

the accident, that occurred at Victoria Park station on the 12th April last (not the 11th as reported).

Several passengers were hurt, but I understand, that none of them were seriously injured.

The branch railway from Victoria Park station to Stratford, belongs to the Great Eastern Railway Company, but it is worked by the North London Railway Company, with whose line it forms a junction at Victoria Park station.

The passenger trains which run on this branch are distinct from the main line trains and work over the branch line only.

There is only one passenger platform at Victoria Park station for the branch line. This platform is situated in the angle, between the branch and the North London main line, so that passengers alighting from the main line trains, do not cross the rails of the branch line to enter the trains on that line.

It follows, that trains proceeding from Victoria Park station to Stratford have to get on to their proper line by a cross-over road which is a short distance from the south-east end of the station.

It is the duty of one of the porters at the station to hold the points for the train to cross over. The three porters that belong to the station take this duty by turns.

On the 12th ultimo Charles Edwards was the porter for this duty. He had only been two months and five days in the company's service and it is his first employment on a railway.

He preceded the 7.12 p.m. train to the points, and was at them when the engine and train arrived, but he does not appear to have pulled them over so as to set the engine cross to its proper line, but to have done so, as soon as the engine had passed through them. The train consisted of a tank-engine, a second-class carriage with break compartment for the guard, another second-class carriage, and a first-class carriage coupled in the order given. The engine kept straight on and the carriages passed through the points on to

the cross-over road, but were dragged off the rails and the first one fell over on its near side. The other two were pulled off the rails, but did not fall over. The line from the south end of Victoria Park station towards Stratford falls 1 in 82. The points of the cross-over road are about 100 yards from the station. The train had gained a speed of about eight miles per hour, when it arrived at the points. The driver is in jail for some offence not connected with the railway which he has committed, since the accident occurred. He did not therefore appear to give me his evidence, but the fireman stated, that he shut off his steam at once and that he applied the break. The guard also applied his break and the train was brought up within 70 yards of the points.

The accident was caused by the mistake of the porter who was acting as switchman. I consider that he was rather too inexperienced in railway matters to be trusted with this duty, which, though perfectly simple, requires a man to be fully aware of the importance of doing it well and correctly.

I would suggest the desirability of a second platform for the branch and a foot-bridge for passengers over or under both the railways. The points of the cross-over road should then be worked from the junction box. This will prevent the chance of up trains coming into contact with down trains, as well as accidents of the present kind. If the company do not consider the station of sufficient importance to warrant such an outlay, I would suggest, that the cross-over road where the accident occurred be moved nearer to the station and worked from the junction box by the signalman, or that it be controlled by a low signal which cannot be lowered for drivers to start from the Victoria Park platform until the points are set in the proper direction.

I have, &c.

*The Secretary
Board of Trade,
Railway Department.*

F. H. RICH,
Capt. R.E.

NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade
(Railway Department),
Whitehall 7th April, 1866.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, to be laid before the Directors of the North Union Railway Company, [London and North-Western Railway Company,] the enclosed copy of the report made by Colonel Yolland, the officer appointed by my Lords to inquire into the circumstances connected with the collision that occurred near the Euxton station on the North Union Railway on the 21st February last.

I am, &c.

J. E. TENNENT.

*The Secretary of the
North Union
Railway Company,
The Secretary of the
London and North-Western
Railway Company.*

*Board of Trade
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 31st March 1866.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to state, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, in obedience to your minute of the 6th instant, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended a collision that occurred on the 21st February near Euxton Station, on the North Union Railway, between an express passenger train and an empty engine, when four passengers and two of the companies' servants were injured, two of the passengers rather seriously.

It appears that on the night in question, the bank engine had assisted the 9.50 p.m. up goods train up the inclines from Preston station to Coppul, a distance of about 10 miles, on the North Union Railway, now

worked by the London and North-Western Railway Company, and the bank engine left Coppul to return to Preston about 10.50 p.m. and passed Balshaw Lane level crossing, seven miles from Preston, going very slow, about 11 o'clock p.m.

The gatekeeper at the level crossing states, that he usually watches trains that pass his crossing until they reach Euxton station, three quarters of a mile distant, and on looking after this engine, he saw that it carried a bad light at the rear of the engine, which was returning to Preston with the tender in front, and he thought the engine appeared to come to a stand still, and in consequence he turned the gate signal lamp on to danger, and put down a fog signal about 40 yards on the Coppul side of the level crossing.

In about 15 minutes the 5.0 p.m. down express passenger train approached his crossing; he saw it a long distance before it reached the crossing, and he showed a red light towards it with his hand lamp as well as with the gate signal lamp. He says that he noticed the guard of the express train put on his break about 100 yards or more before he reached the crossing, but he did not hear any whistle from the train, which passed at a good speed, and which ran into the bank engine about 340 yards on the Euxton side of the crossing, at a speed estimated by the driver of the express train at 25 miles an hour. The effect of the collision was to throw the engine and tender of the express train off the line, fouling both lines of way, to break the buffer beams and buffers off the engines, and to push the bank engine a long distance ahead, and to injure four out of the six passengers who were in the train in addition to an inspector who was riding on the engine and the fireman. Fortunately the inspector had time to reach Euxton station, which was more than a quarter of a mile nearer to Preston than the spot where the collision

took place, in time to have the up station signal put on to "danger" and thus to stop the up limited mail, or another collision might have ensued.

