

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

DUBLIN AND BELFAST JUNCTION RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, June 4, 1858.*

SIR, I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, for the information of the directors of the Dublin and Belfast Junction Railway Company, the enclosed copy of Captain Tyler's report of his inspection of the fencing at the spot upon that railway where the fatal accident occurred on the 18th May to Elizabeth M'Evoy.

I am, &c.

*The Secretary to the
Dublin and Belfast Junction
Railway Company.*

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, R.E.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, May 26, 1858.*

SIR, I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that, in compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 22nd instant, I have inspected the fencing at the side of the Dublin and Belfast Junction Railway, at the spot, about a mile and a half to the south of Dundalk, where the young girl, Elizabeth M'Evoy, was unfortunately killed on the 18th instant.

It appears that this girl, who was about 13 years of age, was engaged with others in weeding a field on the west of the line, and that they were crouching under the fence for protection from a heavy storm when they heard a train approaching. M'Evoy told her companions that she was going to see the train pass, and she got over the fence for the purpose; and after waiting for some time for her to return, they followed to see what detained her. They found her lying dead upon the line, and ran away frightened from the spot.

This unfortunate circumstance was not witnessed by any one. The fireman was attending to the engine on the off side as he passed the spot, and the driver was on the near side, while the girl was killed on the off rail. To judge from the marks on the wheels, the third vehicle in the train was the first to come in contact with her.

It would appear that the girl must have crossed the down line, on which the train was running, after

having climbed over the fence, and that the wind must have caught her clothes, and forced her from the up line under the wheels of the third vehicle. The wind was very high at the time.

The fence is of the ordinary kind in use in Ireland, composed of a bank of earth. It is partly surmounted by a hedge, and supported by stone facing; and it is of sufficient height. At the corner of the field in question, however, there is a place where some persons have evidently been in the habit of getting on the line, and up which, probably, the girl M'Evoy mounted; and at the corner of the field adjacent to it there are some rough steps still easier of ascent.

There are also paths leading on the line in different localities in the neighbourhood, which show clearly that the residents in some houses to the south of this spot make a thoroughfare, more or less, of the railway, in going to Dundalk.

I visited the scene of the accident, in company with several of the directors, and the engineer of the company; and they express their intention of issuing printed handbills to the cottagers, as a warning; of making good the fence at the places referred to; and of taking precautions for preventing such trespass upon the line for the future.

I have, &c.

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

H. W. TYLER,
Captain, R.E.

*Dublin and Belfast Junction Railway Office,
73, Talbot Street, Dublin,*

SIR, *June 16, 1858.*

REFERRING to your letter of the 4th instant, enclosing copy of Captain Tyler's report, dated 26th ultimo, I beg to inform you that the board of this company has given peremptory directions to the company's engineers to have the fences along the line wherever inadequate made good, and then maintained in a state of security. Handbills have been posted at the company's stations, and circulated among the residents in the vicinity of the line, cautioning all persons against trespassing on the line.

I am, &c.

*Captain Galton, R.E.
&c.*

H. M. BOURNE.

EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, June 17, 1858.*

SIR, I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the enclosed copy of the Report which they have received from Captain Tyler, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances attending the accident which occurred on the 29th May near the Burscough station of the East Lancashire Railway.

My Lords trust that this Report will receive the careful consideration of the Directors of the East Lancashire Railway Company.

I am, &c.

*The Secretary
to the East Lancashire
Railway Company.*

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, R.E.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, June 9, 1858.*

SIR, IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the accident that occurred on the 29th ultimo, near the Burscough station of the East Lancashire Railway, to Joseph Ainsworth.

As this young man, a factory operative, eighteen years of age, was travelling on an excursion train between Liverpool and Radcliffe (which is three miles to the south of Bury), on the day in question, his head came in contact with a bridge, 600 yards to the south of the Burscough station, and he was thrown forward against an iron roof-lamp holder of the first-class car-

riage on the outside of which he was riding. His forehead was much cut, and he bled profusely: he remained insensible for that night and the following day; but he has since been progressing favourably, and it is hoped that his life will be saved.

The Saturday in Whit week, on which day the present accident occurred, is annually observed by the manufacturing population of Lancashire as a holiday to be specially devoted to excursion trips, and it is of all days in the year that which is most given up to the purpose. On the day in question there were, accordingly, a number of excursion trips in all directions, and amongst them about 12,000 excursionists were taken to Liverpool from the East Lancashire and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railways; 2,700 conveyed by the former, and the remainder by the latter company; and of the whole number, 4,000 or 5,000 were from Bury and Radcliffe.

