

173

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, November 28, 1851.*

Appendix No. 44

ACCIDENTS.

Lancashire and
Yorkshire Railway

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you a copy of a Report they have received from their inspecting officer relative to the collision which occurred at the Bullfield coal depôt on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway on the 4th instant, caused by an express-train running into a coal-train whilst delayed upon the main line at the depôt.

My Lords direct me to call the attention of the Company to the admitted irregularity of the ordinary goods and mineral trains upon the lines of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which appears to be carried to such an extent as to render nugatory the precaution which has been adopted by the Directors for the safety and convenience of the public and the guidance of their servants by the issue of a printed time-table.

My Lords particularly desire that the attention of the Directors should be drawn to the observations in the Report of the inspecting officer upon the speed necessary to be maintained by the express-trains between Preston and Bolton, which he considers, under the existing condition of the goods and mineral traffic, as admitted by the Company, inconsistent with the safety of the traffic upon the line.

My Lords would observe, with reference to this subject, that it appears most desirable and essential for the public safety that the regulations as to time appointed by the Directors should be strictly adhered to, the neglect of them being an ever-fruitful source of accident, as shown in the case under consideration.

My Lords also direct me to call attention to the observations of their officer upon the advisability of more definite regulations being issued for the guidance of the servants of the Company with reference to the preference which is to be given to passenger-trains over goods-trains, more especially where the siding accommodation is not sufficient to allow of the necessary operations in connexion with the goods-trains being effected clear of the main line.

The concluding observation also in the Report, as to the position in the train of the guard's-van appears worthy of the consideration of the Company, not only for the reason assigned,—viz. the diminution of the effect of any collision which may occur, but also on account of the possibility of an accident occurring at the rear of a train, or of a carriage becoming detached unknown to the guard in the front; and likewise, because the guard is nearer to the place where his services are required for the safety of his train in the event of a stoppage when at the rear than at the front end of his train.

I have, &c.,

*The Secretary of the
Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company.*

J. L. A. SIMMONS,
Capt. Royal Engineers.

APPENDIX No. 45.

Appendix No. 45.

Blackburn
Railway.

BLACKBURN RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, November 27, 1851.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acquaint you for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that I have inquired into the circumstances of an accident from collision that occurred in the Cranberry Moss tunnel of the Blackburn railway so far back as the 21st October, and to which the attention of their Lordships was drawn some time after by Mr. Potter, a sufferer by the accident, the Company having neglected to make a report of it.

Mr. Potter attributes the accident to the "uniform custom on this line of running luggage-trains just before passenger-trains;" and he further states, that "there is not one time-piece on the line, nor are the guards of the luggage-trains furnished with watches."

The following are the particulars that I learned respecting the accident:—

A goods-train from Blackburn left Bolton at 9.5 A.M. on the 21st October, being 5 minutes after time; it had to stop at all the stations on the way (seven in number); at a short distance from Bolton the line rises for a length of 5½ miles with a gradient of 1 in 72; at a few chains from the summit the gradient is reduced to 1 in 115, when it immediately falls with a gradient of 1 in 75 for several miles; about 10 chains from the summit on the Blackburn side there is the entrance to a tunnel which is upwards of 2,000 yards in length.

When the goods-train reached the Entwistle station, situated about one mile from the mouth of the tunnel, the guard of it asked the station-master what the time was; he replied, "I cannot exactly tell, but I think it is about 9.15" (it must in reality have been

Appendix No. 45.

ACCIDENTS.

Blackburn
Railway.

about 9·50); the guard said it must be more, and that he had rather stop till the express had gone past; the station-master replied, that he was sure that the goods-train was 20 minutes in advance of the express-train, and he then turned the train out of the siding where it had been shunted for the purpose of taking on four waggons; these waggons were attached to the rear of the train, and obscured the light of the tail lamp, which was left attached to the guard's van, instead of being removed, as it ought to have been, to the last waggon. When the train had reached within about 200 yards of the lower end of the tunnel it was found to be much obscured with steam, and the guard lighted a red portfire, and almost immediately afterwards they were run into. The train which struck them was the 9·15 express from Manchester, viâ Bolton, which latter place it is timed to leave at 9·35, and which the guard states they did; on passing Entwistle at a speed of about 25 miles an hour, the station-master, who was standing at his box, showed no signal, but pointed forward, which the driver supposed was to warn him of some plate-layers who were at work some distance farther on; he passed down the tunnel with steam shut off, and when near the lower end he saw a red light, and had just time to reverse when the collision took place. Had the tail lamp been placed in its proper position, I think it more than probable that, notwithstanding the reported obscurity of the tunnel, its light would have been seen in sufficient time to have prevented the accident.