The 5.0 p.m. down express train consisted of engine and tender, one composite carriage, one break van, and four carriage trucks. It left Warrington about six minutes late, and was apparently travelling at its regular rate, which from Coppul to Preston is generally very fast, in order to make up for slow travelling up hill from Wigan to Coppul. This portion of the line is worked with the assistance of the electric telegraph, and on the partial block system, and I was informed that when the "all clear" signal had not been received from the station in advance, it was customary to stop the following train, and to tell the driver that there was a train on the line in front; but on this day, the telegraph wire between Coppul and Euxton Junction Telegraph stations, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles apart, had broken, so that it was not possible to make use of it over this length, and the traffic was conducted on the original system of a time interval between following trains. The driver of the express train did not know but that he was working on the telegraphic system, and there is no doubt that a less vigilant look-out is kept when it is known that the traffic is conducted on the block system, or partial block system, by the assistance of the telegraph, than when the traffic is worked only with an interval of time between following trains. The line was straight for a very long distance, and if a vigilant look-out had been kept, the Balshaw Lane gate signal and the gate-keeper's hand lamp should have been seen at a sufficient distance to enable the express train to have been stopped short of the spot where the collision occurred; as it was, the gate signal lamps, the gate-keeper's hand lamp, and the lamp on the tail of the

bank engine, were seen nearly at the same time, but not before the express train was very close on the crossing; the driver reversed his engine and the fireman and guard put on their breaks, but the distance was too short, with the proportion of break power allotted to the train, to enable it to be stopped short of the bank engine.

The bank engine after passing the level crossing had stopped for want of steam. As I have already stated, it was running tender foremost, which is not a favourable position for raising steam; and great blame is due to the driver for not having sent back his fireman in order to stop the down express train, as there was abundance of time to have done so. He had been discharged from the Company's service and I did not see him.

I am also of opinion that the driver and fireman of the express train are to blame for not having kept a better look out, as the signal at the level crossing should have been carefully looked for. But it appears that this signal lamp is without a reflector and cannot be seen above 600 yards, and it is therefore essential that it should be replaced by a good lamp of modern construction.

I beg also to recommend that when any interruption occurs in the working of traffic by the telegraph, on the block, or partial block system, so as to render it necessary to revert to the time interval until the telegraphic instruments can be put into proper working order again, the drivers of all trains should be cautioned and made acquainted with the change which has been made.

I have, &c.
W. YOLLAND,
Colonel.

*The Secretary of the
Board of Trade,
Whitehall.*

VALE OF NEATH RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 5th May 1866.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, to be laid before the Directors of the Vale of Neath Railway Company (Great Western Railway Company) the enclosed copy of the report made by Capt. Tyler, R.E., the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred near the Aberdare station of the Vale of Neath Railway on the 27th March last.

I am, &c.
W. D. FANE.

*The Secretary of the
Vale of Neath
Railway Company.
The Secretary of the
Great Western
Railway Company.*

SIR, *No. 1, Whitehall, 26th April 1866.*

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 16th 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 collision that occurred on the 27th ultimo, between a passenger train and a goods train, near Aberdare, on the Vale of Neath Railway.

There are two stations at Aberdare, on different levels, but within some 20 yards of each other. The original low-level station was formerly the terminus of the Aberdare branch of the Vale of Neath Railway, but there being no communication through it, it is only used now for one passenger train each way daily.

The high-level station, opened for traffic in 1864, has a single *through* line of rails passing a one sided passenger platform; and this line of rails carries the traffic of the Great Western system to and from the

important district north and west of Aberdare. The number of trains passing through Aberdare has already increased from 23 up to 63, including both ways, daily, and the increase may be expected to continue rapidly as the resources of the district are developed.

The terminal line and the through line from the above stations meet at Gadlys junction, about 320 yards to the west of them. The signalman at this junction communicates by a gong with a second signalman, 240 yards west of him, at Gadlys crossing, and the latter works a distant signal near a level crossing at Mill Street, 720 yards from the junction box. The gatekeeper of this level crossing has two signals at the crossing, and a distant signal to the west of it.

There is a considerable descent from Hirwain, on the west, for $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, to Aberdare, the gradients being as follows on the immediate approach to Gadlys crossing:—1 in 67.5 for 27 chains,—1 in 49 for 24 chains, to the crossing distant signal,—level for two chains,—1 in 74 for 20 chains,—and 1 in 156, on which the collision occurred, for $2\frac{1}{2}$ chains, to the crossing signal-cabin.

The line is worked by the block system of telegraph between Gadlys junction and Hirwain on the west, and between Gadlys junction and Cwmbach on the east or south, there being also an intermediate telegraph box at Gelly Tarw, $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles west of Aberdare, and a train staff being used for trains proceeding from Gadlys junction to sidings short of Gelly Tarw.

On the 27th ultimo, the 9.12 passenger train from Hirwain left that station at 9.14 for Aberdare, consisting, in the following order, of a tank-engine, a break-van, a first-class carriage, a second-class carriage, three third-class carriages, a composite carriage and a break-van. It conveyed 35 passengers, and weighed altogether about 76 tons, of which 38 tons were on wheels to which break-blocks were applied, 24 on the four (coupled) driving wheels of the engine, and 14 on the wheels of the two break-