

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

3 February 1854

BoT Report into Accident at
Leyland.

(3 Pages).

York, Newcastle,
and Berwick
Railway.

evidently arises from the porters being overworked, and should receive the immediate attention of the company.

I must draw attention to the dangerous position which the guards of coal trains occupy; not only is it a source of danger to themselves, but the recent collision shows that from the improper mode of fixing the tail light, it may be a cause of danger to others. On a line where there is a mixed traffic of minerals and passengers, it does not appear to me right that the mineral trains should be left without sufficient break power, which they cannot have unless the guard is provided with a proper break van, and the practice of a guard running along the top of the coal waggons should be forbidden.

The signalman at Pelaw Main is much to blame for not having told the driver of the passenger train that there was a coal train shunting waggons only a mile ahead. And it was a great omission not detaining the coal train at Pelaw Main, but for this the company is responsible, as the 41st Rule does not apply to the branch lines.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE WYNNE,

Captain Royal Engineers.

*The Secretary of the
Railway Department, Board of Trade.*

NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, February 26, 1854.*

SIR,

North Devon
Railway.

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the enclosed copy of a report which they have received from their inspecting officer of his inquiry into the circumstances which attended the accident which occurred on the 3rd instant at the Leyland station on the North Union Railway.

My Lords direct me to call your particular attention to those parts of the inspecting officer's report in which he remarks upon the insufficiency of the signals at the Leyland station, and upon the dangerous manner in which the traffic from the private collieries is allowed to be worked over the line.

My Lords trust that the warning which they have received by this accident will induce the directors to give their attentive consideration to the subject, for a heavy responsibility will rest upon them if any accidents should arise from these causes after the defects in the arrangements have been pointed out to them.

I have, &c.

DOUGLAS GALTON.

*The Secretary of the
North Union Railway Company.*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, February 23, 1854.*

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 8th instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 3rd instant, at the Leyland station of the North Union Railway.

The Leyland station is about four miles and a quarter to the south of Preston. This portion of the North Union Railway is leased to the London and North-western and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies, and it is worked by a joint committee of these two companies, which meets monthly, and alternately in Manchester and Liverpool. The stationary servants on the line are employed by the "Lessees of the North Union Railway," and are furnished with the regulations of both of the leasing companies; but all the railway companies' trains are conducted by the servants of the companies to which they respectively belong, who are supplied with the regulations of their own company only. The line is also traversed daily by trains from six collieries, and each train is under the charge of servants employed by the owners of the colliery to which it belongs. The total number of trains and engines passing the Leyland station is stated to be 815 weekly, which would give upwards of 116 daily, nearly five hourly, and therefore nearly one for every twelve minutes throughout the week, night and day, even supposing the same number to run on Sundays as on other days.

A goods train left Preston for Liverpool at six o'clock on the morning of the

3rd instant, and arrived at Leyland at 6.25, with twenty-six waggons, one of which was to be left in a siding of the latter station. Whilst this waggon was being shunted into the siding, a coal train, which is said to have left Preston at 6.20 for the Darlington Colliery, with thirty empty waggons attached, ran into the tail of the goods train, and two of the empty waggons fell across the down line. A coal train, belonging to Mr. Hargreaves of the Coppull Colliery, coming up shortly afterwards in the opposite direction, struck these empty waggons, and one of the breaksmen was thrown from his van, and so much injured that he died four hours afterwards. The last-mentioned coal train was composed of engine, tender, and thirty-five waggons.

The atmosphere was foggy, and the rails were greasy, on the morning of the 3rd instant, at Leyland. The goods train left Preston half an hour late, in consequence of having had a great amount of shunting to get through before the train could be formed, and when it arrived at Leyland (at which station it was not timed to stop) the distant signal towards Preston was set at danger. This distant signal, however, is only 240 yards from the signalman's hut, twenty-six yards from the end of the siding, and 180 yards from the points leading to the siding. The tail of the goods train extended considerably beyond it, and it could not be considered as affording any security from collision from an approaching train. A man who had lost his arm by a recent accident, happened to be riding in the van with the breaksmen of the goods train, on his way to Warrington; and the breaksmen sent this man back with two explosive signals, whilst he went forward to work the points of the siding in which the waggon was to be left. Had it not been for the accidental presence of this man, the explosive signals would not have been used at all. As it was, one explosive signal was fired on the rail at 186 yards from the tail of the goods train, and this was the first notice the driver of the coal train received of his danger, but it was not sufficient to admit of his doing more than slacken his speed from about fifteen to twelve miles an hour, before the first collision took place. The breaksmen of the goods train, seeing that some of the waggons had been thrown across the down line, ran to the gatesman at the station, and told him to put on the down signal, which was done; but this signal was unfortunately only seventy-three yards from the station, and the warning afforded thereby, as well as by a white light waved up and down by the gatesman, and by a red light shown from the engine of the goods train, was not more than enough to enable the driver to slacken speed slightly, and to jump off his engine for the purpose of saving himself. The driver of the goods train ran to the down line, sanded the rails, in order to afford the coal train driver assistance in stopping his train, and shouted to him his advice as to the safest side of the engine from which to jump.

