

The
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of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

13 October 1871

BoT Report into Accident at

Mytholmroyd.

(2 Pages).

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 4th November 1871.

SIR, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in obedience to your minute of the 17th ultimo, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended a collision that occurred on the 13th ultimo at Mytholmroyd station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, between a passenger train and a goods train.

There was only one passenger in the train, and he, as well as the guards of the two trains, was slightly hurt.

It appears that a special goods train, consisting of engine and tender, 29 loaded waggons, and the guard's van at the tail of the train, reached Sowerby Bridge from Normanton at 11h. 55m. p.m., at which time the 10h. 35m. p.m. up-passenger train from Normanton to Manchester, then due at Sowerby Bridge station, was 15 minutes late. The goods train was turned into the loop line, and afterwards directed to proceed, and shunt at Hebden Bridge (which is $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles beyond Sowerby Bridge), by the night inspector (Evans) then on duty, and the goods train accordingly proceeded on its way at midnight.

There are two intermediate stations between Sowerby Bridge and Hebden Bridge, viz., Luddendenfoot, at 2 miles, and Mytholmroyd, at $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Sowerby Bridge. The approach to Mytholmroyd from Sowerby Bridge is covered by a distant and a repeating signal worked by the same lever and wire. The distant signal is 748 yards east from the lever handle, and the inner or repeating signal is 354 yards nearer to the station.

The special goods train had "all right" signals shown to it at Luddendenfoot station, and also at Mytholmroyd, and the driver of that train was not aware that anything was wrong until after the engine had passed the repeating signal, when he felt a little check; the waggons became uncoupled at the sixteenth waggon from the engine, and the speed was accelerated; he says he was running at the time about 15 miles an hour, intending to run through Mytholmroyd station without stopping. The first notice to the guard of the goods train was his van being run into by the engine of the passenger train, and having the leading end forced on to the top of the waggon in front, while he was thrown down to the bottom of his van and hurt in the back. The collision occurred at about 12h. 20m. a.m., and it happened about 116 yards inside the inner or repeating signal. The engine of the passenger train had its buffers knocked off, and the buffer beam broken; none of the carriages were damaged. Three waggons of the goods train were damaged, two of them very much, and the other slightly, while the van had a buffer-casting and a foot-board broken. Two of the waggons and the leading wheels of the van were thrown off the rails.

The 10h. 35m. p.m. up-passenger mail train consisted of an engine and tender, three carriages, and a break-van at the tail of the train, the carriages and break-van being fitted with continuous breaks. According to the guard, this train reached Sowerby Bridge at 12h. 8m., and left at 12h. 10m., he having asked the night foreman or inspector (Evans) if there was any train gone on in front of them, and was answered that a goods train had gone about 15 minutes, or something like 15 minutes, and that it was to shunt at Hebden Bridge. The driver of the train was not told how long the train had left, but only that it was to shunt at Hebden Bridge. A green light was shown on the station signal at Luddendenfoot to this train, and the signalman on duty there informed me that the special goods train passed at 12h. 10m., and the passenger train at 12h. 17m., and that he showed a green light

on the up-station signal, and also with his hand-lamp to this passenger train; but the fireman of this train says the hand lamp showed a white light. The exhibition of a green light at Luddendenfoot station would imply, according to the company's regulations, that the goods train was not 10 minutes in advance of the passenger train.

The driver of the passenger train stated that when he came in sight of the Mytholmroyd signals both were white; that he did not see them when he came out of the cutting, and he thinks they might be 100 yards from it when he saw the first or outside signal, and that he was running, as near as he could say, at the rate of about 25 miles an hour; that after he got inside the first signal, about 200 yards, he perceived the goods train; that he saw three red lights; that he whistled two or three times for the guard's breaks, shut off the steam, and reversed the engine, and the tender break was applied, but he had not time to put the steam on the reverse way; and that he was running near upon 20 miles an hour when they struck the van of the goods train.

The statement of the fireman, not a regular fireman but a cleaner acting as fireman, throws a very different light on the circumstances. He says, that as they were approaching Mytholmroyd, and running about 25 miles an hour, as they got round the curve, they observed that both signals were off, and they saw the red lights on the goods train when they first saw the signals, and they took it that the goods train was on the other road, and had been shunted for them; that they saw this before they reached the outside distant signal, and did not find out that the red lights were not on the other line until they were about 40 yards from them, and then the driver shut off the steam, whistled for the guard's breaks, and he put on the tender break.

This statement is strongly corroborated by the fact, that the first intimation the guard of this train received that anything was wrong, consisted in his head going through the glass of the window of his van, and that there was no warning or whistle from the engine. He was thrown down on the floor of the van, and cut in the jaw.

It also appears that, when the company's officers first inquired into the circumstances, this driver gave the same explanation as the fireman had given to me; and then it was pointed out to him, that if the goods train had been shunted to the other road, the three red lights would then, in accordance with the company's regulations, have been reversed and show the red lights towards a down train and white lights to an up train.

I did not see Evans, the night inspector; he had left the company's service and had got employment with the London and North-Western Railway Company; but if the evidence which I have recited be correct, the special goods train should not have been permitted to proceed beyond Sowerby Bridge station until after the passenger train had gone by; but as it was allowed to go, the driver of the passenger train should have been specially warned that the goods train was only ten minutes in advance. I think there is no question whatever, that the passenger train overtook the goods train as it was reaching Mytholmroyd station, and in consequence found the signals at all right; although the night-watchman states that he put on the distant signal when the engine had passed inside the inner or repeating signal. I have no doubt it was done; but probably after the passenger train had passed it.