The guard of the express-train stated, that there was no regular place for them to pass the goods-train; he has passed it, he said, at Bolton, at King William, at Entwistle, and at Sough, which last station is close to the Blackburn end of the tunnel; no instruction is laid down in the goods time-table where it is to be passed; but as a comparison of the passenger and goods time-tables shows that the goods-train is timed to depart from Sough *two* minutes after the express-train, it would indicate that that is the station where the express should pass it. I have obtained and append a return of the times of departure from Bolton of goods-trains proceeding to Blackburn, and the hours at which they *should* have departed for the fortnight preceding the accident; from which it will be apparent that the time of arrival of this or any other goods-train at any of the stations on the line must be quite arbitrary.

The secretary of the railway admitted that the goods-guards are not provided with watches, and that the only intermediate station which has a clock is Over Darwen.

The station-master at Entwistle has been dismissed for breach of the 17th Rule of the Company's printed regulations, which directs that trains arriving at a station within five minutes after the departure of an engine or train, are to be stopped and detained five minutes from the departure of the previous train; unprovided as he was with a time-piece, I do not see how he could be held responsible for obedience to an order of this kind; and, moreover, if the time-tables are referred to, it will be seen that the station-master might very reasonably question the application of the rule to this line, as at two stations, viz., Sough and Over Darwen, the goods-train is timed at the former place to start two minutes, and at the latter four minutes, after the departure of the express-train.

I would desire to record my opinion, that on a line having such gradients as the Blackburn railway, not only are two and four minutes, but even five minutes, too short intervals between trains following one another, more especially when the train in advance is a stopping one.

The immediate causes leading to the accident, apart from the carelessness of the goods-guard, in not transferring his tail-lamp to the last waggon, are clearly to be traced to the station-master at Entwistle and guard of the goods-train being left without the means of knowing the time; to the habitual disregard of the time-tables in running the goods-train, and the carelessness engendered among the servants of the Company thereby; and to the absence of all specific instructions as to where the goods-train was to be shunted out of the way of the express-train.

The irregularity in starting the goods-trains causes them to approach in so many instance to the times of the passenger-trains, that, so far as I can judge from a comparison of the time-tables, Mr. Potter is borne out in attributing, as he does, the accident to the "custom of running luggage-trains just before passenger-trains." In the return that I have appended I have marked down the times of departure of the passenger-trains which follow rather quickly goods-trains.

As the secretary of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, in reply to your letter of inquiry addressed to him on the subject of this accident, referred you to the secretary of the Blackburn Railway Company, it may be necessary for me to observe, that this line is worked by the former Company, and that the time-tables of the two Companies are one and the same.

I have, &c.,

Captain Simmons, R.E.,
&c. &c.

GEO. WYNNE,
Capt. Royal Engineers.

175

TIME OF DEPARTURE of GOODS TRAINS to BLACKBURN from BOLTON.

Appendix No. 45.

ACCIDENTS.
Blackburn
Railway.

