

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

1 January 1875

BoT Report into Accident at

Mytholmroyd.

(2 Pages).

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
30 January 1875.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 9th inst., the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred on the 1st instant near Mytholmroyd station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the 2.30 p.m. express train from Normanton to Liverpool overtook and came into collision with the 1.30 a.m. goods train from Normanton to Liverpool at a point 135 yards outside the Mytholmroyd up distant-signal.

Seven passengers were more or less injured.

The buffer-beam of the engine of the passenger train was broken, and the lubricators broken off; the bodies of the carriages at the rear of the train were shifted on their frames.

In the goods train the rear break-van left the rails and had its front knocked in, by coming in contact with some iron bars which were projecting from the back of the last waggon; the last two waggons and the rear wheels of the third last were knocked off the rails and damaged, and the train was separated in two or three places.

Mytholmroyd station is situated a mile and 1,130 yards on the Manchester side of Luddenfoot station, which latter, again, is 1½ miles from Sowerby Bridge. Mytholmroyd is approached on a rising gradient of 1 in 377, and is provided with an up distant-signal about 800 yards from the station; but this signal, owing to the line being curved, and in cutting, and being obscured by brushwood, can be seen by an approaching driver for a distance of only about 350 yards.

The present collision occurred 135 yards outside this distant-signal, or about a mile from Luddenfoot station, at a point where, owing to the above-mentioned curve and cutting, the van of the goods train could be seen by the driver of the passenger train for a distance of only about 240 yards.

The block system is not yet in force on this part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire system, but as the necessary preparations are nearly completed it will be very shortly put in operation.

The 1 a.m. goods train from Normanton to Liverpool had, in consequence of a dense fog the previous day, been much delayed upon its down journey, and started from Normanton at 12 noon, 11 hours late. It picked up some waggons at Wakefield, and left it with a load equivalent to 26 loaded waggons (some of the waggons being double), and a break van; the maximum load for the engine was 30 loaded waggons, but the driver, in consequence of the severe weather, had objected to take a full load.

According to the evidence of the driver, who had served in that capacity for two years, his engine was a powerful new 6-coupled engine, with 17-inch cylinder and 24-inch stroke. He took water at Mirfield, where its quality is not very good, and his engine commenced priming before he reached Sowerby Bridge at 3.30 p.m. Here there was a detention of a quarter of an hour from oiling, watering, and signals, and he left this station at 3.45, the time the express was due to leave it. He did not inquire how the express was running as to time, but concluded that he would not have been allowed to start had there not been time for him to reach Hebden Bridge (the next station beyond Mytholmroyd), and there get out of its way. He did not mention the fact of his engine priming to the foreman porter at Sowerby Bridge, and he says that the latter merely told him to hurry away as the passenger train was due, and did not tell him to shunt at Luddenfoot. After starting from Sowerby Bridge his engine continued to prime and he could not get up his proper speed. He passed Luddenfoot station at from 10 to 12 miles an hour,

and on entering the curve and cutting near the Mytholmroyd up distant-signal his engine commenced slipping, and his speed was gradually reduced to four or five miles an hour, when he was run into by the passenger train, just after his engine had passed the distant-signal. He had not whistled for his guard to go back, hoping to be able to get his train well inside the Mytholmroyd distant-signal so as to be protected by it. This signal was lowered when he came in sight of it, and remained lowered till after the collision. He observed the passenger train coming round the curve and heard its driver whistle as soon as he saw it. It was snowing slightly at the time of the collision.

The guard of this goods train, who had acted in that capacity since last March, states that they stopped a quarter of an hour at Sowerby Bridge, but were not told to shunt there for the express, and that he had not remembered it was due when they left Sowerby Bridge; that he did not notice his train losing speed till they were approaching the Mytholmroyd distant-signal, when it began to slacken all at once, and was reduced to five or six miles an hour; that he jumped out of his van in consequence a short distance outside the signal, which he saw was down, and that just as he did so, the passenger train came round the curve and ran into his van before he had time to go back and give the driver any warning; that he observed that the engine was reversed, and the train breaks applied, and that the engine ran a very few yards after striking his van.

The 2.30 p.m. express passenger train from Normanton to Liverpool left Normanton punctually, but was delayed by signal at various places, and arrived at Sowerby Bridge 17 minutes late. Some Bradford carriages were here attached to the train, there was a still further delay of three minutes, and it started at 4.5 (having next to stop at Todmorden), consisting of engine and tender, 10 carriages, and two break-vans, two carriages being coupled with continuous breaks to each of the vans.

The driver of the train, Henry Redman, who had served for five years as driver, states that after leaving Sowerby Bridge he found the signals against him at the next cabin, but that they were taken off on his whistling, and he got no green flag; that at Luddenfoot East the signals remained at danger till he had nearly stopped at the home-signal, when it and the Luddenfoot West home signals were lowered, and that he received no green signal from the signalman at the latter place, but that this man pointed ahead, by which he (Redman) understood that the signals had been on in consequence of a train in front; that he then proceeded and had attained a speed of about 20 miles an hour, when he caught sight of the Mytholmroyd distant-signal lowered, and a few yards further on of the break-van of the goods train, on which no tail lights were burning, though it was now getting dusk; that he had time to shut off steam, reverse his engine, whistle for the breaks, re-apply steam, and jump off before his engine struck the van of the goods train (which he thinks was either entirely stopped, or going at a very slow pace, his own speed being considerably reduced), with the damage before described.

