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Accident Reports.

6 June 1911

BoT Report into Accident at
Oldfield Road, Salford.

(4 Pages).

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
8, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London, S.W.

SIR,

June 27th, 1911.

I HAVE the honour to report for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 10th June, the result of my inquiry into the causes of the collision which occurred on the 6th June between a passenger train and a goods train at Oldfield Road, Salford, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case as No. 3 special train, the 4.56 p.m. from Blackpool Central to Manchester was approaching Salford Station, it collided with the rear of a goods train standing on the up goods line at Oldfield Road, Salford.

Three passengers complained of slight injuries, and the fireman of the passenger train was also injured by jumping off his engine just before the collision occurred.

The passenger train consisted of a six-wheels-coupled goods engine, with a six-wheeled tender fitted with the automatic vacuum brake, working blocks on all wheels of engine and tender, and of 13 vehicles, viz., a bogie third van at each end, and of 11 six-wheeled coaches, fitted with the automatic vacuum brake on all wheels, with the exception of the centre pair of the six-wheeled coaches. The brakes are stated to have been in excellent order. No wheels of the passenger train were derailed, and very little damage was done to it, but the brake van and three waggons of the goods train were considerably knocked about.

The collision occurred at 6.19 p.m.

Details of damage to rolling-stock are given in the Appendix.

Description.

Approaching Salford from the westward there are three pairs of passenger lines running approximately east and west, viz., the Bolton lines on the north side, then the fast lines, and then the slow lines on the south side, and there are sidings to the south of the slow lines.

One hundred and forty yards west of Windsor Bridge No. 1 signal-box the fast lines and the slow lines converge into a single pair of lines called the south main lines, and beyond this point the continuation of the slow lines are for goods traffic only, and are called the up and down goods lines. At the point 140 yards west of this signal-box is an overhead bridge of signals spanning the lines, and on this bridge are the up home signals for the various lines, and for the junctions between them.

The signals are quite distinct, and are placed above the lines they refer to, and those for the up slow line have rings round the semaphore arms to distinguish them as such.

Two hundred and thirty-five yards east of Windsor Bridge No. 1 signal-box is a wide overbridge, called Oldfield Road, and just beyond the bridge, or 260 yards from this signal-box, is Oldfield Road No. 2 signal-box, which is almost entirely concerned with the goods lines.

The next signal-box for the passenger lines is Oldfield Road No. 1.

The outer and inner home signals for the up goods line are 140 yards west and 27 yards east, respectively, from Oldfield Road No. 2 signal-box.

The point of collision was 130 yards east of this signal-box, or 530 yards ahead of the up slow line home signal at Windsor Bridge No. 1 signal-box.

Evidence.

E. H. Yates states:—I entered the service in 1885 and have been a signalman since 1887, having been in charge of Windsor Bridge No 1 box since November, 1909. On June 6th I came on duty at 2 p.m. to work until 10 p.m., having worked the same turn the day before. The 6 p.m. Brindle Heath to Philips Park goods train passed my box on the up slow line to the up goods line at 6.10 p.m., and I received "Out of section" signal for it from Oldfield Road to No. 2 box at 6.12 p.m. At 6.15 p.m. I received the "Is line clear" signal for No. 3 special, 4.56 p.m. Blackpool Central to Manchester on the up slow line from Windsor Bridge No. 2, and I acknowledged it at the same time. I kept my signals at danger against the train, as I intended to allow the 5.40 p.m. express from Liverpool to Leeds to

precede it. The "Is line clear" signal for the latter train was offered by Windsor Bridge No. 3 box on the up fast and accepted by me at 6.17 p.m., and it was acknowledged by the box in advance, Oldfield Road No. 1, at the same time. I received the "Entering section" signal for No. 3 special at 6.19, and for the Liverpool to Leeds train also at 6.19 p.m. Nos. 67 and 68 signals were taken off for the Liverpool to Leeds express at 6.17, and as this train was passing over the up fast line to the up south line, No. 3 special, instead of coming to a stand at the up slow line home signals, ran forward on to the up goods line. I immediately gave the "Train running away on right line" signal to Oldfield Road No. 2 box, and went to the window, but the engine had just passed my box and I was unable