	Actual time of departure.	Proper time of departure.	Time of departure of passenger-train.	No. of wag-gons.	Guard.	No. of engine.	Engine-driver.	Where to.
1851.								
Oct. 6, A.M.	8'10	7'30	- -	12	T. Houghton	218	H. Yates	Blackburn.
"	10'35	Special.	- -	10	J. Hewitson	138	J. Briney	Chapelton
"	11'10	9'0	11'28	15	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	Blackburn.
" P.M.	12'50	Special.	- -	12	J. Hewitson	138	J. Briney	"
"	3'55	3'15	- -	15	T. Houghton	218	H. Yates	"
"	9'5	9'0	- -	7	J. Walker	153	Rowbotham	"
Oct. 7, A.M.	12'45	12'30	- -	11	"	"	"	"
"	2'30	Special.	- -	5	W. Green	194	Parkington	"
"	7'45	7'30	8'0	6	T. Houghton	218	H. Yates	"
"	8'10	9'0	- -	1	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	"
" P.M.	8'40	Special.	- -	11	J. Hewitson	138	J. Briney	"
"	3'50	3'15	- -	17	T. Houghton	218	H. Yates	"
"	9'20	9'0	- -	12	J. Walker	153	Rowbotham	"
Oct. 8, A.M.	12'40	12'30	- -	12	"	"	"	"
"	2'45	Special.	- -	12	R. Allsop	194	Partington	"
"	7'10	7'30	- -	15	T. Houghton	218	H. Yates	"
"	9'0	Special.	- -	12	J. Hewitson	138	J. Briney	Chapelton.
"	10'0	9'0	- -	15	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	Blackburn.
" P.M.	11'28	Special.	11'28	9	Hewitson	138	J. Briney	Chapelton.
"	12'15	"	- -	12	"	"	"	Blackburn.
"	4'40	3'15	4'50	10	T. Houghton	218	H. Yates	"
"	9'10	9'0	- -	12	J. Walker	153	Rowbotham	"
Oct. 9, A.M.	12'50	12'30	- -	12	"	"	"	"
"	7'35	7'30	- -	14	T. Houghton	218	H. Yates	"
"	9'15	Special.	9'35	10	J. Hewitson	138	J. Briney	Over Darwen.
" P.M.	9'40	"	- -	10	R. Allsop	110	J. Tonge	King William.
"	1'0	"	- -	12	J. Hewitson	138	J. Briney	Blackburn.
"	3'50	3'15	- -	16	T. Houghton	219	H. Yates	"
"	9'0	9'0	- -	10	J. Walker & Parker	153	Rowbotham	"
Oct. 10, A.M.	1'10	12'30	- -	12	"	"	"	"
"	3'20	Special.	- -	10	R. Allsop	223	R. Partington	"
" P.M.	7'30	7'30	- -	12	T. Houghton	219	H. Yates	"
"	2'35	Special.	- -	4	Hewitson	92	Rollinson	"
Oct. 11, A.M.	7'10	7'30	- -	18	Houghton	218	H. Yates	"
"	8'45	Special.	- -	11	Hewitson	138	J. Briney	Chapelton.
" P.M.	11'0	"	- -	11	"	"	"	Blackburn.
"	4'45	3'5	- -	15	Houghton	219	H. Yates	"
"	8'50	9'0	- -	15	Walker and Parker	153	Rowbotham	"
Oct. 12, A.M.	12'5	12'30	- -	13	"	"	"	"
"	3'35	Special.	- -	11	R. Allsop	223	Partington	"
Oct. 13, A.M.	6'55	7'30	- -	13	Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
" P.M.	9'40	9'0	- -	15	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	"
"	4'30	3'15	4'50	13	Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
"	9'10	9'0	- -	16	Walker and Parker	218	H. Yates	"
Oct. 14, A.M.	12'30	12'30	- -	13	"	"	"	"
"	2'50	Special.	- -	7	Mayot	223	J. Crompton	"
"	7'5	7'30	- -	7	Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
" P.M.	11'5	9'0	11'28	14	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	"
"	11'10	Special.	- -	9	J. Hewitson	151	J. Briney	"
"	3'55	3'15	- -	13	T. Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
"	9'35	9'0	- -	11	Walker and Parker	219	H. Yates	"
Oct. 15, A.M.	12'50	12'30	- -	15	"	"	"	"
"	3'20	Special.	- -	14	W. Green	223	J. Crompton	"
"	7'20	7'30	- -	12	Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
" P.M.	9'15	Special.	9'35	9	Hewitson	151	J. Briney	Chapelton.
"	9'50	9'0	- -	15	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	Blackburn.
"	12'0	Special.	- -	19	Hewitson	110&151	Tonge & Briney	"
"	8'50	3'15	- -	14	Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
"	9'15	9'0	- -	15	Walker and Parker	219	H. Yates	"
Oct. 16, A.M.	12'35	12'30	- -	14	"	"	"	"
"	3'50	Special.	- -	11	W. Green	223	J. Crompton	"
"	7'50	7'30	8'0	12	T. Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
" P.M.	9'50	Special.	- -	19	Hewitson	151	J. Briney	Chapelton.
"	10'30	9'0	- -	16	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	Blackburn.
"	12'45	Special.	- -	10	J. Hewitson	151	J. Briney	"
"	3'56	3'15	- -	13	T. Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
"	9'55	9'0	- -	14	Parker and Walker	219	H. Yates	"
Oct. 17, A.M.	1'50	12'30	- -	14	"	"	"	"
"	3'35	Special.	- -	10	W. Green	223	Crompton	"
"	7'35	7'30	- -	14	Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
" P.M.	9'15	Special.	9'35	9	Hewitson	151	J. Briney	Chapelton.
"	11'10	"	11'28	9	"	"	"	King William
"	4'0	3'15	- -	10	T. Houghton	153	Rowbotham	Blackburn.
"	9'25	9'0	- -	14	Walker and Parker	219	H. Yates	"
Oct. 18, A.M.	1'45	12'30	- -	14	"	"	"	"
"	3'15	Special.	- -	10	W. Green	223	Crompton	"
" P.M.	7'50	7'30	8'0	14	Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
"	9'50	Special.	- -	7	J. Hewitson	151	J. Briney	Chapelton.
"	10'15	9'0	- -	9	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	Blackburn.
"	12'30	Special.	- -	9	Hewitson	151	J. Briney	"
"	3'50	3'15	- -	14	Houghton	153	Rowbotham	"
"	8'50	9'0	- -	16	Walker and Parker	219	H. Yates	"
Oct. 19, A.M.	12'25	12'30	- -	15	"	"	"	"
"	4'55	Special.	- -	8	W. Green	223	Crompton	"
Oct. 20, A.M.	7'40	7'30	8'0	15	T. Houghton	219	H. Yates	"
" P.M.	10'10	9'0	- -	6	J. Holt	180	J. Lund	"
"	3'50	3'15	- -	15	T. Houghton	219	H. Yates	"
"	9'0	9'0	- -	12	Walker and Parker	153	Rowbotham	"

Appendix No. 45,

ACCIDENTS.

