

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

13 January 1875

BoT Report into Accident at
Bolton.

(2 Pages).

The guard in the rear van thinks the speed at the Mytholmroyd distant-signal, which was off, was 20 miles an hour; he heard the break whistle directly after passing it, and had time to get his break partly on before the collision. He was thrown down and slightly hurt in the back.

The signalman at Luddenfoot west cabin, who keeps a register of passing trains, says that the goods train passed at 4.4 at a speed of about 10 miles an hour, and that the engine seemed master of its train; that he kept his signals at danger against the passenger train, which had nearly stopped at the platform, till 4.11, when he lowered them, and showed the driver a green flag, and said to the fireman as he passed the cabin that there was a goods train ahead, and that he pointed in that direction. There was no fog, but it was dull and snowing.

The signalman at Mytholmroyd had his signals off and was watching for the express train when he saw the engine and a waggon or two of the goods train coming slowly round the curve by the distant-signal. He had just put the latter to danger when he heard the noise of the collision. He made the time at which it occurred 4.11½.

The station-master at Luddenfoot states that after the passenger train had been slacked and nearly stopped at the platform, the signalman in the west cabin lowered his signals, and waved the driver forward with a green flag.

This collision occurred without any grave misconduct on the part of the Company's servants, but was brought about mainly by want of judgment on the part of the driver of the goods train; 1st, in not informing the foreman porter at Sowerby Bridge that his engine was priming, and that he had consequently better let the express train pass him there; 2nd, in not stopping under protection of the Ludden-

foot signals when he found his engine still further losing speed; 3rd, in not sounding his whistle for his guard to go back, when his speed became still further reduced, after passing Luddenfoot. The guard was also to blame for not having had his tail lamps lit. The rules of the Company do not hold a guard responsible for getting out of his train and going back until his driver whistles for him to do so. There is some excuse to be made for these men, seeing that they had, at the time of the collision (owing to delays on the down journey caused by the previous day's fog), been on duty for an uninterrupted period of 22 hours, and may well therefore have been somewhat less on the alert than they should have been.

The driver of the passenger train, seeing that he had been so recently nearly stopped by what he knew was a train ahead, was hardly proceeding with the caution that he should have exercised along a part of the line where his view was very limited.

This collision is peculiarly one of that class which can only be effectually prevented by block system working, and it is satisfactory to know that this will now very shortly be in force on this part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire system.

The continuous breaks with which this train was supplied were, no doubt, very useful in mitigating the effect of the collision. Had they been in the driver's hands they would probably have been still more useful.

It is desirable that the Mytholmroyd up distant-signal should be placed so that it may be better seen by approaching drivers.

I have, &c.,

C. S. HUTCHINSON,

Licent.-Col. R.E.

The Secretary
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.

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

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
30 January 1875.

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 18th instant, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 13th instant, at Bolton station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the engine of the 6 a.m. passenger train from Rochdale to Liverpool and of the 11.5 p.m. goods train from Mirfield to Liverpool came into collision as the latter was running out (against signals) from a siding crossing one of the down lines close to the up end of the Bolton down platform.

One passenger is stated to have complained of having been shaken.

In the passenger train the front wheels of the first carriage left the rails, and the steps and foot-boards on the left sides of some of the carriages were injured. In the goods train the four front wheels of the engine left the rails, and the engine was slightly damaged.

The home-signal for the admission of down trains to the Bolton platform is on the same post as the signal for permitting trains to leave a siding crossing the down platform line and joining the down through line, which siding runs parallel to the main down line for some distance on the up side of the station. The signal-post is placed at the fouling-point of the siding and down platform line, and the signals during darkness consist of two lamps on opposite sides of the post, the right lamp referring to the platform line and the left lamp to the siding, both visible for a distance

of about 250 yards. The signal-cabin is about 40 yards on the platform side of the signals. This portion of the line is practically level.

The 11.5 p.m. goods train from Mirfield to Liverpool on the 12th instant was ready to start at its proper time, but in consequence of its regular driver refusing to go with the engine on account of its right-hand cylinder cover joint blowing badly, time was lost in procuring another driver, and eventually a spare driver named Green, who had acted as a fireman for about three years previously, took charge of the engine, having been informed by the regular fireman (who accompanied him on the journey) what was the matter with it. The train then started at 12.25 a.m., and though time is stated not to have been lost from the defect in the engine, it was lost from other causes, and Bolton was not reached till 6.45 a.m., 3 hrs. 20 mins. late. Two waggons were here dropped in the siding, and at 6.50 the train, which then consisted of engine, tender, 17 loaded waggons, and a van, was ready to start from the siding adjoining the down line, the engine being then some distance from the siding-signal. The driver stated that he had not been in the Bolton yard for about 12 months previously, and that though he had then known the signals well, he had now somewhat forgotten them; that when ready to start he gave two whistles and a crow for the siding-signal, and immediately afterwards saw the right-hand lamp (the siding-signal was the left-hand lamp) turn from a red to a green light; that he asked the fireman if that was their signal, and on his replying yes, started: that on reaching the fouling-point of the main line he heard some one shout "Wo," and saw the signalman waving a red light; that he at once shut off

man (which was not full on), reversed his engine, and applied contrary steam, and had just begun to move back when the left corner of the buffer-beam of the engine of the passenger train struck the inside of the right end of his buffer-beam, broke the end off, and knocked the four front wheels of his engine off the rails.

