

The  
**VIRTUAL MUSEUM**  
of the  
**LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY**

Accident Reports.

22 January 1875

BoT Report into Accident at  
Preston.

(2 Pages).

opposite his cabin at 7.35, and that the passenger train did not start till 7.50; that he could have turned the mineral train out of the main line into a siding, and should have done so, but was not aware (the fog preventing him seeing) whether the siding was occupied or not.

The signalman at the crossing cabin states that the mineral train was stopped by signal at the crossing, and that he allowed it to proceed at 7.40, remarking to the telegraph boy that, considering the fog, it was too close in front of the passenger train; that the latter was rung out at 7.49, and passed about 7.50., but that he gave the driver no warning notwithstanding the fog.

The signalman on duty at Haughton Lane states that the mineral train passed his cabin at 7.40, at a speed of six or seven miles an hour; that the passenger train was rung out to him at 7.50, and passed about 7.52, but that he gave the driver no warning, notwithstanding the fog, as the mineral train had passed more than 10 minutes, and could run to Fighting Cocks in about five minutes.

A platelayer attending to distant-signal lamps at Haughton Lane cabin gives much the same evidence as to time, &c., as the signalman. He says that the latter remarked to him, "Will the mineral train be clear?" and he replied, "It has been gone 10 minutes."

This collision was brought about in the first instance by the neglect of the signalman at the North Road station in permitting (particularly on what is on all hands allowed to have been a very foggy morning) a mineral train to precede a passenger train by an interval of only 10 minutes, when he had the means of turning the former off the main line into a siding.

Secondly, the collision would have been very likely prevented, or at any rate its effects greatly mitigated, had a fog-signalman been on duty at the Fighting Cocks

west junction down distant-signal, as this man would then have warned the driver of the passenger train of what was ahead at a considerably greater distance than his sight of the tail light of the mineral train gave him.

It is almost impossible that the margin of time between the passenger and mineral trains can have been so much (10 or 12 minutes) as made out by the signalmen at the level crossing and Haughton Lane, and I fear these men were not speaking the truth. Even, however, were their statements correct, they were greatly to blame in not having cautioned the driver of the passenger train, considering the dense fog that prevailed. Their own words as given in evidence are alone sufficient to condemn them.

This collision is one of that class for the prevention of which the block system of working is especially valuable, and I trust its occurrence may lead to the extension of this mode of working (which already exists on a great portion of the Darlington and Saltburn line) over the whole of the line with as little delay as possible.

The non-use of fog-signalmen on this section of the North-Eastern system has before this led to collisions, and it is difficult to understand why a practice in general use upon most of the other lines in the kingdom is still not adopted upon the Darlington section of the North-Eastern Railway.

The custom of running mineral trains on passenger lines without break-vans or guards is also one fraught with such danger that its continuance up to the present time on the Darlington section of the North-Eastern Railway is hardly credible.

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

I have, &c.,  
C. S. HUTCHINSON,  
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 15th March.

## NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,  
(Railway Department),  
Whitehall, 15th March 1875.*

SIR,

In compliance with the instructions contained in your appointment of 27th January, 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 accident that occurred on the 22nd of that month, in Fishergate tunnel, at the north end of Preston station, on the North Union Railway.

The North Union Railway is the joint property of the London and North-Western and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies. The Dock Street coal yard, which is at the north side of the tunnel, is under the management of the officer of the joint committee. The servants employed in that yard are servants of the joint committee, except the waggon examiners, who are employed and paid by the separate companies.

On the night in question, a train of empty coal waggons had to be made up at Dock Street yard. As there was no room in the yard to marshal the coal train, it was brought out on the main up line to carry on the shunting operations, and it was afterwards sent back into the yard.

During the shunting operations the break-lever and break dropped off one of the waggons, and remained on the railway, without anyone being aware of its being there. The train of empties had been put away in the yard about 25 minutes before the passenger train, which is due to leave Carlisle at 7.50 p.m., arrived at Preston.

On the day in question this passenger train left Carlisle 41 minutes late. It was detained there in

consequence of two trains from the north being late and by the shunting operations that were required? It was detained 15 minutes more at Tebay, as it had to be shunted at that place to allow the limited mail to pass. On leaving Tebay the train consisted of an engine and tender, a guard's van with guard, three coaches, an empty guard's van, three coaches, three fish trucks, three carriage trucks, two horse-boxes, and a break-van with guard at the rear of the train. It arrived at Preston station 62 minutes late. As it was entering that station, the guard's van, which was the fourth vehicle from the engine, was thrown off the rails by striking the break-lever which had dropped off the empty coal waggon. The step of the van was some inches lower than the steps of the carriages in front of it. The step of the van struck the break-lever, and pushed it across the rail. When the van was thrown off the rails it broke the connecting-rods of the points at the north end of Preston station, which led to the passenger platforms. The points were displaced and allowed the vehicles that followed the van to take a different road to what the front vehicles of the train had taken.

As the engine-driver of the passenger train was pulling up at Preston he noticed his train dragging heavily, and on looking round he saw some of the carriages off the rails. The guard's attention was attracted to the state of the train at the same moment by the pointsman calling out, so that both of these men applied their breaks and the train was stopped at once. Two passenger carriages and three covered waggons were found to be off the rails when the train came to a stand. No person was injured.

The accident was caused by the break-gear of an

empty coal waggon having fallen on to the permanent way without any person having noticed it. It dropped off in consequence of the bolts by which it was attached to the sole of the coal truck having been broken. They appeared to have been broken for some time, but the defect was not noticed by the waggon examiner as the break-gear was retained in its proper position by the spring of the waggon. I would recommend that the waggon examiners in

the Preston Dock Street yard should be the servants of the joint committee, as well as all the other men that are employed in that yard. The waggon that caused the accident belongs to Wood & Son, Scott Lane Colliery, near Wigan.

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

I have, &c.,  
F. H. RICH,  
Colonel, R.E.

- Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 3rd April.