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LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Operational Documents & Pamphlets

1919

How the “Business Line” dealt with its
Labour Troubles.

Railway Magazine article about L&Y operations during the
1919 Railway Workers Strike.

(5 Pages)





Photo].

[E. Hulton & Co., Ltd.

ELECTRIC TRAIN : MANCHESTER-BURY SERVICE.

A half-hourly service was maintained during the greater part of the strike period.

How the "Business Line" dealt with its Labour Troubles.

THE LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY DURING THE STRIKE.

TO deal adequately with the various methods adopted by the different British railways to keep traffic moving during the recent railway strike would occupy more space than the RAILWAY MAGAZINE can afford, but by the courtesy of Mr. Ashton Davies, Superintendent of the Line, Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, we are able to include a succinct and, at the same time, illuminating narrative of the plan of campaign put into operation upon what is generally known in the north of England as "The Business Line."

On the receipt of the intimation that the railway strike would take place, the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, anticipating that a large number of their men would be involved, took steps with regard to the disposal of traffic already in transit, and made arrangements

for it to be worked into goods yards and exchange sidings, so as to avoid trains being left in undesirable places on the main line.

Instructions were also issued as to what was to be done when the signal boxes were closed, and station masters were instructed as to the position the facing points of the junctions were to be left, so that the best use could be made of the engine power available during the strike. These arrangements were satisfactorily carried out.

When the strike took place no less than 98 per cent. of the traffic operating staff failed to report for duty.

As a result of the Government's appeal for volunteers to assist in the working of the railways a large number of offers of assistance were received, and a staff of upwards of 400 was engaged. These

were made use of for platform duties, assistant guards, firing and assisting on the engines, working to the instructions and under the supervision of loyal men and inspectors.

Naturally, with such a depleted staff, only a very limited number of trains could be run, but the best possible was done under the circumstances. Including the electric services in the Manchester district 232 passenger trains were run during the period September 27 to Sunday, October 5. There were no Sunday passenger services on October 5, the engines available being utilised for goods services.

In connection with the electric services from Manchester and Liverpool which serve the residential districts adjacent to those cities, arrangements were made for obviating undue overcrowding of the trains.

Perishable traffic conveyed by passenger train, which was on hand at the commencement of the strike, was disposed of through dealers or the local food officer on best possible terms, so as to obviate it becoming unfit for consumption. The staff were busily engaged for some time in clearing the traffic from the trains and platforms to the various parcels offices, and, in order to effect delivery of the

LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Passenger Department, Station, 19....

A.....ex

consigned to you cannot be delivered owing to the **LABOUR TROUBLES**. Possession can be obtained at the Parcel Office here on surrender of this post card, and I shall be glad if you will kindly arrange accordingly early.

The consignment remains on hand at **OWNER'S** risk and expense, and failing removal and payment of charges due within six months of this date, it will be disposed of on behalf of whom it may concern, and without further notice.

Failing immediate removal and payment of any charges due, Perishable Traffic will be disposed of at **once**.

.....Agent.

POSTCARD ISSUED TO CONSIGNEES OF PARCELS AND LIKE TRAFFIC.

Each evening a list of trains arranged for the following day was distributed to newspapers, post offices, food controllers, and to the principal hotels and clubs in the districts concerned, this method of publicity being much appreciated by commercial men who were held up.

The passenger services arranged gave access to the principal towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and from these towns passengers were able to proceed on their journeys by tram to their destination, whilst those who found themselves stranded at Blackpool, Southport and other Lancashire Coast resorts made use of the services which enabled them to reach home.

accumulation of parcels at various stations, postcards were sent to consignees advising them of traffic on hand and requesting that arrangements be made for collection, seeing the company were unable to deliver, and it is of interest to note that this arrangement proved satisfactory.

With a view to assisting in the forwarding of food supplies, instructions were issued to the stations that perishable traffic could be accepted for conveyance where train services permitted. Obviously these consignments had to be restricted, and their acceptance was subject to the senders arranging for the loading, unloading, handling, &c. Live stock in transit

was stabled, fed and watered until the dispute was over.

The advantages of the company's control system were demonstrated in a striking manner when dealing with the traffic arrangements. The Central Control Office at Manchester is connected by telephone with practically all stations, signal boxes, &c., and by means of these comprehensive telephone facilities it was possible to receive by 6.45 a.m. and 2.45 p.m., daily, complete information of the total number of staff who had taken duty on early, middle and late turns respectively at each

of traffic on hand at goods yards, mineral yards, outlying sidings, exchange and marshalling sidings, and the necessary arrangements were at once instituted for effecting delivery of all live stock, food stuffs, perishable traffic, &c., control telephones being utilised for sending advices through the staff at the destination stations to the consignees, when the latter arranged for delivery to be taken at whatever place the wagons were held up.

