

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

17 October 1872

BoT Report into Accident at
Bradford.

(1 Page).

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),*

SIR,

Whitehall, 12th November 1872.

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 31st ult., the result of my investigation into the circumstances connected with a collision that occurred on the 17th ult., near Bradford station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, between a light engine and a passenger train.

I was informed that no passengers have complained of injury.

Bradford station is situated at the foot of a steep incline of 1 in 50, and to help a heavy train to ascend this gradient the objectionable practice exists of allowing a pilot engine to pursue it, overtake it, and push it up. This practice is the more objectionable at Bradford inasmuch as, 1st, the traffic is worked by the block-telegraph, so that every time an engine pursues a train the block-telegraph rules are permittedly broken; and, 2nd, about 100 yards from the departure end of the station there is a tunnel 150 yards long, which makes it especially difficult for the driver of the assisting engine to regulate his speed so as to overtake the train without bumping it.

On the present occasion, the 6.2 p.m. train for Huddersfield started punctually from Bradford, consisting of engine and tender, a van, and five coaches, three of the latter being coupled to the van with continuous breaks. The driver wanted no assistance up the bank, gave no intimation that he wanted any, and was not aware that any engine would follow him. As he was emerging from the tunnel alluded to, at a speed of seven or eight miles an hour, he felt a slight blow on the engine. It was not sufficient to cause him to stop, and the train went on to Low Moor. No damage was reported to have been sustained.

The pilot engine, when the passenger train started,

was waiting in a siding to go to its home at Low Moor, its day's work being done. The head shunter told the driver that he could follow the passenger train and help it up the bank; the driver accordingly whistled for the starting signal, which was lowered after the passenger train had started, and he followed it after about a minute's interval, expecting to overtake it some little distance on the Low Moor side of the tunnel. The tunnel, he states, was very full of steam, and he came upon the train unexpectedly while it was still in the tunnel, having no time to moderate his speed so as to avoid coming into slight collision with it.

The signalman declares that the passenger driver intimated that he wanted the pilot engine to help him up the bank, and accordingly lowered the signal for the pilot engine to come out of the siding and follow the train, in accordance with the permitted mode of working in such cases.

I do not believe that the passenger driver did give any intimation that he wanted assisting up the bank, but that the signalman in pursuance of the allowed practice of infringing the block-telegraph rules, in the case of engines following passenger trains to assist them up the bank, thought he might transgress them in the case of this pilot engine.

This collision was the result of an objectionable system of working. It is impossible but that accidents must again and again occur so long as it is permitted to continue. If I do not mistake, this is the fourth collision that has occurred on this railway owing to the same system of working during the last few months, and I think the directors would do wisely to forthwith order its discontinuance, before a more serious collision is the result.

I have, &c.,

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

C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
4th January 1873.*

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 21st ult., the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred on the 13th ult., near Radcliffe station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, between a passenger train and a pilot engine.

Three passengers are returned as having been bruised or shaken.

Radcliffe is the first station out of Bury, from which it is distant $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, on the main line between Bury and Manchester. There are two intermediate signal cabins, one at Buckley Wells level-crossing, where sidings join both main lines about half a mile from Bury, and a second, where the locomotive sidings join the up line to Manchester, about 700 yards from the first, or nearly a mile from Bury and a mile and a half from Radcliffe.

The evening of the 13th was stated to be foggy, the thickness of the fog being such that lights could not be seen at a greater distance than 40 or 50 yards.

At about 9 o'clock on the evening in question the Radcliffe station-master observed the 7.40 p.m. goods train from Rawtenstall to Salford pass through the station without any van, and concluded that a portion had been left behind. In a minute or two this rear portion entered the station at a slow speed (the gradient is falling from Bury to Radcliffe, and then commences rising towards Manchester), and the station-master directed the guard to let it run through

the station as far as possible, the result being that the van stopped at about the Manchester end of the platform. The cause of the dislocation of the train had been the fracture of the cotter hole in a draw-bar. The station-master then sent a porter to the goods yard (about half a mile on the Bury side of Radcliffe) to see if there was a pilot engine there, and also telegraphed to Bury to ask for one; and on the porter returning and saying there was not one, he sent him back again with fog signals to protect the line and caution anything coming. He next got some reply from Bury which he did not understand, and at the same time the fireman of the goods train arrived from the next station, where the accident to the goods train had been discovered, to know whether the engine was to come back along the wrong line for the tail of the train. To this the station-master replied that the engine must come along the proper line. It was now past 9.30, an up passenger train being due at 9.47, and the station-master getting uneasy went down the line to see if he could hear anything of the pilot engine he was expecting. Before he had gone very far he met the engine proceeding at a faster rate than he thought was right; he therefore pulled up the driver with a red light, and was informed by him that his engine had just been run into by the engine of the passenger train. On proceeding onwards he found the engine and one of two coaches off the rails, at a point 320 yards inside the distant-signal, which was showing a good red light visible at least 40 yards off.

The driver of the pilot engine on receiving orders through a Bury porter to proceed to Radcliffe to help a goods train got ready as soon as possible, and entered the main line, with the knowledge of the