

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

24 October 1874

BoT Report into Accident at
Miles Platting.

(2 Pages).

operation is, it appears, performed at the station 28 times a day, and has been so for many years. The weather was very bad on this particular night, and Holding must, apparently, have allowed the vehicles to gain a little too much speed before he applied the brake.

The accident was thus occasioned by a want of sufficient care on the part of the guard in not applying his brake so soon or so firmly as he ought to have done as his vehicles ran back down a gradient of 1 in 40 for about 100 yards, to a portion of nearly level line, combined with the fact that the rails were in a slippery condition, and the night was a very bad one. The guard, on measuring the distance from the point at which his vehicles started to the point at which the collision occurred, found it to be 180 yards.

I learn that there have been several accidents of

the same description, though not attended by serious results, on previous occasions, within the last 20 years, in working in a similar manner. This mode of working cannot be considered satisfactory. It need not be so much resorted to; but it can hardly be altogether avoided as long as the station remains in its present condition. The true remedy that is required, in order that the mode of working may be improved, is a general re-arrangement of the station, which would entail much expense, but which is urgently required for other reasons as well as with a view to the prevention of accidents of this description.

I have, &c.,

H. W. TYLER.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 27th November.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

SIR, *Plymouth, 21st November 1874.*

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 29th ult., the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended a collision that occurred on the 24th ultimo, between a passenger train and a coal train, near Miles Platting station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, when ten passengers are stated to have been injured, but most of the injuries received are believed to be slight.

The main line of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway between Victoria station, Manchester, and Miles Platting station, 1½ miles apart, is worked, with the assistance of the electric telegraph, on the absolute block system; but as there are extensive sidings and loop lines at Miles Platting, the working on this system is suspended between Miles Platting junction signal box and the Brewery siding signal box, which is about 687 yards to the east of the former. There are also advance or starting signals at the eastern end of the Miles Platting station down platform, worked from the Miles Platting junction signal box, and distant 210 yards from it; and 47 yards beyond the down starting signals, there is a down distant-signal worked from the Brewery siding signal box, besides two down home-signals at the Brewery siding signal box, one of which is for the main down line (the upper), and the other for the down loop line, which lies on the north side of the main down line, and is entered by a pair of facing-points on the main down line, situated opposite to the Miles Platting station down starting signals.

On the evening in question, an engine and tender, with 14 loaded waggons, reached Miles Platting junction by the branch up line from Ardwick, and after waiting some short time, this train was backed across to and then pushed along the main down line past the Miles Platting starting signals, and stopped on the main down line between the down distant and down home-signals worked from the Brewery siding signal box; the engine and tender which had brought the train from Ardwick, and had pushed it back along the main down line, standing 180 yards inside or east of the down distant-signal. This train would have passed along the down loop line, and thence been shunted into the down sidings, if the down loop line had not at the time been occupied by a special goods train for Normanton, which was being marshalled on the down loop line and adjacent sidings.

This Ardwick goods train was signalled forward to the Brewery siding signal box at 5h. 43m. p.m., and when it stopped on the main down line, it was protected by the Brewery siding down distant-signal, and

by a red light on a tail lamp belonging to the guard of the train, which had been placed on the tender so as to show a danger-signal towards Miles Platting station, the tender being behind the engine.

The 5.45 p.m. down passenger train from Victoria station to Oldham and Rochdale consisted of a tank-engine and six carriages. It reached Miles Platting station at 5.52 p.m., and left at 5.54, the signalman on duty in the junction signal box taking off the down main line starting signal for the train to proceed, observing, at the same time, that the Brewery siding down main line distant-signal was on at "danger" against this train.

The driver of this passenger train had, in the first instance, stated that all the down-signals were off for him to proceed; but, when questioned, he informed me that the Brewery siding down main line distant-signal was on at "danger," but that he could not see it, nor the light on the tender of the Ardwick goods train, until he got to within 20 yards of the distant-signal, on account of steam from the engine, and from a pilot engine which was on the up loop line. Subsequently, he declared, contradicting what he had previously stated, that the Brewery siding main line down distant-signal was on, and he saw it before he started from Miles Platting station, but that the down home-signal was off, and he took it to be a signal for him to proceed, and that he was not running more than five miles an hour when the collision took place, about 5.55 p.m.; his engine was thrown off the rails, and had both buffers broken, while the other engine was slightly damaged.

There is no doubt that the main line down home-signal was taken off, but not until after the collision had actually taken place,—and then it was taken off, as a signal to another pilot-engine which had come off the down loop line at the Brewery siding junction, and had then been backed along the down main line to look on to the Ardwick goods waggons, and haul them ahead for the purpose of shunting them into the down sidings.

The collision was undoubtedly caused by the neglect of the driver of the passenger train engine in not keeping a proper look out ahead, and in running past the distant-signal standing at "danger" without apparently taking any notice of it; but it seems that this distant-signal, placed only 47 yards beyond the Miles Platting down starting signals, is constantly passed by trains whilst standing at "danger," and the Company's regulations are indefinite, and, to a certain extent, sanction the practice.

So long as railway companies by their regulations, and the officers of those companies by supporting these

regulations, permit and encourage drivers to run past distant-signals whilst standing at "danger," without having previously brought their trains to a stand still, so long will collisions continue to take place between the distant and home-signals at stations and junctions.

