

The
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LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

16 March 1908

BoT Report into Accident at
Bolton.

(3 Pages).

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
8, Richmond Terrace,
Whitehall, London, S.W.

SIR,

9th April, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 20th March, the result of my inquiry into the causes of the collision which occurred on the 16th March between two passenger trains at Bolton on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the 6.57 a.m. train from Liverpool to Rochdale came in contact with the rear of the 7.27 a.m. train from Blackburn to Manchester while the latter was standing on the up main platform line.

Three passengers complained of slight injuries.

The collision was a slight one and no wheels of either train were derailed.

The 6.57 a.m. train ex Liverpool consisted of a four-wheels-coupled bogie passenger engine with a six-wheeled tender, fitted with the automatic vacuum brake on the four coupled wheels of the engine and six tender wheels, and four bogie coaches and two vans one six-wheeled and one four-wheeled, fitted throughout with the vacuum brake except on the centre pair of wheels of the six-wheeled van.

The 7.27 a.m. train ex Blackburn consisted of a four-wheels-coupled radial tank engine and of six bogie coaches fitted throughout with the automatic vacuum brake on all wheels except on the leading and trailing pairs of the engine.

The brakes on both trains are stated to have been in very good order.

Details of damage to rolling stock are given in the Appendix.

Description.

Approaching Bolton Station the up line from Blackburn runs from the northward, and the up line from Liverpool direction from the westward, and Bolton West signal-box is in the angle between them.

About 63 yards west of the signal-box in the up slow road from Liverpool are facing points at which the up passenger loop line diverges to the left from the up main platform line. The former runs along the northern side and the latter along the southern side of the up platform, which is an island one. The outer home signals are on a gantry 147 yards outside the facing points above mentioned, and there are inner home signals for each line on separate posts just ahead of the signal-box.

The up main platform line is on a sharp curve of 10 chains radius to the right from the facing points mentioned above past the signal-box, until it reaches the north end of the up platform, and just at this end of the up platform is a wide and rather low overbridge. The tail of the Blackburn train was standing about 70 yards from the north end of the platform.

Evidence.

John William Robinson, states: I have been nearly 25 years in the service and a passenger guard almost 16 years. I came on duty on the 16th March at 6.40 a.m. to work until 3.30 p.m. On the 15th I had finished duty at 10.30 p.m. I was guard of the 6.57 a.m. train, Liverpool to Halifax. My train consisted of equal to nine coaches leaving Liverpool, but we detached one at Wigan, and had equal to eight approaching Bolton, marshalled as follows:—

Engine No. 897,
Bogie Third van,
Bogie Third,
Bogie Composite,
Bogie Third van,
North-Eastern van,
Meat van.

We had a clear run into Bolton Station and were running three minutes late. It is usual to turn

my train to the up platform loop line. I felt the brakes applied when my van was getting quite close to Bolton West box and looked out and saw we were being turned to the up main platform line but I could not see the train ahead until we stopped. The stop seemed to me an ordinary one and I was quite unaware that we had struck the train in front until I got out to see why my van had not reached the platform. There was no shock. I was just arranging the parcels against the van door but was not shaken in any way and was quite in ignorance that any mishap had occurred; as were also the passengers in the next compartment to my van who asked me how long they were going to stay there. The van was not quite at the platform but the compartments were and the passengers could have alighted had they wished. We had 19 inches of vacuum travelling between Wigan and Bolton. I did not notice the signals approaching Bolton as I was getting my

parcels ready. No complaint of injury was made to me by anyone. When the train had come to a stand I could see the train ahead by looking out through the window on the off side.

Walter Potter states: I have been in the Company's service 14 years and a regular guard three years, but had six seasons before that as summer guard. On the 16th March I came on duty at 4 a.m. to work until 1.23 p.m. I was off duty the previous day. I have worked the 7.27 a.m. train ex Blackburn for several years, and on arrival at Bolton on the day in question we were turned on to the up main line in the usual course. We arrived at 8.8, and are due to depart at 8.15. My train was worked by engine No. 1160, and was formed as follows:—

Engine.
Bogie Third van.
Bogie Third van.
Bogie Third.
Bogie Compo.
Bogie Third.
Bogie Third van.