Blackburn
Railway.

SIR,

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, December 5, 1851.*

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to forward to you, for the information of the Directors of the Blackburn Railway Company, a copy of a Report they have received from their inspecting officer relative to the accident which occurred on the 22d October, by an express-train coming in contact with a goods-train in the Cranberry Moss tunnel, and which was reported in your letter of the 7th November.

My Lords direct me to observe, that the causes which led to this accident appear, from the Report of their officer, to exhibit a condition of things upon the Blackburn Railway requiring the most serious attention of the Directors, as tending to produce much risk to the passengers and traffic upon their railway.

There appears to have been, in the first instance, a neglect of duty on the part of the guard of the goods-train in not having attached the lamp used for the purpose of warning following trains to the rearmost truck of his train. This neglect, it would appear, could not have taken place without the knowledge of the station officials at the preceding station.

The next point to which I am to direct the attention of the Directors is the utility of prescribing regulations dependent upon time, when the means are not provided by which the servants of the Company whose duty it is to act upon those regulations shall be enabled to conform to them with punctuality and precision.

The truth of this observation is evinced by the regulation of the Company as to the interval of time to be observed between trains following each other upon the same line of rails, a breach of which is stated to have caused the dismissal by the Directors of the station-master at Entwistle, but upon what grounds their Lordships are not able to judge, as from the Report of their officer it would appear that there was no time-piece at that station, or upon the goods-train, by which the exact time of that train leaving the Entwistle station could be determined.

My Lords also direct me to observe on the disagreement of the regulation above referred to with the printed time-tables issued by the Company for the guidance of their servants and for the information of the public. It appears that, according to the regulations of the Company, the Directors have fixed five minutes as the interval within which trains travelling in the same direction on the same line of rails are not to follow each other; whereas, from the printed time-table it appears, that exceptions are made to this rule, and that four and even two minutes are considered sufficient to secure the safety of such trains.

My Lords, under the peculiar circumstances of the Blackburn Railway, with its steep gradients and long tunnel, recommend to the serious consideration of the Directors the decided opinion expressed by their inspecting officer, that on the Blackburn Railway even the space of five minutes is too short an interval to provide for the safety of the traffic.

My Lords also direct me to observe upon the great irregularity of the goods-trains in their departure from the more important stations of the line, such as Bolton; and that it appears from the return furnished by the Company, that there is practically a total disregard of the hours fixed in the printed time-tables issued by the Company, so that these time-tables, instead of being of use for the protection of the traffic, must rather tend to confusion and accident, by conveying wrong information to drivers as to the probable position of other trains than their own, and which must be a more especial source of danger upon a railway so totally unprovided as the Blackburn Railway with the means for correcting the intervals between succeeding trains. The neglect of precaution, such as time-tables, adopted by the Directors, no doubt, with a view to the safety and convenience of the public, must also tend to engender carelessness, and an ill state of discipline, highly prejudicial to the safe working of the railway.

My Lords direct me to impress upon the Directors, that want of punctuality is at all times a source of danger to their own servants and to the public; and to observe, that the return referred to evinces such a total neglect of it, and absence of discretion on the part of the Company's servants, that they cannot but concur in the opinion of their officer, that the affairs of the Company are so conducted as to give good reason for Mr. H. Potter's observation in his report to their Lordships, a copy of which was forwarded to the Company, that this accident is to be attributed to the "custom of running luggage-trains just before passenger-trains."

There is one other point to which my Lords direct me to call the attention of the Directors, viz.; the propriety of fixing more definitely the stations at which, when necessary, passenger-trains are to be allowed to pass goods-trains.

In conclusion, my Lords trust that the Directors of the Blackburn Company, as well as of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company, who, according to your letter of the 7th November, work the traffic on this line, will take into their serious consideration the whole system in force upon this railway, which, from the Report now before them, appears to exhibit a degree of mismanagement that is greatly to be regretted.

I have, &c.,

*The Secretary of the
Blackburn-Railway Company.**J. L. A. SIMMONS,
Capt. Royal Engineers.*