Information was also obtained of the stocks of traffic on hand at all sidings, &c., and particularly of coal traffic at the



Photo].

[E. Hulton & Co. Ltd.

COLLECTING BARRIERS AND ENTRANCE TO SUBWAY AT MANCHESTER (VICTORIA) STATION CLOSED DURING STRIKE.

station. From these particulars the Superintendent of the Line was able to determine what percentage of men in each grade were at work on the whole of the system, and to make definite arrangements for the next day's programme.

The stationmasters also reported by telephone every two hours to the Control Office, when advice and instructions were given to them.

Shortly after the commencement of the strike the Control Office obtained, through the stationmasters and agents, particulars

various collieries waiting to be worked forward, and of coal traffic on hand at intermediate stations, as well as at each particular station. This enabled a reasonably fair and equitable distribution of coal to be effected at any and every place.

It was also possible to ascertain which coal mines were working and what was necessary to enable work to be continued. As a result of the information, engines and men brought into use were utilised to remove loaded traffic from certain colliery sidings and to give a supply of

empty wagons so as to avoid the work at the pits being brought to a stand.

Special attention was also given to the requirements of public utility works.

As the company officials found it possible to run passenger and other trains, information of the scheduled programme arrangements for each day were sent to all the stations concerned over the Control telephones, and each night, when it was found possible for stations to be closed, the same method of communication was adopted, which considerably conserved the energies of the staff at stations

by the Superintendent of the Line, and carried out by the company's own refreshment department, chiefly through Manchester (Victoria), whilst use was made of the dining rooms at other stations.

Many of the staff engaged in working the traffic were unable to travel to their homes each evening, consequently, in addition to catering, attention had to be given to the question of sleeping accommodation.

Beds were arranged at a number of the principal stations, whilst at Manchester use was made of one of the Head Office



Photo].

[E. Hulton & Co., Ltd.]

FIRST STEAM TRAIN TO LEAVE MANCHESTER (VICTORIA) STATION DURING STRIKE.

by preventing stationmasters remaining on duty unnecessarily, waiting to see whether any other trains were run.

The loyal staff and volunteers worked irregular hours, which allowed no booked time for meals, consequently it was necessary for arrangements to be made for them to be supplied with food. This developed into a big question, inasmuch as signalmen in isolated boxes, some distance from Manchester, had to be fed in addition to train men, loyal staff and volunteers.

By means of trains and motor-cars, food was forwarded from Manchester to the staff working at outlying stations. The whole of the catering was arranged

Conference Rooms, where a large number of beds were provided.

One of the problems during the period of the strike was to devise a method of getting letters containing confidential and important instructions, pay-sheets, &c., from head offices into the hands of the stationmasters and others concerned. This was achieved by the willing co-operation of stationmasters, clerical staff and volunteers.

The utmost use was made of the trains which were running, but the difficulty was to reach stations in districts where there was no train service.

Communication with those places was maintained by means of motor car, motor

cycle, bicycle, tram car, and on foot. In some cases it was possible to maintain a direct motor car or cycle service between stations in a certain area and headquarters, but where this was not possible a scheme was arranged where letters were left at a central point or junction station. The stationmaster retained those for his own particular station, whilst he or one of his clerks would walk (or use tram if available) to the next station, there handing the remainder over to be dealt with in a similar manner.

This was repeated until the chain was complete. To carry out an emergency arrangement of this kind on a single occasion makes heavy demands on those responsible, but to repeat it on several consecutive days is an achievement.

In the training of volunteers for duty as signalmen, the company's school of signalling at Manchester was utilised, and over 150 volunteers took a special course to enable them to qualify for the position of signalmen, and arrangements were made for the whole of the signal boxes required to be opened for block

purposes to be manned by trained men.

To ensure safety the company's control system formed an important link, as before any signals for the passage of a train were lowered, not only was the necessary permission obtained on the block telegraph, but the authority of the control office was also obtained. Special staffs were trained in the control office to undertake this safety working.

When the strike was settled, to allow of industries to be kept going, special instructions were issued with regard to the disposal of the accumulation of coal traffic, and on Monday, October 6, 150 engines were employed exclusively for this purpose.

The best test of the success of these arrangements is indicated by the fact that the full normal September service of passenger trains was running before noon on October 6, whilst booked goods train workings were introduced as from midnight on that date, another example of the adaptability of "The Business Line."

A "STROUDLEY" VETERAN ON THE BRIGHTON LINE.



Photo.]

[A. B. MacLeod

ONE OF THE FAMOUS "TERRIER" TANK ENGINES STILL IN SERVICE AT BRIGHTON.