

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

7 March 1867

BoT Report into Accident at
Bowling Tunnel.

(1 Page).

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade
(*Railway Department*),
30th March, 1867.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, to be laid before the Directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Major Rich, R.E., the officer appointed by my Lords to inquire into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred on the 7th instant in the Bowling Tunnel on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

I am, &c.

The Secretary of the
Lancashire and Yorkshire
Railway Company.

R. G. W. HERBERT.

SIR,

Dulwich, 27th March 1867.

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 9th instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision that occurred on the 7th instant in the Bowling Tunnel, near Bradford, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

A train, which consisted of an engine and tender, a second-class, a first-class, and a second-class carriage, with a guard's break compartment, left Bradford for Huddersfield at 1.15 p.m., on the 7th March 1867.

The carriages were coupled in the order above stated, and were all fitted with Fay's continuous breaks. The train reached Bowling Station, which is about 150 yards from the entrance to Bowling Tunnel, about 1.23 p.m., and as the signals were all right for the train to proceed, it entered the tunnel, which is 1,641 yards long.

Soon after entering the tunnel, the fireman stated that he, and the driver who was killed, perceived that something was wrong with the engine.

They succeeded in working more than half way through the tunnel, but when they got about 1,008 yards from the Bowling end, the engine came to a stand. On getting down, the driver found that one of the eccentric straps was broken. He got under the engine to clear it and sent his fireman to Low Moor Station (which is over three quarters of a mile from where the train was stopped) to procure another engine to take on the train.

The guard of the 1.15 p.m. train got out of his carriage and went to see the engine driver to ascertain what was the matter.

The guard stated that the driver told him that there was no necessity for his going back to protect his train, as the line was blocked by telegraph; but he went back after a few minutes, got some fog signals out of his compartment, and was proceeding towards Bradford to protect his train, when he heard another train coming. He stated that he was afraid to put down a fog signal lest he should be run over, and that he had only got about 50 or 60 yards from his train when another train passed him. He shouted and did what he could to warn the driver of this train of the danger, but the latter had only time to shut off steam before his engine came into collision with the 1.15 p.m. train.

The train that ran into the 1.15 p.m. train consisted of a tank engine, a third-class, a composite, and a second-class carriage, with a break compartment for the guard, and all the carriages were fitted with Fay's continuous breaks.

It left Leeds for Manchester at 12.55 p.m., which was its proper time. The signals at Bowling Junction were at all right for it to proceed, and it entered and proceeded through Bowling Tunnel at a speed

which is estimated at about 25 to 27 miles per hour.

The tunnel was so dark that the driver could see nothing, and the first notice he got of the danger was hearing some one shout. His engine struck the last carriage of the 1.15 p.m. train immediately after.

The driver of the 1.15 train, who appears to have been still under his engine at the time of the collision, was picked out from under the last carriage of his train and died shortly after. One of the passengers died about four days afterwards from the injuries that he received. Five passengers had limbs fractured and 17 others have complained of injuries more or less severe. The last carriage of the 1.15 p.m. train was stove in and a pair of its wheels were knocked off. The bodies of the other two carriages of this train were shifted in their frames. The engine of this train was not injured. The whole of this train was driven forward about 80 yards by the collision.

The engine of the Leeds train had its chimney knocked off, its smoke box broken in, and the spring balances of the safety valve were broken.

The carriages of this train were not injured and none of the vehicles left the rails.

The Leeds train entered the tunnel about seven minutes after the 1.15 p.m. train had gone in.

Bowling Tunnel was worked with a single telegraph instrument by signalmen stationed at each end of the tunnel. The block system has now been introduced. It was being done at the time of the accident, but the ordinary single instrument was still in use at that time.

The signalman at the Bowling end, who allowed the Leeds train to enter while the 1.15 p.m. train was still inside, stated that the signalman at the Low Moor end had telegraphed to him about three minutes before, that the 1.15 p.m. train had gone out.

The signalman at the Low Moor end is equally decided in his statement that he had done no such thing, and the latter is borne out by the entries in his book of the hours at which he received and sent his messages, and also to a certain extent by the evidence of a man who was at work on the new telegraph wires close to his box, and by that of the fireman, who was passing by on his way to Low Moor to get another engine.

The signalman at the Bowling end of the tunnel got a telegraph from the Low Moor end intimating that a single engine had entered the tunnel at the Low Moor end about four minutes after the 1.15 p.m. train had entered at the Bowling end, and he is under the impression that he received the telegraph of the 1.15 p.m. train having passed out at the same time. There appears to be no reason for supposing that he received such a message, and he kept no record of the trains that he passed in and out of the tunnel.

The regulations of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company are, that such records should be kept, and there was a book for that purpose in the signal box at the Bowling end of the tunnel, but it had not been kept up since December 1866, and there appears to have been a want of proper supervision on the part of the Company in this respect.

There was no satisfactory reason for the guard of the 1.15 p.m. train not going back at once to protect his train, in accordance with rules 191 and 192 of the Company's regulations. Had he done so, he would no doubt have prevented the accident, which appears to have been caused by a mistake on the part of the signalman at the Bowling Junction, and the neglect of duty of the guard of the 1.15 p.m. train.

I have, &c.

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

F. H. RICH,
Captain, R.E., and
Major.