

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

29 September 1873

BoT Report into Accident at
North Dean.

(2 Pages).

reverse; he did not observe that any wheels were skidding, and, on coming down from the bank after the collision had occurred, found the guard's break off. He estimated the speed on collision at seven or eight miles an hour.

The passenger train consisted of a four-coupled engine and tender, in charge of a driver of 17 months service, five coaches and a break-van in rear, coupled to the three carriages next it, with Fay's continuous breaks. It started from Huddersfield punctually at 10 o'clock, kept time along the road, and left Shepley at 10.22 correct time.

The driver states on approaching Denby Dale he shut off steam about the centre of the tunnel, the usual place, and saw the distant-signal at danger, when about 240 yards from it, and at first thought that it meant that something was standing on the line near the platform, as had often previously happened; but that at the tunnel mouth he caught sight of a porter running towards him holding out his arms, and that this led him to think that the obstruction must be nearer the distant-signal; that he had had his break applied before seeing the porter, but that on seeing him he at once reversed and applied steam the reverse way, at the same time giving the break whistles, but that he does not think the guard's breaks were applied as they ought to have been; and that the speed on collision was five or six miles an hour. The driver stuck to his engine, and escaped without injury.

The fireman's statement is almost a counterpart of the driver's. He jumped from the engine, and stumbled in doing so.

The guard of the train was a man of seven years service as such, and had been a relief guard seven years previously. He says that he saw the driver shut off steam just after leaving the tunnel; that he noticed the distant-signal at danger, but did not see the porter, and thought that there was something standing near the station; that he began to apply his break on leaving the tunnel, and got it hard on at the time of collision; that the driver first gave the break whistle at the distant-signal; that in an ordinary way he should not apply his break till close to the platform. The collision occurred at 10.27.

In the passenger train the damage was confined to

the engine which had its buffer beam and buffer broken. In the goods train the break gearing of the van was damaged, and the two waggons in front of it were broken up.

This collision was caused in the first instance by the driver and guard of the passenger train not having used, as promptly as they might have done upon seeing the distant-signal at danger, the means they had had at their command for stopping the train. A light train of six vehicles on a rising gradient of 1 in 200 not probably running at a greater speed than 30 miles an hour and with continuous breaks applying to four vehicles out of the six, might well have been stopped in less than the distance available in the present case.

Though I do not blame the station-master for not having blocked the line by telegraph between Denby Dale and Shepley before allowing the shunting to proceed—as both the printed rules and the practice with reference to the use of the block telegraph bear only upon the avoidance of collisions in the tunnel—he was much in fault in allowing the up main line to be occupied in close proximity to the tunnel mouth, up to within four minutes of the passenger train being due, under the impression that upon the train being telegraphed as having left Shepley (two miles distant) there would be time to clear the line. There was no train due upon the down line, and there was nothing to prevent his having had the waggons transferred from the up to the down line ten minutes before the passenger train was due.

This collision should lead to the revision of the block telegraph rules in force between Shepley and Denby Dale, which should clearly prohibit any shunting taking place on the main line between these stations unless the line has been previously blocked. It is greatly to be regretted that, with the very appliances at hand for preventing a collision of this description, it should nevertheless, for want of proper rules directing the use of these appliances, have occurred.

I have, &c.,
 C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.
The Secretary,
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 12th November.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

West Hartlepool,
 2nd December 1873.

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 4th October, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision that occurred on the 29th September, between a passenger and a coal train, at North Dean station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. It is stated that no persons were injured on this occasion.

The branch line to Halifax, Bradford, &c. joins the main line of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, between Manchester and Wakefield, at the western end of the North Dean station platform; and the junction-signals are placed immediately opposite to the junction and the signal-box. Hence it follows that all down trains proceeding to North Dean station either along the main line from Manchester, or branch line trains from Halifax, must pass the junction-signals before they can reach the down platform; and, on the other hand, all up trains for Manchester or Halifax, may reach and stop at the up platform, without having to pass the junction-signals. The points and signals were interlocked with each other two or three years since.

It is stated to be the practice to take off the distant and junction-signals for all up trains that have to stop at North Dean station, and to put them on again at "danger" as soon as the train has stopped at the up platform, and when the driver sounds the whistle for the main line or branch line, the particular junction signal for the main line, or for the branch line, as the case may be, is then lowered for the train to proceed. The facing-points on the up line, in their normal position, are set open for the main line, and the up main line-signal can at once be lowered when required; but, in consequence of the interlocking of the points and signals, when an up branch line train has completed the work at the station, and the station-inspector has given a signal that the train is ready to proceed, the facing-points must be moved and set open for the branch line, before the branch line up junction-signal can be lowered, in answer to the three whistles which the driver of the train is directed to give, that he may indicate to the signalman the direction in which his train is proceeding.