to get the attention of the enginemen. I also attempted to attract the attention of the guard in the rear van, but was unable to do so. I had also the 6.15 p.m. Manchester to Southport express passing on the down fast line at 6.19 p.m. I am perfectly sure that I did not lower any of the slow line home signals for No. 3 special, and that they were at danger when the train approached and passed them, and my repeaters also showed that the signals for the slow line were at danger. I do not think the driver had steam on, but he had his hand on the regulator and he was travelling at a fast rate and seemed to be going at the same speed as the engine of the Liverpool train on the other line. When the special passed me the driver and fireman were looking ahead. I should not have accepted the special in the up slow road if I had not received the "Out of section" signal for the goods train from Oldfield No. 2 signal-box.

H. White states:—I have been in the service since 1886 and a signalman since 1888, having worked at Oldfield Road No. 2 box since November, 1909. On June 6th I came on duty at 2 p.m. to work until 10 p.m., having worked the same turn the day before. I have a train booker to assist me. The 6 p.m. Brindle Heath to Philips Park goods train was signalled to me at 6.7 p.m. on the up goods line from Windsor Bridge No. 1 box, and I acknowledged it at the same time. I received "Train entering section" signal for it at 6.7, and the train arrived at 6.10, when I gave "Out of section" signal for it on seeing the brake van with tail lamp passing my box. The train, however, did not come to a stand until the brake van was some 300 yards in advance of my cabin. As I do not work the north or south lines, No. 3 special and the 5.40 p.m. ex Liverpool were not signalled to me, and I did not know there was any irregularity until I received the "Train running away on right line" signal on the up goods line at 6.20 p.m. The special passed me as soon as I had acknowledged the "runaway" signal, and I was unable to do anything towards stopping it. My outer and inner home signals for the up goods line were at danger and the repeater showed that my distant signal for this road was also on. I cannot say at what speed the engine passed my cabin, but the driver appeared to apply the brakes as he was passing the box.

J. Wolstencroft states:—I entered the service in July, 1904, and have been an emergency signalman since 1907. On June 6th I signed on duty at 2.0 p.m. at Oldfield Road No. 1 box to work until 10.0 p.m., having worked the same turn the day before. I received the "Is line clear" signal for the 5.40 p.m. Liverpool to Leeds express at 6.16 on the up south line, and I acknowledged it at the same time and also got it acknowledged by the box in advance, when I took off the whole of my signals for it. I received "Entering section" signal at 6.19 and the train passed me at 6.19, and I gave "Out of section" for it at 6.19 p.m. At 6.17 p.m. I also received the "Is line clear" signal for an express on the up north line from Windsor Bridge No. 1 box, which I acknowledged at the same time, but I received the "Cancelling" signal for this at 6.17. I do not work the goods lines, but immediately after the Liverpool to Leeds express had passed my box on the up south I saw the special train on the up goods line. I was watching for the tail lamp of the Liverpool train, and immediately I saw it I turned round and then observed the engine of No. 3 special passing my box on the up goods line. I heard and saw the collision, and not knowing whether the south

lines were blocked I gave the "Obstruction danger" signal in both directions until I ascertained how matters stood. Immediately the mishap occurred I telephoned to Salford Station cabin for the Station Master, who arrived at 6.55, and on being informed that the south lines were clear I cancelled the "Obstruction danger" signal and resumed ordinary workings. At 6.53 p.m. the coaches of No. 3 special were propelled across from the goods line to No. 2 carriage siding, after which the engine was detached and went through No. 1 siding in order to get to the leading end. The train afterwards drew out of the siding at the Salford Station end and went forward to Victoria.