I was occupied in my van sorting letters, and about 8.14 I happened to glance up, and saw another train was coming about 30 yards away on the same line at about 10 miles an hour. I realised that it would be unable to stop before hitting my van. I jumped out, and immediately afterwards the collision occurred. The gauge in my van showed 18 inches of vacuum at the time we were struck. No complaint was made to me, but I am aware that some passengers have made complaints of slight injury. No vehicles were derailed by the collision either in my train or the Liverpool one, but my van was lifted up, and was damaged by the front of the Liverpool engine. The rear of my train was opposite the tobacco stall near Messrs. Smith & Son's bookstall. There would not be very many passengers in my train at the moment of the collision, as a lot join the Rochdale train, and we get a good many from it. My train was changed at Bolton and fresh carriages provided, leaving at 8.41.

Joseph Morgan states: I have been nine years in the Company's service—five and a half as signalman, and four years at the up signal-box, Bolton Station. On March 16th I came on duty at 6 a.m. to work until 2 p.m. I had been off duty the day previous. At 8.9 a.m. I received the "Is line clear?" signal for the 6.57 a.m. train, Liverpool to Halifax, and acknowledged it at the same time. I did not receive any further signals until 8.12, when I got the "Cancelling" signal, 3-5. About 8.11, signalman Nelson, West box, called my attention on the telephone, and told me that he had turned the Liverpool train on the main line in mistake, instead of the up passenger loop, which is the usual road. Immediately afterwards he gave me the cancelling signal.

Gerrard Bain states: I have been 16 years in the Company's service, eight as a signalman and three and a-half years at the Middle box, Bolton. On March 16th I came on duty at 6 a.m. to work until 2 p.m. I had been off duty the day previous. At 8.5 a.m. I received the "Is line clear?" signal for the 7.27 a.m. Blackburn to Manchester passenger train and accepted it at the same time; received "Entering section" at 8.7 a.m., the train arriving at 8.8 a.m. I then placed my home signal to danger. I had not pulled off my distant signal for the train. I was tidying up about the stove a minute or so afterwards when I heard a bump and wondered what it was. I went to the

window and saw something behind the Blackburn train, and this I took to be the Liverpool train which is due at 8.10 a.m. I saw people rushing about and concluded the West signalman must have turned the train to the main platform instead of to the loop platform which is its usual road. I did not make any inquiries from West box as I did not wish to upset the signalman.

Richard Nelson states: I have been in the service about 30 years, except for an interval of about 12 months. I commenced as a learner signalman and have never held any other grade except that of learner and signalman. I have been working as a three-eight signalman in Bolton West box about 18 months, i.e., working the East, West, and Burnden Junction signal-boxes alternately. I came on duty on the morning of March 16th at 6 a.m. to work until 2 p.m. I finished duty on the 15th at 6 p.m. I went to bed about 9 p.m. and got up shortly after 4.30 a.m. I received "Is line clear?" for the 7.27 a.m. train, Blackburn to Manchester, at 8.7 a.m. from Bradshawgate and accepted it at the same time. I got "Entering section" at 8.9 a.m. and the train passed my box at 8.10 a.m. "Is line clear?" was acknowledged by the Middle box at 8.7 a.m., and I gave "Out of section" for the train at 8.10 a.m. I received "Out of section" from the Middle box for it at 8.52 a.m. I was offered "Is line clear?" for the 6.57 a.m. train, Liverpool to Rochdale, at 8.10 a.m. from Bullfield East and accepted it at the same time. I received "Entering section" at 8.12 a.m. The train passed my box at 8.13 a.m. and I got it accepted by the up box at 8.11 a.m., having offered it correctly to him on the up loop. I gave "Out of section" for the train to Bullfield East at 8.13 a.m. I had pulled all the signals off for the Liverpool train under the impression I was turning it on the up loop platform line, but omitted to reverse No. 30 points for that road. The consequence was that the train travelled main line. The train passed my cabin travelling at the usual speed at which trains run into Bolton Station when the platform is empty. I fully intended to let the train in on the up loop line, and thought I had until I saw it passing on the main line. I realised when the train passed my box that I had made a mistake but was unable to take any steps to warn the driver or guard. I cancelled the train to up box at 8.14 a.m. The normal position of No. 20 points is for the main line platform and they were last used by the 7.10 a.m. Southport to Manchester. It is the practice for the Blackburn and Liverpool trains to arrive on the main and loop platform lines respectively, as the latter changes engines. I could see that nothing was off the road and did not give the "Obstruction danger" signal. We generally use the tablets marked "Train here" for putting over the signal levers, but not always.

