

LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, Dec. 10, 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 your instructions of the 27th ultimo, I have inquired into the circumstances attending the fatal accident which occurred at the Brighton terminus of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway to George Sweetman, a switchman in the employment of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Company.

A switchman named Henry Evans has charge of the switches adjacent to the terminus on the London side of it, and the deceased was his assistant.

On the morning of the 20th ultimo, at about 9 A. M., Sweetman held the points of a coke siding, of which the lever is close to the switchman's box, for the admission of some coke waggons, and the driver pushed them with his engine into the coke store.

It was the least busy part of the day, and Sweetman crossed the main line to a spot where he had no points to attend to, and there he was seen quietly standing.

Presently, the driver having placed the coke waggons, whistled for leave to quit the sidings. Evans, who was at his box, signalled to him to do so, and the driver was backing his engine tender foremost out of the sidings, when Sweetman suddenly ran from where he was standing on the opposite side of the main line towards the switchman's box. He was crossing before the engine in motion on the coke siding, when his foot slipped, and he was struck by the tender, and his death was the result of the serious injuries he received.

Evans cannot explain Sweetman's object in crossing the line at that moment. There was nothing for him to do, and his intervention was not required to pass the engine out of the coke siding. He had been 4 years on duty at that post, and was a steady man; but the station master says that he had on several occasions reproved him for rashness. In my opinion, his death must be attributed to his own want of caution.

The jury observed in their verdict (in the extract submitted by the railway company to their Lordships) that "two men were not able to attend to fourteen or more points at a place of so much traffic with reasonable safety."

These switchmen are circumstanced as follows :

Their hut is about 100 yards short of the terminus on the left of the arrival line from London, and is in an angle between the arrival line and the sidings of

the station yard. They have two series of switches to attend to, of which the one is in the shops' and sheds' yard behind their box, where there are 7 switches of sidings connected with turntables, water cranes, shops, &c., &c. The other series is on the main line side of the box, where switches lead from the main lines to the coke siding in which the accident occurred to the spare carriage sidings in the terminus and into the yard already referred to. They have also charge of one switch of a cross-over road, which is in use on the arrival of nearly all passenger trains from London, for passing the engine from the front to the rear of the train.

About half the total number of switch handles are contiguous to the switchman's box; the others at various distances within about 60 or 70 paces of it, and most of them on the box side of the main line.

To enter or quit the yard, the numerous engines which work into Brighton terminus must pass on to the small length of main line, about 100 yards in length, between the switchman's box and the terminus, and this, with the number of trains arriving and departing on the London main lines, doubtless makes the switchman's position an anxious one.

The company, I understand, would be glad to improve it; but they question the practicability of working the switches by handles collected into a box, where, as in this case, the engines are many, their objects various, and the switches frequent.

Evans, the switchman, and the station master, with respectively 13 years and 11 years experience at the station, are dubious as to its expediency, and the former says that there would be liability to fouling of the points from engines hanging close to them when shunting after dusk. That inconvenience might perhaps be avoided by means of a lamp or post on the side of the line, to indicate to the driver when at a proper distance clear of the points; and my impression is, that it might be an improvement were one or two of the most frequented switches to be worked from the box; that, for instance, leading from the arrival main line into the yard.

The duties were conducted by one switchman until four years ago, when they were lightened by the appointment of the assistant switchman; and it is said that no accident had, until now, occurred to any servant of the company on duty at that part of the terminus.

I have, &c.

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

*GEORGE ROSS,
Captain R.E.*

LONDON AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, Sept. 3, 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 made by Captain Ross, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances attending the accident which occurred to a train on the 18th June near the Huddersfield tunnel on the London and North Western Railway.

My Lords trust that the recommendation of their inspecting officer will receive the careful consideration of the directors.

I am, &c.

The Secretary to the London and North Western Railway Company.

*DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, R.E.*

report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the fatal accident which occurred to the 1-30 p.m. up train from Huddersfield to Manchester on the 18th June at the open cutting which is in the Huddersfield tunnel at the spot where the Lancashire and Yorkshire line from Penistone joins a junction called Springwood with the Huddersfield and Manchester branch of the London and North Western Railway.

The tunnel from Huddersfield station, where it commences, to Springwood junction, is 700 yards in length, on a gradient ascending 1 in 100 from Huddersfield station towards Manchester, and it is traversed by all trains passing to and from Huddersfield, whether on the Penistone or Manchester lines.

From Springwood junction the line to Manchester is continued at the same gradient of 1 in 100 through a further length of 112 yards of open cutting and 245 yards of tunnel, while the Penistone line diverges to the left (southwards) from Springwood junction on a curve through the open cutting, the roadway being level for 352 yards, and thence on a continued ascend-

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, July 21, 1858.*

SIR, IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 23d ult., I have the honour to

ing incline of 1 in 200 for 308 yards, and of 1 in 100 for not less than five miles.

On this incline the stations of Lockwood, Berry Brow, and Honley are situated, at distances from Springwood junction of respectively 1,297 yards, 2,888 yards, and 5,000 yards.

Both the London and North Western and the Lancashire and Yorkshire lines are double, and the tunnel is worked by telegraph, but there is no telegraphic communication with the Penistone branch.

The tunnel pointsmen are three in number, in charge of voltaic battery telegraph instruments at Huddersfield station, at Springwood junction, and at "Gledholt," the last telegraph station being on the Manchester side of the upper part of the tunnel.

The instruments are under the inspection of an officer of the Electric Telegraph Company, and are applied solely to working the tunnel.

They are double-needle instruments, and the application of the symbols to the working of the tunnel is regulated under a code of instructions which has been in use, I am informed, since the opening of the line, 11 years ago. The pointsmen seem well instructed in the use of their instruments.

In working the junction the pointsman at Springwood keeps his signals constantly set to danger, except for the passage of trains.

The up trains from Huddersfield to Penistone traverse the tunnel to Springwood junction on the up line, and the pointsman at Springwood turns them off on to the Penistone line by a pair of points worked from his box, which is in the angle to the right on emerging from the tunnel into Springwood cutting, and is five feet above the level of the rails.

The rock cutting in the curve towards Penistone is high, and intercepts the view of the Springwood pointsman at a distance, by my measurement, of 210 yards.

The junction is under the management of the London and North Western Company, and the station of Huddersfield belongs to the two companies.

On the 17th June the London and North Western 12.30 p.m. up train from Leeds left Huddersfield for Manchester at 1.40 p.m., 10 minutes after time, having lost six minutes between Leeds and Huddersfield, and four minutes at Huddersfield.

The train consisted, in the following order, of engine and tender, horsebox, van, one second-class carriage, one first-class carriage, and three third-class carriages.

The usual telegraphic message had been received from Springwood junction of "up line clear," but on emerging from the tunnel into the open cutting at Springwood junction the train was run into at the crossing of the Penistone *down* line with the Manchester *up* line by five loaded runaway waggons, escaped, as afterwards appeared, from a siding at Honley station.

From the nature of the curve through the cutting on which the waggons approached they were seen by the engine driver of the up Manchester train, as he arrived close to the crossing, only in time for him to put on steam, and thus to carry the train past, with the exception of the two last third-class carriages, which were struck by the waggons, the last of all with the full force of the collision, by which three persons were killed and some injured, while the other carriage escaped with considerable damage to the last compartment, and with comparatively little injury to the passengers.

The Gledholt pointsman at the upper end of the tunnel has a view from his box of the Penistone line after it leaves the open cutting, but his view is limited by the Lockwood tunnel, which the line enters on the Penistone incline about 1,000 yards from Springwood junction.

The Gledholt pointsman noticed the waggons come out of this tunnel, but, distant as he was, could not distinguish whether they were following the up or down line. He immediately telegraphed to the pointsman at Springwood, and the latter states that the message he received was only "look out for Lankey," referring to the Lancashire and Yorkshire line.