The true explanation of the causes which produced this collision is afforded by the fireman's evidence. Both driver and fireman thought the goods train had been shunted to the other line, and did not find out their mistake until it was too late to take the necessary

steps for stopping the passenger train. The blame rests entirely upon the driver, a man of experience.

The collision could not have occurred had the traffic been worked on the absolute block system, by which a greater amount can be safely worked than on any other system.

This company is nearly at the head of the list of

those paying large dividends, but it is exceedingly slow in introducing improvements that will provide for the public safety and convenience,

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

I am, &c.,
W. YOLLAND,
Col., R.E.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
30th November 1871.*

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 9th inst., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 3rd inst. at Accrington station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway between a passenger train and an engine to which it was about to be attached.

Two passengers are returned as having been slightly shaken.

At Accrington station (the junction of lines from Manchester, Preston, and Colne), situated at the foot of a steep incline of 1 in 39 on the line from Manchester, a train is made up for Preston and Liverpool, consisting of portions of trains from Manchester and Colne due at Accrington at 6.23 and 6.25 respectively, the combined train being due to leave at 6.38. The engine which takes the train from Accrington to Preston, &c. generally travels light from Colne, following the train due at Accrington at 6.25, and if it arrives at Accrington in good time proceeds at once into the siding in which the combined train is afterwards made up, the portions from Manchester and Colne being allowed to drop down by gravity against it; the engine then pushes the train out of the siding till it clears the junction points, when it starts forward on its journey. If however, as more frequently happens, the light engine is late in reaching Accrington, and the two portions of the train are already in the siding, they are drawn out of the siding by a pilot engine, the light engine joining the train on the main line, and at once proceeding with it on its journey. It should be mentioned that the siding joins the main line some distance up the incline of 1 in 39.

On the evening in question the light engine which was to take the 6.38 p.m. down train to Preston &c., did not reach Accrington till about 6.45 p.m., its train consisting (in the order in which it was to travel to Preston) of two carriages and a break van (for Preston), a carriage, a break van, and two carriages (for Liverpool), seven vehicles in all, the break vans being coupled to the two carriages next to them with continuous breaks. Immediately before the train left the siding it was joined by two guards only just arrived at Accrington with an up train from Preston &c., the guard of the Preston portion being considered in charge of the train. On the arrival of the train-engine

the driver of the pilot engine, which had joined the Liverpool end of the train, was directed by the inspector to draw it out on the main line, and he accordingly did so by permission of the junction signalman, who stopped him as soon as the tail of the train had cleared the siding points some 10 or 12 yards, and at the same time gave a green light to the driver of the train-engine, which was standing on the main line, as a permission for him to back up to his train. Directly the pilot engine stopped the fireman unhooked the train without any previous communication with the guards, and the carriages at once moved down the incline meeting the train engine in slow motion towards them, the driver of the latter having observed them coming, and having nearly stopped his engine before the collision took place, after the carriages had run down about a train's length.

Both guards of the train knew nothing of the collision till it occurred, and both declare that they thought the train-engine was pushing them out of the siding and that therefore there was no need for them to use their breaks.

Nothing left the rails, and there appears to have been no damage whatever sustained by either carriages or engines.

This collision was caused by an unsafe mode of working, as the driver of the pilot engine ought not to have allowed it to have been unhooked from the train until he had either been informed by signal from the guard in charge that the breaks were applied, or had made sure that the train-engine had joined the other end of the train.

It was certainly the duty of the guard in charge of the train to have, before starting, made himself aware whether the train-engine was or was not attached, and, however hurried he may have been in joining his train, he is to blame for having neglected to do this.

Since the collision occurred an order has been issued (stated to have been in existence previously, but lost sight of) that the pilot engine is never to be unhooked from the tail of the train until the train-engine has joined it in front. This order, if enforced, will no doubt prevent the recurrence of a similar collision.

I am glad to be able to report that Accrington is now supplied with interlocked signal apparatus.

I have &c.,
*The Secretary
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.*

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

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department,
Board of Trade,*

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 9th inst., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision, which occurred on the 6th inst. at Blackburn station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, between two passenger trains.

Two passengers are returned as having been slightly injured.

At about 8.45 a.m. on the 6th inst., a passenger train, consisting of engine, tender, three carriages, and a van, coupled together with continuous breaks, was standing at the west end of Blackburn station ready to depart to Chorley and Wigan, so soon as a train due

from Chatburn at 8.40 should have arrived on the same line of rails and have transferred any passengers it might have. In approaching Blackburn station from the east the line descends very slightly, and is then level through the station. The station master, who was on the platform, noticed the Chatburn train enter the east end of the station at very little more than walking pace. Instead, however, of its stopping as usual, and as he expected it to do on the present occasion, the engine a few yards off the tail of the Wigan train, it ran into it at a very low speed. The morning was clear and dry.

The driver of the Chatburn train, a man of 12 years service as such, started from Chatburn five or six minutes late, with a train consisting of engine and tender, van and five carriages, coupled together with Fay's continuous breaks, those of the last carriage but