carriages, two second-class carriages, and a break van.

It was approaching Dixonfold station when the driver felt something "brush under the ashpit" of his engine. He then felt a "bit of a check," and seeing that the guard's van was not right he pulled up within 400 or 500 yards.

On stopping it was found that all beneath the frame work of the guard's van was a wreck; the axles and break gear were completely gone. The guard's van had not, however, become uncoupled from the train, and the guard who was in it was little hurt.

It was then discovered that the engine had lost the balance weight of the reversing lever from beneath the engine.

The axles of the van belong to a lot of 800 axles which had been received from the Lowmoor Company seven years ago. Not a single axle of this lot had ever proved defective.

The balance weight weighed nearly one cwt., with a length of about 14 inches; the lever arm to which it was attached had a section of 3" × $\frac{7}{8}$". It came away with the balance weight, the fracture having occurred at the weakest point, where the arm was welded on to its axle.

The balance weight was found lying in the roadway just in front of one of the broken axles of the break van. Besides the driver, who had felt the brush under his ashpit, several passengers in two of the carriages had experienced a bump or blow under the carriages.

The axles of the carriages are 15 or 16 inches above the roadway.

Some deep grooves in the roadway showed evident signs of a heavy body having bounded along it between the rails; and there seems no reason to doubt that the balance weight, after its first drop from the engine, had struck the bottoms of the carriages, and formed these grooves in the ballast. It then came into direct collision with the axles of the guard's van. One of them at once dropped, and near it the balance weight. The other axle may have been entangled in the break gear, for, 140 yards beyond the first axle, it had evidently come into violent collision, *end on*, with a sleeper, which was completely pierced through, and just beyond this the second axle was lying, with the break gear and three wheels scattered about it.

The balance weight had been supplied with the engine in 1849, and the mileage run by the engine had been upwards of 250,000 miles. The loss of a balance weight is said to be very unusual; but it is not improbable that the arm in this instance may have been gradually failing, and that some slight jolt in the roadway dislodged it. The rails where the accident happened are not fished, and some of the joints are somewhat wide.

The accident would have been attended with no more serious consequences than the destruction of the break-van but for a lamentable occurrence which followed. A gentleman in one of the second-class carriages had, it is said, been looking out of the window of the carriage while the train was being pulled up, and in so doing he had lost his hat. The train had not stopped when he opened the reverse door of