The

VIRTUAL MUSEUM

of the

LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

19 February 1872

BoT Report into Accident at

Stanningley GNR.

(2 Pages).

and Port Carlisle Branch junctions, so that the signalmen may be informed of the destination of coming trains, &c., by something less likely to be mistaken than engine whistles.

I am sorry to have to add that at Port Carlisle Branch junction the very objectionable practice exists of keeping signalmen on duty for 18 hours at a spell between 6 o'clock on Friday evening and 6 o'clock on Monday morning, so as to change the duties of the night and day men without bringing in a relief man.

I have, &c.

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

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

Copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 22nd March.

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Manchester, 15th March 1872.

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 22nd ultimo, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision, that occurred on the 19th ultimo, at Stanningley station, on the Great Northern Railway.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company have got running powers over this section of the Great Northern Railway.

On the day in question, the Great Northern goods train, which is due to leave Bradford at 6.25 p.m. for Milford, arrived at Stanningley about 7.40 p.m.

It came to a stand at the up-line platform. The transhipment parcels were put into the train, and the guard and engine-driver of the train were told, that there were three waggons of goods that were to be taken on with the train. These waggons were in the goods yard, which is situated at the south or down-line side of the railway.

As soon as the transhipment parcels had been put in, the goods train was taken to the east end of the station, where there is a cross-over line to the goods yard.

The guard of the goods train detached the tender, the engine, and the front waggon from the rest of the goods train, as soon as it stopped at the east end of Stanningley station. These vehicles were taken forward so as to clear the cross-over road, and then the Stanningley station shunter, held the points of the cross-over road, for the detached portion of the goods train to run back into the goods yard, and be there coupled to the goods waggons that were to be taken on from Stanningley.

The signalman at Stanningley is stationed in a raised cabin, at the east end of the down-line platform. This signalman was aware that the goods engine had to go from the up line, across the down line, to the goods yard, to fetch the three waggons of goods. The custom at the station has been, that, before doing this, the engine-driver shall give three whistles, and that if the railway is clear, and the signalman is prepared to allow the engine to cross the lines, he shall give the signal for the engine-driver to do so, by exhibiting a white flag by day, or a white light by night; but if the engine is not to cross, the signalman shows a red flag by day, or a red light by night.

On the present occasion the guard of the goods train, after detaching the front portion of the train, went across to the goods yard, and the station shunter went to shift the points of the cross-over road. The engine-driver went forward on to the foot-plate to oil his engine, and the fireman, without whistling or giving any notice, started the engine backwards in order to cross over the down line to the goods yard.

The down-line signals had been lowered at this time for the Lancashire and Yorkshire express passenger train, which is timed to leave Leeds at 7.28 p.m. for Manchester. The waggon, the goods engine, and the tender were crossing the down line at the moment that the Lancashire and Yorkshire down express reached the spot, and the engine of the express train ran into the tender of the goods train at a speed of 25 to 30 miles an hour.

The engine and the front wheels of the tender of the passenger train were thrown off the line and damaged, and the three coaches of this train were damaged. The tender of the goods engine was knocked off the rails, and the two axles nearest to the passenger engine were broken. The driver and fireman and guard and two passengers in the express train were hurt. The driver of the goods engine, who was on the side-plate of his engine, was thrown off, and had his collar bone broken. This man had not sufficiently recovered from the accident, to give his evidence on the 13th instant.

The signalman at Stanningley observed that a part of the goods train had been detached, and was moving forward at the east end of the station, with the apparent object of crossing to the goods yard. As he had taken off the signals for the down express train, he sent one of the station porters to stop the goods engine from crossing. The porter could not get to the goods engine in time to prevent its crossing. The signalman committed an error of judgment in not keeping his signals at danger against the express, until he was satisfied that the goods engine would remain where it was. At all events he should have put back his down-line signals to danger, as soon as he suspected that the goods engine was going to move backwards across the down line.

The yard shunter, who altered the points for the goods engine to cross the down line, without having obtained the signalman's leave to send the goods engine across, showed great ignorance of proper railway working. This shunter had not been two months in railway employment; he held the points for the goods engine to cross the down line at the time that the down-line signals were lowered for the express. The superintendent of the Great Northern Railway Company stated, that the Company has some difficulty at the present time, in procuring experienced men for the many requirements of their line; but I think that the station-master at Stanningley showed a want of judgment, in selecting a man of less than two months' experience, for so difficult and responsible a duty as that of yard shunter, at a station where there is so much work to do, as there is at Stanningley.

The direct cause of the accident was the neglect of the engine-driver and fireman of the goods engine.

The former went forward to oil his engine at a time that he should have been attending to the driving of his engine.

This man could not appear to give his evidence, and it is possible that the fireman may have started the engine before the engine-driver was aware of his intention to do so, and before the latter could get back to the foot-plate to prevent the accident; but the fireman stated that the engine-driver told him to go on.

This man had been employed as a fireman on the Great Northern Railway for about six years. He showed how unfit he is, for anything but a subordinate situation, by his moving the engine across the line, without first calling for and obtaining the signalman's permission to do so. He actually started his engine,

at a time when the down-line signals were lowered for the down express train.