Redman's fireman estimates the speed at the Mytholmroyd distant-signal, which was off, at from 20 to 25 miles an hour, and states that a locomotive inspector who was riding on the foot-plate applied the tender breaks immediately the break-van was seen, after which he, then the foreman, and next the driver jumped off.

The head guard riding in the centre van estimates the speed when the break whistle was given (just after he had seen the Mytholmroyd distant-signal off) at 30 miles an hour; that he had tried to get his break well on before the collision, which occurred at 4.14. He was thrown down in his van, but not hurt.

The guard in the rear van thinks the speed at the Mytholmroyd distant-signal, which was off, was 20 miles an hour; he heard the break whistle directly after passing it, and had time to get his break partly on before the collision. He was thrown down and slightly hurt in the back.

The signalman at Luddenfoot west cabin, who keeps a register of passing trains, says that the goods train passed at 4.4 at a speed of about 10 miles an hour, and that the engine seemed master of its train; that he kept his signals at danger against the passenger train, which had nearly stopped at the platform, till 4.11, when he lowered them, and showed the driver a green flag, and said to the fireman as he passed the cabin that there was a goods train ahead, and that he pointed in that direction. There was no fog, but it was dull and snowing.

The signalman at Mytholmroyd had his signals off and was watching for the express train when he saw the engine and a waggon or two of the goods train coming slowly round the curve by the distant-signal. He had just put the latter to danger when he heard the noise of the collision. He made the time at which it occurred 4.11½.

The station-master at Luddenfoot states that after the passenger train had been slacked and nearly stopped at the platform, the signalman in the west cabin lowered his signals, and waved the driver forward with a green flag.

This collision occurred without any grave misconduct on the part of the Company's servants, but was brought about mainly by want of judgment on the part of the driver of the goods train; 1st, in not informing the foreman porter at Sowerby Bridge that his engine was priming, and that he had consequently better let the express train pass him there; 2nd, in not stopping under protection of the Ludden-

foot signals when he found his engine still further losing speed; 3rd, in not sounding his whistle for his guard to go back, when his speed became still further reduced, after passing Luddenfoot. The guard was also to blame for not having had his tail lamps lit. The rules of the Company do not hold a guard responsible for getting out of his train and going back until his driver whistles for him to do so. There is some excuse to be made for these men, seeing that they had, at the time of the collision (owing to delays on the down journey caused by the previous day's fog), been on duty for an uninterrupted period of 22 hours, and may well therefore have been somewhat less on the alert than they should have been.

The driver of the passenger train, seeing that he had been so recently stopped by what he knew was a train ahead, was hardly proceeding with the caution that he should have exercised along a part of the line where his view was very limited.

This collision is peculiarly one of that class which can only be effectually prevented by block system working, and it is satisfactory to know that this will now very shortly be in force on this part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire system.

The continuous breaks with which this train was supplied were, no doubt, very useful in mitigating the effect of the collision. Had they been in the driver's hands they would probably have been still more useful.

It is desirable that the Mytholmroyd up distant-signal should be placed so that it may be better seen by approaching drivers.

I have, &c.,

C. S. HUTCHINSON,

Licent.-Col. R.E.

The Secretary
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 5th March.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
30 January 1875.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 18th instant, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 13th instant, at Bolton station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the engine of the 6 a.m. passenger train from Rochdale to Liverpool and of the 11.5 p.m. goods train from Mirfield to Liverpool came into collision as the latter was running out (against signals) from a siding crossing one of the down lines close to the up end of the Bolton down platform.

One passenger is stated to have complained of having been shaken.

In the passenger train the front wheels of the first carriage left the rails, and the steps and foot-boards on the left sides of some of the carriages were injured. In the goods train the four front wheels of the engine left the rails, and the engine was slightly damaged.

The home-signal for the admission of down trains to the Bolton platform is on the same post as the signal for permitting trains to leave a siding crossing the down platform line and joining the down through line, which siding runs parallel to the main down line for some distance on the up side of the station. The signal-post is placed at the fouling-point of the siding and down platform line, and the signals during darkness consist of two lamps on opposite sides of the post, the right lamp referring to the platform line and the left lamp to the siding, both visible for a distance

of about 250 yards. The signal-cabin is about 40 yards on the platform side of the signals. This portion of the line is practically level.

The 11.5 p.m. goods train from Mirfield to Liverpool on the 12th instant was ready to start at its proper time, but in consequence of its regular driver refusing to go with the engine on account of its right-hand cylinder cover joint blowing badly, time was lost in procuring another driver, and eventually a spare driver named Green, who had acted as a fireman for about three years previously, took charge of the engine, having been informed by the regular fireman (who accompanied him on the journey) what was the matter with it. The train then started at 12.25 a.m., and though time is stated not to have been lost from the defect in the engine, it was lost from other causes, and Bolton was not reached till 6.45 a.m., 3 hrs. 20 mins. late. Two waggons were here dropped in the siding, and at 6.50 the train, which then consisted of engine, tender, 17 loaded waggons, and a van, was ready to start from the siding adjoining the down line, the engine being then some distance from the siding-signal. The driver stated that he had not been in the Bolton yard for about 12 months previously, and that though he had then known the signals well, he had now somewhat forgotten them; that when ready to start he gave two whistles and a crow for the siding-signal, and immediately afterwards saw the right-hand lamp (the siding-signal was the left-hand lamp) turn from a red to a green light; that he asked the fireman if that was their signal, and on his replying yes, started: that on reaching the fouling-point of the main line he heard some one shout "Wo," and saw the signalman waving a red light; that he at once shut off