It is literally a farce to tell a driver in charge of a passenger train standing alongside of a station platform, that he may start and proceed, by lowering a starting-signal, whilst a distant-signal 47 yards beyond indicates that there is danger in his proceeding, somewhere between the distant and home-signals of the junction or station to which he is going.

This particular down distant-signal should be removed, and the Miles Platting down starting signals should both be slotted and controlled by the signalman in the Brewery siding signal box, who will know far better than any one else when he can safely allow a train standing at Miles Platting station (which is a little more than a quarter of a mile off) to proceed either by the down loop or down main line.

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

I have, &c.,
W. YOLLAND,
Colonel.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 7th December.

LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

Sir, *Liverpool, October 31st, 1874.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the accident that occurred on the 9th of September, near the Huyton Quarry station, on the London and North-Western Railway.

In this case, after the 10 p.m. passenger train from Liverpool for Manchester, in leaving the Huyton Quarry station, had crossed the 9.10 p.m. express train from Manchester for Liverpool, travelling in the opposite direction, four door-handles, two door-straps, and portions of the wood-work of a carriage-door, were found lying on the ballast between the two lines of rails. A passenger riding in the train for Manchester, and in the compartment of the carriage from which the door was wrenched, has complained of injury.

A fireman, Richard Reilly, working with the Whiston tank engine, was standing, with his engine in the shed, on the east of the Huyton Quarry station, when he heard a crash just after the train for Manchester had passed him in starting from the Huyton Quarry station. He saw at the same time the 9.10 p.m. passenger train from Manchester for Liverpool passing in the opposite direction, at a speed which he considered to be about 35 miles per hour. It occurred to him that some of the passengers in one of these trains might have had their heads out of the carriages, and he took his hand-lamp and went eastward along the line to ascertain what had occurred. About 80 yards from the shed, and about 140 yards from the station, he found four door-handles, two door-straps, and portions of a door which had been smashed, all lying on the ballast or on the rails. Returning to the station he met the signalman, and handed over to him portions of the door, and the handles &c., which he had found.

The signalman on duty at the Huyton Quarry cabin, Hy. Beasley, lowered the signal in due course for the train to start from Huyton Quarry for Manchester about 10.27 p.m., and saw it go away in due course. He also saw the express train from Manchester for Liverpool passing him at full speed about the same time. He thought he heard something unusual, but attributed it to the engine in the shed, until he saw some one with a hand-lamp going up the line towards Manchester. He then, as soon as he had received "line clear" for the train, left his cabin, and walked up the line to see what had occurred. He received from the fireman of the tank-engine some handles and straps of a door, and took them to the station-master; and he placed portions of a door, which he found on the line, in the space between the two lines of rails.

The engine-driver of the 10 p.m. passenger train from Liverpool for Manchester, Peter Kilshaw, started from Huyton Quarry in due course, and was not aware

of anything unusual having occurred until he reached the Rainhill station. He was then told by some passengers that a door had been ripped away from a carriage. He went to examine the train with the guard, and noticed that one door was gone from a second or a third class carriage, but does not know which.

The guard with this train, George Jenks, started from Huyton Quarry with his train in due course. The train consisted of an engine and tender, eight carriages, and one break-van. He rode in the van, which was the sixth vehicle from the engine. He felt a "scrape" on the side of his van, which he thought must have been done by a piece of the communication-cord, till he got to Rainhill, when a porter shouted to him, to see some damage that was done to the train. He found that one door had been taken off a third-class carriage, the second from the engine, and that another door of the same carriage was damaged and flying back. Three sash-lights had also been broken in the carriage next behind the one which had lost the door. The doors should have been all locked on that side of the train, but he cannot say whether they were locked on that evening.

The guard of the 9.10 p.m. express train from Manchester for Liverpool, Isaac Marsden, states that he left Rainhill about 10.18 p.m., running 26 minutes late; and he felt, as he was approaching the Huyton Quarry station, that something scarred the side of the van. When he reached the Edge Hill station, some of the passengers called his attention to the windows of the train on the offside, of which five or six in the carriages, and two of the projection windows of the guard's van, were broken.

George Coldwell, the fireman of the 9.10 p.m. passenger train from Manchester for Liverpool, states that as he was approaching the Huyton Quarry station, leaning over the side of his engine, and looking to the front, he saw a train pass him in the opposite direction. His own train was going at a sharp speed. It was quite dark, and he felt, as the other train passed, that the tender was struck by something; and immediately afterwards, finding some broken pieces of glass on the tender, he came to the conclusion it must have been an open door in the other train. He went along the train with the guard, on the arrival of the train at Edge Hill, and found several windows broken.

On examination of the part of the line on which the above portions of door were found, I observe that there is an intermediate space of only 4 ft. 4½ in. in place of 6 ft. between the two lines of rails.

The Liverpool and Manchester railway was originally constructed with 4 ft. 8½ in. of intermediate space between the lines of rails; but there appears to be no explanation as to why even that amount of intermediate space has been still further narrowed for about 100 yards in this neighbourhood; and there is ample space, and no difficulty in the way of widening it out to 6 feet. I understand that the