The crossing is 40 yards beyond the points leading to the Penistone up line, worked from the Springwood pointsman's box, and the inquiry suggests itself whether he could have averted the collision by turning the up train to Manchester on to the Penistone line.

His own statement is that he endeavoured to do so, but that the front wheels of the engine already closed the points. This is questioned by the engine driver, and inspector of permanent way, who was on the engine, but the pointsman's statement appears to me probable, for when the front wheels of the engine were on the points the rear compartment of the last carriage but one (the first struck) may have been about 90 yards from the crossing.

The engine driver's estimate of his speed is from 10 to 12 miles an hour, and in the case supposed the distance passed over by the waggons while in view by the Springwood pointsman would have been traversed at about 23 miles an hour, which I should judge to be not far from the truth; at all events the notice by telegraph from Gledholt could not have given the Springwood pointsman more than a minute's warning, allowing for sending and receiving the message, which did *not* specify the danger.

The Springwood pointsman had the signal on against the down line, and he had little time for consideration when the source of danger became apparent.

I therefore concur in the propriety of the verdict of the jury at the coroner's inquest in imputing no blame to this man.

The inquiry at the inquest appears to have been conducted with great minuteness and care, and the verdict of the jury is as follows:

"The jury find a verdict of manslaughter against some person or persons unknown, and the jurors also say that the death of the said Jasper Beard having been caused by the escape of luggage waggons from the Honley station siding, and it appearing that there is no sufficient evidence of how or in what manner such escape arose, the jury recommend a greater supervision of the carters and other persons coming to that station, and particularly recommend that the stop blocks should be kept locked, and the keys thereof kept in the care of the railway servants, who should be held responsible for the same blocks being locked, until some more efficient mode of preventing so disastrous an occurrence as the present be adopted; and the jurors would further suggest that if a part of the rock at Springwood junction was removed some security would be obtained by enabling the pointsman to have a longer view of the carriages coming down the Penistone line."

I proceed now to the consideration of the escape of the waggons from Honley.

The booking office of this station is on the right of the line to an up train travelling from Huddersfield.

Fifty yards below it, nearer to Huddersfield, also on the right of the line, is the warehouse, parallel to and closely adjoining the main line.

The siding from which the waggons came ends close below the booking office, from which it runs through the warehouse, towards Huddersfield at about the same falling gradient of 1 in 100, parallel to the main line, till it is led into it. This is called the warehouse siding. Another siding, with a similar falling gradient, called the timber siding, has its end just above and to the right of the warehouse, and it is led into the main line by points 200 yards below the booking office nearer to Huddersfield.

On the opposite side of the main line to the booking office is the coal siding, with coal drops, forming a loop round the passengers' platform on the up side. The most distant pair of points of this siding are about 150 yards above the booking office, and nearer to Penistone.

The station master's charge extends, therefore, to about 150 yards above his booking office, and 200 yards below it on the incline.

At the time of the accident there were chock blocks to the sidings, but no means of locking them.

The station is not well situated, in being shut in towards Penistone by an embankment, and towards Huddersfield down the incline by a tunnel, and considerable excavation has been required to obtain the contracted space available for the lower part of the station yard, comprising the warehouse, two cranes, the warehouse siding, and the wood siding and yard.

The traffic in coal is not limited to the coal siding, but is carried on by several small dealers at the *warehouse siding*; and other persons unconnected with the railway company have frequent business in loading and unloading trucks, &c. at the lower part of the yard.

The staff for working the station consists of the station master, a porter, and a lad, whose duty it is to attend to the weighing machine at the coal shoots below the level of the coal siding. Hence the booking office and the warehouse duties, with the charge of the sidings, devolve on the station master and porter.

There is little discrepancy in the statements of these men regarding the events of the 17th June.

On the morning of that day there were seven waggons in the warehouse siding, and at 9½ a.m. two more were shunted into it by the Holmfirth goods down train. Sykes, the porter, superintended, and states that he put the breaks down as usual, and the chock blocks on, and that he scotched the wheels of the waggons he put in.

