

working the traffic, as regards following trains between Newchurch and Stackstead, the station next to Bacup. Even supposing the treadle bell always to be in working order, it would afford the Newchurch signalman no means of knowing whether the *whole* of a train going eastward had cleared the tunnel, and it would give no information at all to the signalman at Stackstead as regards trains proceeding westward towards Newchurch. The proper mode of working the traffic as regards following trains between Newchurch and Stackstead is by means of block-telegraph, and it is to be hoped that the occurrence of this collision may lead to its establishment without loss of time.

The signalman at Newchurch was much to blame, 1st, in waiting two days before reporting that the treadle telegraph bell was out of order; and, 2nd, in not giving the goods train a full five minutes' start of the passenger train, and also in not warning the driver of the latter, by means of his flag, that he had a train close in front of him.

In addition to the unsafe mode of working the traffic as regards following trains between Newchurch and Stackstead, above alluded to, there are other unsatisfactory arrangements at Newchurch, to which I think

it right to draw attention. In consequence of deficient siding accommodation, horses and carts have to stand on the main line in the process of loading from the trucks. The distant signal for trains approaching from Stackstead down a gradient of 1 in 72 is only 190 yards from the nearest siding points; supposing the second tunnel to be clear, the signal can be seen through it for a distance of 610 yards; but, in the case of following trains, when the signal would be most required, it would most probably be full of steam, &c., and the view would be limited to 100 yards.

To make the signal really useful it should be removed to the Stackstead end of the second tunnel, and provided with a repeater, electric or otherwise. A proper distant signal, worked from the cabin, is also required for trains approaching Newchurch from Rawtenshall, the present one being nothing more than a starting signal, for which purpose it could continue to be used.

I have, &c.,

C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

The Secretary,
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.

Copies of the above report were sent to the Company.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 30th April 1872.

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision, that occurred on the 26th ultimo, about a quarter of a mile to the west of Middleton Junction Station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.]

About a quarter of a mile to the west of Middleton Junction there are some sidings. These sidings are situated on a part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which is called the Distillery Bank. The sidings are provided with home signals and distant signals, and are in the charge of a pointsman, who is stationed in a cabin called the Vitriol Cabin, which is situated at the west end of the sidings. On the day in question, a goods train, which consisted of an engine and tender and 18 waggons, was being shunted from the sidings at the north side of the passenger lines on to the line from Middleton to Manchester.

One of the coupling chains gave way during the operation. The passenger train which is due to leave Manchester at 6.15 a.m. for Normanton, arrived at the time, and was brought to a stand by the signals, which are worked from the Vitriol Cabin, which stood at danger.

The distant signal is 600 yards on the Manchester side of the Vitriol Cabin.

The passenger train consisted of an engine and tender, a guard's van with a guard, a second, a first, a second, two third, a composite, two third, a first, a second-class carriage, and a break-van with another guard, at the tail of the train.

Three carriages next to the front break-van and four carriages next to the last break-van were fitted with Fay's continuous breaks.

The van at the tail of the passenger train stood about 480 yards inside the distant signal, which was worked from the Vitriol Cabin, and about 30 yards

inside the Middleton Junction distant signal, which was likewise at danger. The passenger train had only stopped about one minute, when it was run into by a goods train, that is due to leave Oldham Road at 4.45 a.m. for Preston. This goods train consisted of an engine and tender, nine waggons, and a break-van with a guard.

It left Miles Platting, which is about four miles from Middleton, at 6.30 a.m. The driver got a caution signal, denoting that there was a train in front of him, as he passed Newton Heath Station, which is about a mile and a half to the west of the Vitriol Cabin. He stated, that owing to the morning being foggy, he did not see the Vitriol Cabin distant signal until he arrived close to it, when he observed it to be at danger. He was running at a speed of about 14 miles an hour at the time. He whistled for the signal to be taken down, but as it was not taken down, he reversed, whistled for the guard's; break, and his fireman applied the tender break. The speed of the goods train was reduced to about 4 or 5 miles an hour, when it struck the passenger train. No persons were hurt, and no vehicles of either train left the rails.

The guard's van at the tail of the passenger train was slightly damaged.

The guard had just got out.

The accident was caused by the neglect of the engine-driver of the goods train from Oldham Road, who appears to have tried to whistle down the Vitriol Cabin distant signal, instead of stopping his train as soon as he noticed the signal to be at danger.

The night had been foggy, and the platelayers had been out all night fog signalling, but as the weather cleared up about 6 a.m. they left off signalling.

The fog does not appear to have been sufficient to prevent the driver seeing the signals, in ample time to stop his train, if he had chosen to do so at once.

I have, &c.,

F. H. RICH,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

The Secretary,
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.

Copies of the above report were sent to the Company.