Fred Lomax states:—I have been in the service between nine and ten years, and a goods guard for five years. On June 6th I signed on duty at 6.30 a.m. at Bury and signed off for rest at Blackpool from 10.45 a.m. to 3.25 p.m. I was in charge of No. 3 special from Blackpool Central to Manchester, Salford being our first stop, and my train consisted of 11 six-wheeled carriages and two bogie 3rd vans, equal to 15 coaches. We had a clear run until I sighted what I took to be the distant signal for Windsor Bridge No. 2 box, which was at danger, but I am not acquainted with the signals at this point. The driver reduced speed in response to the signal, and he appeared to have his train under control. I commenced to get the luggage ready for discharging at Manchester and did not see any other signals. We travelled on the slow lines all the way from Dobb's Road Junction. When passing Windsor Bridge No. 1 box, I did not realise that we were travelling on the goods line, and it did not occur to me that we were going wrong until immediately before the collision occurred, when I heard the brake go full on, after which I think we only ran about 30 yards or perhaps more before coming in contact with the goods brake and waggons.

A. Howard states:—I have been in the service since 1885 and a booked driver since 1900. On June 6th I signed on duty at 5.15 p.m. and in the ordinary course would have finished duty sometime before 4.0 a.m. I had not been working the previous day. I was working the 6.0 p.m. Brindle Heath to Philips Park goods train with engine No. 456, which is a six-wheeled coupled goods tender engine, and I arrived at Oldfield Road No. 2 on the up goods line at 6.5 p.m. with four waggons and a brake van. We drew over the points with three attached to the engine, then backed into the siding, left one waggon, and drew out again on to the up goods line with two waggons attached to the engine. We stood clear of the crossing to allow the pilot to propel the remainder of our train on to the goods line against the two waggons attached to the engine. The guard's van was stood on the up goods line about 12 yards from the cross-over road. The guard was not in the van and I had seen him going down towards the cabin. The first I knew of anything being wrong was seeing No. 3 special coming through Oldfield Road Bridge as I was looking in that direction, and I turned round, blew off the breaks, opened the regulator, and had just got the engine on the move when the waggons closed up to my engine. I think the driver of the Blackpool special had not shut off steam when I first caught sight of him coming through the bridge. My engine did not leave the rails, but the left-hand tender buffer spring was broken. Both waggons attached to my engine were off the road, the second from the engine being turned over on its side and the other waggons being derailed. I went back towards the engine of the Blackpool train and assisted to look after the fireman of that train, who was on

the ballast close to the down goods line suffering from an injured knee. Shortly afterwards the driver of the Blackpool train told me that he supposed he must have run past the signals at danger.

Charles Slater states:—I have been in the service four years, and on June 6th I was working with Driver Howard as fireman and had signed on duty with him at 5.15 p.m. I did not work on Whit-Monday, the day previous. As we were waiting for the pilot to put waggons against our engine I was cleaning the face plate, when my driver called out "look-out," and almost immediately the collision took place. I had not seen the train approaching. My driver had blown the brake off and had just got steam on when the collision occurred.

T. Peers states:—I have been in the Company's service for 30 years and have been a goods guard for 19 years. I was in charge of the 6 p.m. goods train, Brindle Heath to Philips Park, on June 6th. We arrived at Oldfield Road No. 2 box at 6.10 p.m. We had four waggons and a brake van. We detached one waggon into the sidings at about 6.16 p.m., after which the engine with two waggons attached came out on to the up goods line and stood over the cross-over road points waiting for the yard pilot to attach other waggons. I was standing in the sidings about 30 yards in rear of my brake-van, when I heard a train approaching and on looking round I saw a passenger train had just got through the bridge on the up goods line. I put my hand up as a warning and I saw the fireman standing between the engine and the tender on the footplate between the hand rails, but before the collision took place I saw him actually jump on to the ballast and he rolled over several times. The driver had evidently shut off steam before I noticed the train, and as train passed I could tell the brakes had been applied. I then went to the assistance of the fireman, who had injured his knee. I did not notice the position of the signals. The driver of the passenger train afterwards told me that he had mistaken the signals. My brake-van was standing on the Oldfield Road box No. 2 cabin side of the down home signal, but close to it. I came on duty at 5.30 p.m. at Brindle Heath to work till 2.30 or 3 p.m. I had left duty the day before at 11.50 p.m.

