

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

25 May 1853

BoT Report into Accident at

Lea Road

(4 Pages).

Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway.

the public road at the level crossing at the High Street and Pelham Street, Lincoln.

It appears from this letter that the company propose now to adopt the suggestion which was made to them by their Lordships, as referred to in my letter of the 29th ultimo, to the effect that no train or part of a train should be allowed to stand on the main line of the railway, unless in charge of a guard.

It would be undoubtedly greatly to the convenience of the public using the High Street and Pelham Street that the gates should be kept closed across the railway, instead of across the road; and if the above precaution be taken, and if engines be not left on the main lines without their drivers, and provided keys of chock-blocks for all the sidings be placed in charge of some responsible person at the Lincoln station, I should not perhaps be disposed to apprehend danger to the public, as far as the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway is concerned, from the gates of the Pelham Street level crossing being kept closed across the railway. I am unable, however, to report that it would, in my opinion, be more conducive to the safety of the public that the gates at the High Street and Pelham Street level crossings of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway should be kept closed across the railway, than that they should be kept closed across the public road.

I have, &c.,

H. W. TYLER,

Lieut. Royal Engineers,
Inspector of Railways.

The Secretary of the
Railway Department, Board of Trade.

Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway,

SIR, Secretary's Office, Manchester, October 31, 1853.

I AM in receipt of your letter of the 29th instant, in reference to the level crossings at Lincoln, and I have to inform you that we are prepared to adopt the conditions suggested, and instructions will be at once given to this effect.

I have, &c.,

James Booth, Esq.,

Railway Department, Board of Trade.

EDWARD ROSS.

Secretary.

PRESTON AND WYRE RAILWAY COMPANY.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, June 21, 1853.

SIR,

Preston and Wyre
Railway.

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you for the information of the Directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, a copy of a report which has been made to their Lordships by the officer appointed to inquire into the circumstances attending the accident which occurred at the Lea Road station on the 25th ultimo.

My Lords direct me to observe, that it appears from this report that several of the stations upon the lines of the company are of a most objectionable construction, not being provided with platforms, and in certain cases so placed that passengers are obliged to get out of the trains on the side of the carriages nearest to the adjacent line of rails, and that consequently, for the convenience and dispatch of the traffic, the doors of the carriages are not locked on that side as recommended by their Lordships in their circular letter of 21st May, 1852.

My Lords direct me to request you to urge upon the Directors the advisability of an inspection and examination of all stations of this construction, with a view to ascertain whether or not some arrangement may be made by which proper platforms may be erected so as to prevent the necessity of passengers getting out of the carriages on the wrong side, and so to obviate in the most satisfactory manner the objection which has been taken to the recommendation of their Lordships.

My Lords desire me, however, to observe, that the fact of some of the stations not being provided with proper platforms on the near side of the carriages, tends, in their Lordships' opinion, to increase rather than diminish the force of

their recommendation; for it cannot be doubted that whatever precautions are taken in the way of signals to prevent trains from passing stations on one line, while passengers are getting out of carriages on the other, these passengers must be exposed to considerable risk and inconvenience while so doing, and therefore should not be allowed to liberate themselves, but only get down upon the line with the permission of a proper servant of the company.

Preston and Wyre
Railway

This precaution may involve some delay, but my lords direct me to observe, that if the stations of the company are improperly constructed, the company incur a great responsibility, if for the sake of saving some little time or the expense attendant on an increase to their staff of servants, they neglect due precaution for the safety of passengers.

As respects the recommendation of the inspecting officer as to the erection of fencing round such platforms as are placed between the lines of rails, my Lords desire me to observe, that although such an expedient may be adopted, it would not, in the opinion of their Lordships, in anywise diminish the necessity that they conceive to exist for locking the carriages on the off side; and that such an expedient cannot be considered as providing nearly the same amount of accommodation to passengers which a proper platform would do, if placed on the near side of the line.

I have, &c.

To the Secretary of the

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company.

J. L. A. SIMMONS,

Capt. Royal Engineers.

Sir,

Manchester, June 2, 1853.

As directed by your letter of the 30th ultimo, I have inquired into the circumstances attending the unfortunate accident at the Lea Road station of the Preston and Wyre Railway on the 25th ultimo, by which two passengers, William Holding and Mary Ann M'Cann, lost their lives; and I have now the honour to report the result of my inquiries for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade.