It does not appear that the station master or porter were at the lower part of the station near the chock blocks from the time of shunting, 9½ a.m., till after 2.12 p.m., when the absence of the waggons Sykes had left in the warehouse siding was discovered by him, when standing on the passenger platform opposite at the booking office, waiting for the up train due in 2.12 p.m. The station master had, however, been to the warehouse from 9½ a.m. till 12.10, when he went to his dinner.

He says that while at the warehouse he had the waggons under his eye, and that all appeared right, the breaks down, and that they were "scotched with wood and stone, as usual." Sykes all this time was at the booking office, and only left it, he says, to assist a man in moving a chest of drawers in the warehouse, at 12½ o'clock.

On the return of the station master from his dinner, at 1¼ p.m., Sykes was standing on the booking office platform, and the latter then went to *his* dinner. The station master went into the booking office, and busied himself with his books, leaving the office only to give a signal to the down express train from Sheffield at 1.43.

On the return of Sykes, the station master sent him across the line with a heavy package for the up Holmfirth train, and it was while waiting for this train, after 2.12 p.m., that Sykes came to tell him that five waggons were missing from the warehouse siding. On proceeding to the spot the station master found that the breaks of the four waggons remaining in the siding were *off*, and the chock block the same.

Several persons had been engaged at the cranes and trucks of the warehouse siding throughout this time, and it is obvious that the station master had no control over their proceedings.

It must be repeated that the sidings fall direct into the main line on a gradient of about 1 in 100, and in my opinion the management is directly in fault in having neglected to afford the station master the means of securing their safety.

Locks had not been supplied to the chock blocks of the warehouse and timber sidings at the date of my inspection of the spot on the 1st of July; and it is right that the directors should be made aware that I was informed that the locks were on the spot, but that the *crowded state of the sidings* on that day had prevented their being fixed.

The warehouse siding, when I saw it, was choked with waggons to such an extent that the chock block was employed to scotch only the rear wheels of the waggon nearest the main line, the front wheels projecting beyond the chock block; and, what was worse, in the adjoining timber siding, in order to obtain space, the loaded waggon at the extreme end was forced on to the mound of earth forming its limit, while of the front timber waggon, composed of two smaller trucks coupled together, the hind one only was jammed by the chock block, actually twisted the reverse way, while the front truck projected beyond the chock block.

If the safety of the station is to depend upon locked chock blocks, ample siding accommodation should be provided, and a direct responsibility fixed upon the station master.

It is true that the leading waggons I saw were "spragged" and "scotched," but, however useful as auxiliaries these may be, the principle of *no possible interference without the intervention of a servant of the company* is not attained by such expedients, and for the safety of the public it is essential that this principle should be enforced. This object can be best attained by blind sidings, into which the falling sidings should be led, and their direct communication with the main line cut off; and this is the course which in the present instance should be adopted.

It seems very desirable that an incline of five miles, situated as is the Honley incline with reference to Springwood junction and to Huddersfield station, should be worked by telegraph.

As regards Springwood junction, it does not appear that the position of the pointsman's box is directly concerned in the present accident, but I should recommend that it be removed to the top of the rock to its right, and the points, with indicators attached to them, worked from it. An increased range of sight of about 100 yards would, I believe, be attained by this.

I have, &c.

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

GEORGE ROSS,
Captain, R.E.

LONDON AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, Sept. 3, 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 of Lieut. Col. Yolland, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 26th July last at the Willesden station of the London and North Western Railway.

My Lords trust that the directors will take warning by this accident, and make arrangements to place signals in connexion with *all facing* points, so that the position in which the points are standing may be seen by the engine drivers before they reach them.

My Lords also trust that the directors will cause the trains to be supplied with additional break power.

I am, &c.

*The Secretary to the
London and North Western
Railway Company.*

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, R.E.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, August 20, 1858.*

SIR,

In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 30th ultimo, 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 an