Edmund Fletcher, states:—I have been in the service since January, 1882, and have been a booked driver since March, 1899. I signed on duty on the 6th June at Bury Shed at 6.40 a.m. after having been off duty on the previous day, signing off at 11.45 a.m. on Sunday the 4th instant. I worked No. 3 special from Manchester to Blackpool and signed off duty

there at 11.45 a.m., resuming duty again at 3.35 p.m., expecting to finish about 7.45 p.m. at Bury Shed. Whilst taking rest at Blackpool I went to the Company's lodging-house and sat in a room and talked. I worked No. 3 return special from Blackpool to Manchester, leaving at 4.56 p.m., and my first stop was Salford, where I was due at 6.10 p.m. My engine was No. 1145, which is a six-coupled goods tender engine fitted with the vacuum brake on all wheels. The train had a very good road and we travelled on the up slow line from Dobbs Brow Junction. The distant signal was "off" for Pendleton New and also for Windsor Bridge No. 3. On approaching Windsor Bridge No. 1, where the up fast line home signal was off, I took the fast line home signal as my signal, being under the impression I was on the fast line, and it was not until I came under the Oldfield Road Bridge I found that I had made a mistake and that I was then on the goods line. I shut off steam at Pendlebury, applying it again after passing Brindle Heath Junction and shutting off again before reaching Pendleton New Station. On passing from underneath Oldfield Road Bridge I saw a goods brake-van ahead of me and applied the brake fully. I had not got steam on at the time. I partly reversed my engine, which struck the van and pushed it and the waggons attached to it ahead against those attached to the goods train engine, derailing the van and three waggons. I ran past Windsor Bridge No. 1 up slow line home signal; also the up outer home for the goods line for Oldfield Road No. 2 and the inner home signal for Oldfield Road No. 2 goods line. I saw a train passing me on the up line whilst I was under the bridge. I think I was travelling about 30 miles an hour as I was passing under the bridge. Just after I had noticed the brake-van ahead my mate shouted out to me that he had seen it, and I told him to stop where he was, and I did not look again until after the collision, and then I found he was not on the footplate. After the collision I looked back and saw him being assisted by some of the staff about a carriage and a half length away. He told me afterwards that he had got on the step ready to jump and had overbalanced and had to leave hold and fall on the ballast. I used to work the 12.10 p.m. Bury Lancashire and Yorkshire to Kearsley *via* Victoria and Bolton, and I have worked passenger specials from Blackpool to Manchester *via* Atherton, but have usually come over the fast line, and I felt that I was quite acquainted with the road. The last time I came to Manchester was at Easter. My engine was not derailed, nor were any of the carriages, but the front buffer plate of the engine was broken. If I had not felt satisfied that I knew the road I could have asked for a pilot at Blackpool.

Conclusion.

The circumstances attending this collision, which are clearly detailed in the evidence of signalman Yates and driver Fletcher, were as follows:—A goods train passed from the up slow line on to the up goods line at Windsor Bridge No. 1 signal-box at 6.10 p.m., and when this train had passed Oldfield Road No. 2 box on the up goods line at 6.12 p.m., the signalman there gave out of section for it to Windsor Bridge No. 1 box, and it came to a stand with the brake van 130 yards beyond the signal-box.