The Preston and Wyre Railway is worked by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company; and the Lea Road station is a small station, about three miles north of Preston, on a slight embankment, without a platform, with a small station-house, and a porter in charge. On the 25th instant the six o'clock train from Fleetwood arrived at the Lea Road station at 6.52, which was about its proper time, and one of the passengers was observed by a platelayer employed on that part of the line, to get out on the wrong side and stand on the line, apparently talking to some person in a carriage. A platelayer seeing the express train from Manchester coming, shouted to him to "come off the line," and as he did not heed, rushed towards him, seized him, and dragged him off. This circumstance alarmed some of the passengers who were heard to cry "danger"—a panic seized others, and just before the express train passed, the passengers of the stationary train leaped from the carriages on both sides. About twenty of them jumped out on the wrong side, knocked down the platelayer, and ran down the embankment, and some of them over a thick hedge and into the field beyond. The express train was about seven minutes behind its time; the driver says that he saw the train from Fleetwood stop at the Lea Road station; he saw the first passenger get out, and the platelayer drag him off the line, when he was about 200 yards from the station; he then slackened speed. He saw about twenty passengers getting from the carriages on to the line, when about forty or fifty yards from the Lea Road station, when he reversed his engine and gave three sharp whistles to the guard, but did not succeed in stopping his train until he had passed the station some fifty yards, and run over the two last passengers who left the train standing at the station. The guard of the express train also states that he saw the passengers jumping from the stationary train at Lea Road, and instantly put on his brake.

The guard of the six o'clock train from Fleetwood states, that as they were standing at the Lea Road station he saw the express train from Manchester approaching, and observed the engine driver of the express train shut off his steam and blow his whistle on approaching the station. Hearing him then give three whistles, and hearing the noise of the passengers getting out of his train on the other side, he crossed over the buffers between the carriages, got

Preston and Wyre Railway. between the trains, cried to his passengers, "For God's sake, keep your seats," and held to the doors as much as he could.

The porter in charge at the Lea Road station states that he has been in that capacity for ten years, and has been thirteen years on the line. When it was first opened as a single line, about thirteen years ago, there was a small platform at the Lea Road station; but when it was opened as a double line, about six years afterwards, the platform was removed, and there has not since that time been any platform on either side of the line.

It is evident that this accident could not have occurred if the rule had been adhered to of locking the doors of the carriages on the off side of a train in all cases, a rule which has been before recommended for adoption from the Board of Trade; and it is possible, that if the passengers had seen a platform ready to receive them on the proper side, they might not, even in the state of panic in which they appear to have been, have jumped from the carriages on to the line.

I would, therefore, beg leave to suggest, that a recommendation should be made to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company, to have their carriages in passenger trains invariably locked on the off side.

The objections made to this rule (which was, I am told, in force some little time since) on the part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company is, that at several stations of the lines worked by them, the passengers are obliged to get out of the trains on the off side, because either there is no room for a platform on the proper side, or it would be necessary for the passengers to cross the line immediately after leaving the train, in order to arrive at their destination; and they then, in such cases, locked the near sides of the carriages. The public were sometimes, therefore, locked in on both sides, and strongly objected to it. In reference to these objections, I would remark that I think it would be better to allow an extra three minutes at the stations so situated, for unlocking and relocking the carriages, than to run the chance of a recurrence of a catastrophe similar to that at Lea Road, and that it is not desirable under any circumstances to lock the near sides of the carriages. I have been led also by this accident to observe, that there are other stations on the lines worked by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company without platforms, and that there are some stations at which there is no room to get out of the train on the proper (or near) side, and where there is a small platform placed between the lines of rails on which the passengers descend. I am informed that it is the strict rule that when a train stops at such stations, the other line shall be stopped by signals, and this is no doubt an element of security; but I am of opinion that it would be desirable also to place a stout handrailing round all platforms so situated, with a gate through which the passengers should be allowed to pass out at the proper time. I think also that it is very necessary that platforms should be added to all the stations of the lines worked by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, which are at present unprovided with them.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the servants of the company did all they could do, under the circumstances, at the Lea Road station, to save the lives of the passengers.

Captain Simmons, R.E.
 &c. &c.

I have, &c.,
 H. W. TYLER, Lieut. R.E.,
 Inspector of Railways.

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.
 Secretary's Office, Manchester, June 23, 1853.

SIR,

I BEG to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st instant, enclosing a copy of the report of Lieutenant Tyler, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances attending an accident which occurred at the Lea Road station of the Preston and Wyre Line on the 25th ultimo, and to state that they shall be submitted to the directors of this company at their next meeting. I have sent copies to the committee of management of the lessees of the Preston and Wyre Line.

I am, &c.,

JOHN DUNSTAN, JUNIOR,
 Secretary.

To the Secretary of the
 Railway Department, Board of Trade.

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.
Secretary's Office, Manchester, July 12, 1853.

Sir,

I HAVE been desired to state that the remarks in your communication of the 21st ultimo, arising out of the report of Lieutenant Tyler, R. E., upon the circumstances attending the accident which occurred at the Lea Road station of the Preston and Wyre line of railway on the 25th May last, as far as they relate to the provision of platform accommodation, have been submitted to the managing committee of the lessees of that railway, and that an order has been passed by the committee to the following effect, viz:—

Preston and Wyre
 Railway.

"That platforms be made on each side of the line at the stations, in conformity with the communication from the Board of Trade."

With reference to that portion of your letter which refers to the locking of the outer doors of the carriages, I am to state that the directors of this company have issued such instructions as appears to them expedient under the circumstances, and as will add, they hope, to the proper protection of the passengers.

I am, &c.,

JOHN DUNSTAN, JUNIOR.
 Secretary.

To the Secretary of the
 Railway Department, Board of Trade.