The fireman with the engine, who was accustomed to working in the Bolton yard, states that previously to their starting from the siding at Bolton he had told the driver that the left-hand signal was theirs; that after the driver had whistled for the signal he (the driver) told him it was lowered, but that he (the fireman) did not himself look at it, and was unaware that it was against them until he heard the signalman call out, when every effort was made to stop; that they had got into backward motion just before the collision.

The passenger train, which consisted of engine and tender, four carriages, and a van, the five vehicles all coupled together with continuous breaks, started from Rochdale at 6.2 a.m., two minutes late, lost time at various stations on the road, and was approaching Bolton at 6.51, 12 minutes late. The driver, an experienced man of 30 years service, caught sight at the usual place (about 250 yards off) of the Bolton platform signal-lamp showing a green light, and approached the platform at sufficient speed to run up to it, without being aware that the goods train would get in his way till just before the collision, when there was time only to throw his engine out of gear. He did not see the signalman throw up the signal or show him a red light.

The signalman on duty states that he had lowered the platform-signal for the passenger train on having it rung on to him from the previous cabin at 6.45, just before the goods train whistled for the siding-

signal; that on seeing that the driver of the goods train was overrunning the signal-post he threw up the platform-signal to danger when the passenger train was a short distance from it, and showed both drivers a red light; that the collision occurred at 6.50.

This collision was caused by the driver of the goods train mistaking the signal which was lowered for the passenger train for the siding-signal for which he had whistled. It was very stupid in him to have done this, seeing that the position of the lamps, which were both alight, clearly indicated to which lines they respectively referred.

It would have only been reasonable caution on the part of the fireman with the goods train, seeing that his driver was comparatively strange to the place, to have satisfied himself by actual observation that the proper signal was lowered when they started.

This collision would not have occurred had the siding been provided with catch points, properly interlocked with the signals. The arrangements, generally, at the Manchester end of Bolton station are in an unsatisfactory condition, but I am informed that a large piece of ground has recently been purchased with a view to improvements, and these are to be carried out without loss of time, and certainly not before they are needed.

It certainly does not speak well for the locomotive arrangements at Mirfield that it should have been necessary to despatch the 11.5 p.m. goods train on a long journey with the engine in a condition (stated to have been reported three weeks previously) such that its regular driver refused to travel with it.

I have, &c.,
The Secretary, C. S. HUTCHINSON,
(Railway Department), Lieut.-Col. R.F.
Board of Trade.

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

LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

Sir,

Wigan, 26th January 1875.

IN compliance with your Order of the 20th instant, 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 instant at Springs Branch junction, on the London and North-Western Railway, when the guard of a London and North-Western mineral train was killed.

Springs Branch junction is situated about a mile and a half to the south of Wigan station. It is the place where the line to Manchester and the line to Liverpool diverge from the main line to Warrington, and where the Springs Branch mineral line joins the line from Wigan to Warrington. The yard and the junctions are protected by signals which are interlocked with the points, and are worked from a raised cabin which is placed close to the junction of the passenger lines. This main junction-cabin, which is called Springs Branch junction, is supplemented with a second junction-cabin, called Old Man's siding, No. 1 cabin.

The man in charge of No. 1 cabin, which is placed about 150 yards to the north of the Springs Branch junction-cabin, assists in working the several junctions, and the working of some of the levers in both these cabins is checked and controlled by means of slotting arrangements connected with the junction signals. There are also two junction cabins on the line to Manchester, the first, which is called Blundell's junction, is about 200 yards, and the second, which is called Platt's Bridge junction, is about half a mile south-east from Springs Branch junction-cabin.

On the day in question a mineral train, which consisted of an engine and tender, about 30 empty

waggons with a break-van and a guard at the tail of the train, arrived from Preston at Springs Branch junction about 2.30 a.m. As 12 of the empty waggons of this train were to be placed in the sidings of the Springs Branch yard, the train was drawn up at the south side of the Springs Branch junction. The inspector on duty gave instructions that after the waggons were placed in the sidings the driver should push back his train on the same road and get his train on to the Springs Branch mineral line. After the waggons had been placed in the sidings the signalman at Blundell's junction, who controls the junction of the sidings at the south end of the yard, was not able to get the up road blocked, so as to let the mineral train push back. He therefore told the driver and guard of the mineral train to take their train forward to Platt's Bridge junction, to return on the down line, and thus get into the Springs Branch mineral line. The mineral train was taken forward to Platt's Bridge junction. It returned about 20 minutes afterwards to Springs Branch junction, where the signal was at "all right" for it to cross into the sidings and get on to the Springs Branch mineral line. As the break-van of the train of empty waggons reached the siding it came into collision with a train of 30 waggons of coal which was standing on the siding. The break-van was capsized, fell on the guard, and killed him; and two other waggons of this train were thrown off the rails; one wagon of coal was also thrown off the rails.

The inspector at Springs Branch yard, who gave the instructions to the men in charge of the mineral train from Preston, informed the signalman on duty at Springs Branch junction-cabin that he was not to allow anything to cross on to what is called