There is a signal at 517 yards from the down line signal, and therefore at 590 yards from the station, which is ordered to be set at danger whenever the distant station signal shows danger; but as it was not possible to see from one to the other in a foggy state of the atmosphere such as existed on the morning in question, this arrangement was worse than useless, for the driver of Mr. Hargreave's train, thinking that a Lancashire and Yorkshire train might possibly have been shunting at Leyland, ordered his fireman to hold on his break whilst approaching this first signal; and it was only after observing that it showed "all right" that he made up his mind to pass the Leyland station at speed. The gradient from the farther signal is 1 in 100 descending towards Leyland, and is succeeded by a descending gradient of 1 in 500 to the point of collision.

It is extraordinary that a station approached from the south on so severe a gradient, and continually passed by such a vast number of trains, should not have been better provided with signals. I trust that the lessees of the North Union Railway will not now, however, neglect to erect such signals as shall prevent a recurrence of such catastrophes.

In my report upon a collision which occurred at the Spring's Branch Junction of this railway on the 7th ultimo, I felt it my duty to remark upon the circumstance, that the drivers and servants of the colliery companies were allowed to convey trains over the line. Although Mr. Hargreave's driver cannot be considered as in any way blameable for the present accident, I cannot but look with apprehension upon the state of things disclosed in the evidence which I received in the course of my inquiry. I found that neither the driver nor the breaksmen of Mr. Hargreave's train were provided with time tables, nor with any regulations, excepting a copy of North Union

North Union
Railway.

regulations which had been supplied to the driver seven years since. Mr. Hargreave's trains are worked three times a day in each direction in winter, and twice a day in summer; and the driver, having no particular time for starting, states that he studies the time bill posted up at the Coppull station, and gets to and from Preston between the other trains, as soon as he can after his train is ready. The danger of such an arrangement may be conceived, when it is remembered that the trains from five other collieries are worked in a somewhat similar manner, independently of each other, over the same portion of railway. The want of efficient signals at the stations cannot, at all events, under such circumstances, be excused.

I have, &c.,
H. W. TYLER,

*The Secretary of the
Railway Department, Board of Trade.*

*Lieut. Royal Engineers,
Inspector of Railways.*

Monmouthshire
Railway.

MONMOUTHSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, March 7, 1854.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to forward to you the enclosed extract from a report they have received from Captain Wynne, on the circumstances attending the death of Owen Evans, who was killed upon the Western Valleys Railway on the 17th ult. And I am to request that the attention of the Directors of the Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Company may be immediately called to Captain Wynne's remarks on the dangerous state of the crossings of the railway between Cour-y-bella and the Dock Street Dock Station, where the Cardiff road runs alongside of the railway, and the access from the road to the houses on the other side of the line is through turnstile openings in the wall that separates the road from the railway.

On two former occasions their Lordships have represented to the directors the great danger arising from these crossings; copies of Captain Simmons's reports of inspection of the 2d and the 31st July 1852, containing observations on the subject, having been transmitted to you, in his letters of the same dates, for the purpose of being laid before the directors. And their Lordships are now obliged to repeat those representations, and to urge upon the directors the propriety of taking steps for doing away with those crossings, or if that be not practicable, of adopting some arrangement, like that suggested by Captain Simmons, and further explained by Captain Wynne, for at least diminishing the danger. And their Lordships trust that effectual measures may be taken for this purpose without delay, and that it will not be again necessary for them to remark on a state of things that recently led to the fatal accident above mentioned, and had previously, as they are informed, caused the loss of other lives.

I am also to request that you will bring to the notice of the directors the subject of the level crossings of the public thoroughfares in Newport, referred to in the latter part of Captain Wynne's report, in order that the regulations of the 47th section of the Railways Clauses Consolidation Act may be duly complied with, by the erection of gates, and the appointment of gatekeepers at these crossings, in conformity with the provision for that purpose in the Company's Act, 8 & 9 Vict. c. 169.; and my Lords desire to be informed at the earliest opportunity of the steps that shall have been taken by the directors in compliance with their Lordships' directions.

I have, &c.,

DOUGLAS GALTON,

Captain Royal Engineers.

*The Secretary of the
Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Company.*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, March 2, 1854.*

MEMORANDUM ON Minute of 22d February, referring to me a communication made to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade by the Coroner of Newport, acquainting their Lordships of the verdict of a Coroner's jury on the