One of the East Lancashire Company's excursion trains left Radcliffe at 5 a.m. for Liverpool, and picking up passengers on the way at Bury, Summerseat, and Ramsbottom, it reached Liverpool in due course, with 1,080 passengers, in 27 carriages, and in charge of two guards. The guards were unable to keep the passengers inside the carriages, though they endeavoured to do so, because the excessive heat of the weather, and their crowded state, made the temptation to get out of the windows and ride on the tops of the roofs too great for the young factory workmen to resist. About 12 or more of them were outside at different parts of the journey, and about 20 when the train reached Liverpool.

It appears that on the outward journey the whole of the passengers might have been accommodated in the carriages without *extra* crowding; but when the train started from Liverpool on its homeward journey, at 7 o'clock in the evening, a number of passengers brought from the neighbourhood of Bury by the Lancashire and Yorkshire route in the morning, joined it; and there were more in it than the carriages were built to convey. There were 35 porters, 2 or 3 policemen, and some 20 guards on duty at the joint station at Liverpool; but it was found impossible to get the passengers into their proper trains, in consequence of the crowds that besieged the station; and it was not considered—as harmony now exists in the working of the two companies—to be of much importance that the passengers booked by one company should travel in the trains of the other.

This, however, was no excuse for the train being started with a greater number of passengers than the carriages were constructed to carry; and, as might have been expected, after a day of pleasurable excitement in a broiling sun, it was found still more difficult to keep them inside their carriages than it had been in the morning. The head guard states that he passed down the carriages before the train started, and caused the excursionists to descend from the roofs and get inside; but that he no sooner left one carriage and went to another than they got out again; and the result was, that he started from Liverpool with six or seven passengers on the roofs of the carriages, and that a number of others climbed out of the doors or windows soon afterwards. When the train stopped at Ormskirk, an inspector who was travelling on the engine, and the guards, again attempted to get the passengers in, but without any better success than before, and the young man Ainsworth is stated to have been walking over the roof of a first-class carriage, and looking down through the lamp-holes at his comrades inside, when he was struck by the bridge near Burscough. He would probably have been killed on the spot if the train had not been slackening

speed at the time, for the purpose of stopping at the station.

This accident has been caused entirely by the imprudence of Ainsworth himself, but at the same time, in reporting upon it, it becomes my duty to direct attention particularly to one or two circumstances connected with it.

In the first place, that the train should have been loaded with more passengers than the carriages were fitted to carry was highly improper, and was most likely to lead to some accident of this nature.

In the second place, a bad example was afforded to the passengers, and a feeling of security was no doubt induced amongst those who rode outside, by the under guard of the train having been stationed on the roof of the last carriage for the purpose of working his break, and by his having travelled on the roofs of other carriages during portions of the journey. It will be remembered that a guard in the East Lancashire Company's service met with a similar accident to that on which I am now reporting, in June 1855, while in the execution of his duty near Bury; and I may observe that another man now travels on the outside of a van or carriage at the same place and in the same manner.

In again drawing attention to my report of the 31st July 1855 upon that accident, I would strongly recommend the directors to alter those of their break handles which are constructed to work from the roofs of their coaches, and to make them all to work from the interior, in conformity with the practice almost universally in force in the kingdom; and it would be well if they would remove from the tops of their carriages, the outside seats which many of them possess, and which cannot be otherwise than a temptation to excursionists in hot weather. I enclose a section of the bridge against which this accident occurred, and I would point out that, one side of it being only 3' 2½" above the top of a first-class carriage, and the other side only 3' 5¼", it is not a safe one for a guard to ride under on the top of a coach; as well that there are many other bridges over lines on which this company's trains travel, which are only 13' 6", 13' 7", and 13' 8" above the rails, and which are also of unsafe heights for this purpose, the height of the tunnel by which the guard was struck in 1855 having been 13' 6".

Lastly, it is only right to point out that two guards cannot be considered sufficient to work the breaks of a train of 27 carriages, and at the same time to control 1,080 excursionists; and, indeed, it may be added, that the under guard had only the means of turning on the break of one carriage, and that the supply of break power was very inadequate for such a train; as well as that such a deficiency was particularly inexcusable over gradients such as occur on the East Lancashire Railway, though it had nothing to do with the present accident. There is, unfortunately, a tendency, at certain seasons, to push excursion traffic beyond the limits of prudence in the manufacturing districts. Numerous accidents have been the result; and I may mention that on the same day last year one of this Company's passengers was seriously injured in a similar manner, in consequence of his having climbed to the top of a cattle truck which had been improperly used for his conveyance. If Railway companies continue on such occasions so to strain their resources, both in staff and means of conveyance, some lamentable results must be expected to follow.

I have, &c.

The Secretary,
Railway Department,
Board of Trade.

H. W. TYLER,
Captain, R.E.