William Johnson states: I have been in the service 21 years and a booked driver since 1894. On March 16th I came on duty at 6.5 a.m. to work until about 4 p.m. I had not been on duty the day before, Sunday, and I had been off altogether about 32 hours. I was driving the 6.57 a.m. train from Liverpool to Halifax with engine No. 897 which is a four-wheels-coupled tender engine, and my train consisted of four bogie coaches, one North-Eastern van and one meat van. My brake was in perfect order and I had 20 inches of vacuum. On approaching Bolton the signals showed that I had a clear road into the station on the main platform line. We are usually turned along the loop line, but on this occasion the signals were off for the main platform line. The first I

knew of the train in front was when my fireman shouted "Stop," and this was after passing West Junction signal. I did not see the train until I got on the straight near to the end of the platform at Trinity Street bridge. I had steam off at the time and the brakes were partially on when I sighted the train. I at once applied the brake at full, reversed the engine and gave her steam; my fireman opened the sanders but owing to the greasy state of the rails the wheels appeared to lock and we glided into the stationary train. I had crossed the junction at eight miles per hour and was travelling about five miles per hour when I sighted the train and we struck it at the rate of two miles an hour. I was running at my usual speed entering the station and as I was driving on the left hand side of the engine the fireman would have a better view of the train ahead than me.

Richard Hughes states: I have been in the service

seven years, and a booked fireman for eight months. Before this I was a cleaner and acting fireman all the time. On March 16th I came on duty at 6.5 a.m. to work for 10 hours. I had not been on duty the day before. I was working with driver Johnson on the 6.57 a.m. Liverpool to Halifax train, and the signals showed a clear run into the station on the main platform line. When we were opposite Bolton West cabin I was looking for signals, and I sighted the train at the same time. We were then rounding the curve just before reaching Trinity Street bridge. I shouted out to the driver, applied the hand brake, and opened the sanders; he applying the vacuum brake, and pulling the engine over to back gear. We were running about eight or ten miles an hour when I sighted the train, but we could not pull up in time. It was a bad morning for seeing, owing to the mist and smoke hanging about the bridge, and the engine wheels appeared to be picking up.

Conclusion.

The circumstances attending this slight collision were as follows, viz. :—

The 7.27 a.m. train Blackburn to Manchester arrived at Bolton at 8.10 a.m. and was turned by signalman R. Nelson as usual on to the up main platform line, the tail van of the train being about 70 yards from the end of the platform. At 8.10 a.m. Nelson was offered the 6.57 a.m. train ex Liverpool from Bullfield East signal-box, and at once accepted it. He had offered it to the up box and it was accepted by that signal-box on the up loop line, which runs on the other side of the up platform, at 8.11 a.m., and it arrived at 8.13 a.m. Nelson however, though sending the block signals for this train to run on the up loop line, did not set the road for the up loop line, and lowered the up main line signals, so the Liverpool train was turned on to the same platform line as that on which the train from Blackburn was standing.

Owing to the sharp curve in the line approaching the station and to an overbridge there is not a good view for any distance for a driver approaching Bolton from the north, so neither driver Johnson nor his fireman were able to see the train in front in time to quite stop their train before it collided with the tail of the train from Blackburn.

The accident was thus due to an unfortunate mistake on the part of signalman Nelson, who fully intended to turn the Liverpool train on to the loop line but inadvertently pulled off the signals for the main line.

Nelson is an experienced signalman with an excellent record, and had been on duty for two hours and a quarter at the time of the accident after an interval for rest of 12 hours.

I have, etc.,
E. DRUITT,
Lieut.-Col., R.E.

The Assistant Secretary,
Railway Department,
Board of Trade.

APPENDIX.

DAMAGE TO ROLLING STOCK.

Engine No. 897.—Both engine buffers damaged. Vacuum pipe in front of smokebox damaged. Smokebox slightly damaged.

Lancashire and Yorkshire bogie third van No. 742.—One headstock, four end intermediate pillars, five end panels, one Gold's car steam trap, one steam sediment well, one steam cock,

one shackle hook, one vacuum pipe, one vacuum train pipe (iron), one pull rod, four centre casting bolts, two end lights, one opal light, one door pillar, four inside casing boards, two bottom boards, one footboard, and one buffer casting bolt broken; one drawbar, four buffers, one diamond frame pull rod, and one bogie check iron bent.

Printed copies of the above Report were sent to the Company on the 7th May.