At 6.15 p.m. the signalman at Windsor Bridge No. 1 box was offered the No. 3 special train on the up slow line, and he accepted it at once, although he intended to allow the 5.40 Liverpool to Leeds express to precede it on the up south line. He acted quite correctly in doing so, as he had received the "Out of section" signal for the goods train at 6.12 p.m., and the facing points of the up goods line lying normally for that line form safety points for the up south line. He accepted the Leeds express on the up fast line at

6.17 p.m., and had it accepted by the Box in advance, viz., Oldfield Road No. 1, at the same time, so he then lowered the signals for the up fast line, keeping those for the up slow line at danger. The two trains approached Windsor Bridge No. 1 Signal Box at the same time, and driver Fletcher for some reason or other got the impression that he was on the up fast line, and seeing the signals for that line "off" ran past his own signals at danger on to the up goods line, and did not discover his mistake until he had gone under the Oldfield Road overbridge some 375 yards from the Windsor Bridge No. 1 signals. He then saw the brake van of the goods train ahead of him, and did his best to stop his train, but as he only had at the most 150 yards in which to stop could not do so before colliding with the brake van. He thus ran 530 yards past the up slow line home signal at Windsor Bridge No. 1 Signal Box, and also passed the inner and outer home signals for Oldfield Road No. 2 Box, all of which were at danger.

As described above, the bridge of signals at Windsor Bridge No. 1 Signal Box is of the best description, the semaphores for the up slow line being provided with rings, and are placed above the line to which they refer, and similarly the signals for the up fast line are above that line, and there is a space of 21 feet between the up fast home signal and the up slow home signal, leading to the up south line.

Driver Fletcher cannot account for his mistake. He had been travelling on the up slow line for several miles back, and although he does not usually work trains into Manchester, yet he states he felt he was perfectly acquainted with the road, and he had brought special trains there on previous occasions.

He is a man with an excellent record. He had commenced duty that day (Tuesday in Whit week) at 6.40 a.m. at Bury, and had not been on duty at all on the previous day. He had worked a special train from Manchester to Blackpool, where he had been booked off duty from 11.45 a.m. to 3.35 p.m., and then returned with a special train at 4.56 p.m. due at Salford at 6.10 p.m. The collision occurred at 6.19 p.m., just before reaching Salford.

Driver Fletcher expected to finish his tour of duty about 7.45 p.m. at Bury. He would thus have been on duty for a period of 13 hours from start to finish, with a booked interval for rest of 3 hours 50 minutes. These hours, though rather long, may be unavoidable at holiday times, when a large number of special trains have to be run.

I have, &c.,

E. DRUITT,

Leut.-Col. R.E.

The Assistant Secretary,
Railway Department, Board of Trade.

APPENDIX.

Damage to Engine No. 1145.

Engine buffer plate badly bent, both top and bottom angle irons broken; screw shackle, main vacuum pipe broken, and drawbar bent; both front sand boxes, and left cylinder cover broken; lap and fall plates bent, and hinges broken.

Engine No. 456.

Both tender buffer spindles bent.

Lancashire and Yorkshire 10 Ton Brake Van, No. 4658.—Two sole-bars, two head-stocks, brake-work, axle-guards, draw-bars, buffers, and body etc., broken.

Lancashire and Yorkshire Waggon, No. 13370.—Two sole-bars, one head-stock, two side rails, two side planks, two end planks, one end muntin, and three axle-boxes, etc. broken; two drawbar hooks, four axle-guards, and brake-work, etc. bent; and journals and wheel flanges cut.

Lancashire and Yorkshire Waggon, No. 5473.—Two sole-bars, two head-stocks, one end plank, one side rail, three axle-boxes, one buffer shoe, two brake blocks, etc., broken; four buffer rods, two drawbars, four axle-guards, etc., bent; and wheel flanges slightly cut.

Lancashire and Yorkshire Waggon, No. 6433.—One buffer shoe broken; two drawbars, one iron head-stock, four axle-guards, and one buffer rod bent.