But when any down train is ready to leave the down platform, as it has already passed the down junction-signals, which are put on at danger as soon as the train passes the signal-box on its arrival at the down platform, and as there is no starting-signal

ahead for the driver to look to, the signal given by the station inspector that the work at the station has all been completed, the station inspector's hand-signal is all that is given to authorise the down train to proceed.

Portions of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, here and there, are now worked on the absolute block system with the assistance of the electric telegraph. Thus a portion of the branch line from North Dean towards Halifax and Bradford, as far as Dryclough junction, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from North Dean, and another portion on the main line about 1,000 yards in length between Elland station and the west end of the tunnel, which is about 350 yards from North Dean station, are thus worked.

On the day on which the collision occurred, the 8h. 10m. a.m. up passenger train from Huddersfield for Halifax and Bradford consisted of an engine and tender, four carriages, and one break-van, with continuous breaks on the last five vehicles.

It reached North Dean station at 8h. 46m. a.m., and the up platform about 8h. 51m.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company run a short local train between North Dean and Halifax, and this local up train from North Dean to Halifax, due to leave the former place at 8h. 40m., did not leave until just before the 8h. 10m. up train for Halifax and Bradford reached the up platform, as an up main line train reached North Dean station at 8h. 42m., and was detained there six minutes.

The driver of the 8h. 10m. up train for Halifax and Bradford states that all the signals were against him when he came out of the tunnel, and that he was called forward by the signalman on duty by means of a hand-signal; but this is distinctly contradicted by the signalman who says the driver drew up to the platform without any signal whatever from him.

The evidence is very conflicting as to the practice followed by the signalmen with respect to their lowering the up junction-signals for all trains that leave the up platform; they and the station inspector assert positively that it is always done, while the driver and the guards state that up trains frequently leave on being merely given a hand-signal by the signalman, in addition to the "all right" from the station inspector, when the work at the station is done.

The driver of this train further states, that after they had finished the work at the platform, the station inspector who stood near the engine called out "all right;" that on looking towards the signal-box he did

not see the signalman, and he looked at the main line up junction-signal and saw that it was on at danger against him; that he then looked for the branch line up junction-signal, but it was obscured by steam; that when the section in front to Dryclough junction is blocked the signalman comes and shows a red flag or a red light, to stop them from going, but if the section is clear, they sometimes start without getting the signal lowered or any signal from the signalman; that he gave three whistles for the branch line (which turns sharply off to the right) before starting, and that he did not observe that he was running on the straight main line, as he was looking towards the rear of his train to see if it was following over the junction, until on turning round he found that he had run about 38 yards on the main line instead of on the branch, and he then whistled for the guard's break, reversed the engine, and applied the steam the reverse way, but he did not succeed in stopping his train until the engine had come into collision with a coal train which was shunting on the up main line, about 94 yards from the spot from which he had started. This train started at 8h. 56m.

The buffer-plank of the passenger train engine was broken, and four waggons of the coal train were damaged.

The guard of this train only heard the driver give the usual starting whistle, and not the three whistles required to tell the signalman that the train was going on to the branch line to Halifax and Bradford.

The driver of the 8h. 10m. a.m. up train for Halifax and Bradford is to blame for having started his train without having received any signal from the signalman, when the section of line between North Dean and Dryclough junction was already occupied by the local train that left North Dean as he was drawing up to the platform, and also for his carelessness in not having seen at once that he was travelling on the wrong line.

At the same time, I think it probable that a very loose practice of signalling the trains out of this station has at times prevailed.

A re-arrangement of the station and the position of the signals is very much required, and is, I understand, to be made, so that the drivers of all trains will be obliged to look to the starting-signals before they attempt to leave.

I have, &c.,

W. YOLLAND,
Colonel.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 27th December.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitchall, 11th November 1873.

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 6th ultimo, the result of my enquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision between a cattle train and a passenger train which occurred on the 2nd ultimo at the east end of Mirfield station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Two passengers are reported to have been shaken.

There are two signal-cabins at the east end of Mirfield station; from the one next the station at Cleckheaton junction, called the Tower cabin, 170 yards east of the platform end, the arrival and departure of trains coming from and going to the east is regulated; the second, W. cabin, 450 yards east of the

Tower cabin, is placed at the junction of two goods sidings with the main lines.

The next cabin east of W. is at Thornhill junction a mile distant, and between these two cabins the traffic is worked on the absolute block system. The necessary instruments are also provided for working block system between W. and the Tower cabins, but hitherto the traffic has been worked on this system only in case of fog; and on Sundays, when W. cabin is shut up, the block working is carried on between Thornhill junction and the Tower cabin.

For down trains going eastward, W. cabin is provided with a down distant-signal 400 yards off, (visible from the platform,) and with a down home-signal 40 yards west of the cabin. The Tower cabin has down home-signals and for a down distant-signal, starting-signals at the east end of the platforms, regulating the starting of trains from the main line and two bays.