The Great Northern Railway Company propose to re-arrange the whole of the signals and points at Stanningley, on the locking principle, as soon as they make the junction at that station for their new line to Pudsey.

I would suggest that this work should be done at once at Stanningley, and that a rule should be issued forbidding any person, except the engine-driver, from running engines on the passenger lines, or to any point where the engines will interfere with the passenger lines, and also forbidding any engine from being moved, unless the engine-driver and an assistant are on the engine.

I have, &c.,

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

F. H. Rich,
Lieut.-Colonel, R.E.

Copies of the above report were sent to the Great Northern and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies on the 8th April.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 28th February 1872.

Sir,

I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in obedience to your minute of the 15th ult., the result of my inquiry into the circumstances that attended an accident to a coal train, which occurred on the 7th ult., near Tredegar Junction station on the Taff Vale Extension of the Great Western Railway, on which occasion the fireman of the second engine of the train, Edward Griffiths, was killed, and the driver very seriously injured.

It appears, that the 12h. 30m. a.m. coal-train from Pontypool Road to Aberdare consisted, on the morning in question, of two tank engines, six loaded, and 53 empty waggons, and a break van. It left Pontypool Road at 5h. 20m. a.m. having been rendered thus late in starting owing to a late arrival at Pontypool Road from Aberdare, caused by an accident to another train, about 3 miles from Aberdare, on the previous evening.

This coal-train was assisted up the steep incline of 1 in 45 from Pontypool Road to Blaendare sidings ($3\frac{1}{8}$ miles) by another engine behind the train; and after it had got over the summit, it proceeded down the incline at the ordinary speed, which is limited to 8 miles an hour, over the Crumlin Viaduct; and the driver of the leading engine informed me, that in order to pass Crumlin station, six miles from Pontypool Road, he was running with the steam on between Crumlin station and Penners crossing, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Pontypool Road, down an incline of 1 in 132, and without steam from Penners crossing to Tredegar Junction station, $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Pontypool Road, also down 1 in 135, at the rate of about 15 miles an hour; that as they passed Tredegar Junction station he turned the steam again on, and the speed was, in consequence, somewhat increased; and when they had passed the station about 200 yards, the driver of the second engine sounded the break-whistle, and, in consequence, the engines were brought nearly to a standstill; and as they were stopping so suddenly, the driver of the leading engine found out that the two engines had separated from the train of waggons. As soon as he discovered this he turned the steam full on and endeavoured to get into quick running again; but when they were going about four miles an hour the engines were overtaken and run into by the train of coal waggons, about 6 a.m., nearly half a mile west of Tredegar Junction station.

It also appears that the coupling between the second engine and the leading waggon had become unhooked, but had not broken.

The effect of the collision was to throw 11 waggons at the front of the train off the rails, one half to the right and the remainder to the left of the line; blocking both lines of way.

The leading waggon was forced on to the top of the second engine by the shock of the collision and greatly damaged it. The trailing buffers were smashed, the coal bunkers broken down, bent forward, and partly carried away; the gauge glass and steam pressure gauge were broken; break damaged, while the weather board was levelled down; and some damage was also done to the cover of the dome and to the water tank, side rails, and side connecting rods. Three of the waggons were badly broken and eight others more or less damaged.

The unfortunate fireman was found jammed between the coal bunkers and the fire box of the engine, standing erect, as if he had been attending to his break; but he died in a few minutes.

It is surmised that the engines and the train travelled together, without separating, down the greater part of the incline of 132–5, until the steam was turned on at Tredegar Junction station, as the signalman on duty there states, that when the engines passed him he noticed that both had the steam on, and that they were travelling at the usual speed, and he did not notice as the trucks passed him, that the leading one was uncoupled from the engines; but when they reached the home-signal at the west end of the station platform, he noticed that there was a space between the engines and the trucks. The night is described as being very dark, with drizzling rain at the time. The guard says it was a very rough night.

Nothing is known as to where the leading waggon became detached from the engine, or what occasioned it.

The engine had a chain with a hook at the end, and the waggon had a hook, shackle, and two links. The hook of the engine chain was passed into the shackle of the waggon, and thus it was only fastened by a single attachment. The draw-bar of the engine had no hook at its extremity.

The driver of the second engine discovered that the engines had separated from the trucks when he looked back, after turning on the steam at Tredegar Junction station, when he had got about 200 yards from the station, and then he sounded the break-whistle. He had been driving about 18 months, but only as a regular driver for four months. If he had had more experience it is probable that he would not have sounded the break-whistle, as that induced the driver of the leading engine to pull up suddenly. He says he did not shut off the steam on his own engine.

If the break-whistle had not been sounded, the probability is that the trucks would not have come into contact with the second engine, and this serious accident would not have occurred.

There is great room for improvement in the manner in which trucks are coupled together, and I don't think that this coupling should be a single one. It is impossible also to lose sight of the very large number of accidents that happen to the Companies' servants from having to get between the trucks either to couple or uncouple them.