

The driver states that he was entering the station no faster than usual, having shut off his steam and had his tender break applied at about the customary point, and that he was perfectly aware that he had on the present occasion only one set of continuous breaks to depend on, this train being more usually supplied with a second guard at Ormskirk; that when about half-way up the platform it appeared to him that the guard had suddenly taken off his breaks, as the speed seemed to increase; and that upon this he at once gave the break whistle, reversed his engine, and got contrary steam applied, but that owing to the greasy state of the rails, from fish trucks having been recently standing on the line, he could not stop in time to avoid the collision.

Other evidence does not support the driver's belief as to the guard's breaks having been taken off before

the collision; and its occurrence must in my opinion be attributed to the driver's want of judgment in entering the station at too high a rate of speed to enable him to stop in proper time. He had hitherto borne an excellent character and was considered a careful, steady man.

The guard appears to have done his duty under the circumstances.

Had there been in the present instance the amount of break power usually available on Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's trains, it is probable that this collision would have been prevented.

I am, &c.,

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

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

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 9th November 1872.

Sir, I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 20th September, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending a collision between a passenger train and some waggons, which occurred on the 17th September, at Miles Platting station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

One passenger has complained of being shaken.

At Miles Platting, the first station on the east out of Manchester, the Ashton branch leaves the main line to Yorkshire. There is a raised cabin at the junction points, and about 200 yards further to the east there is a second raised cabin on the platform between the two lines, from which cabin the station signals and certain siding points and signals are worked; these points and signals being properly interlocked.

Sixty yards to the east of the platform cabin is a pair of facing points leading from the line to Yorkshire to a siding running parallel to and on the north of that line; there is a signal at the points for giving permission to a driver to enter the siding, but main line home-signal is over the cabin, and therefore 60 yards west of the points. The facing points are worked by No. 5 lever, and No. 4, the one next it in the cabin, is a lever working a siding signal connected with the Ashton branch.

The train in question was the 4.50 p.m. express from Manchester to Bradford, having first to stop at Tadmorden. It started punctually, and consisted of engine, tender, guard's van, and four coaches, the van and coaches being coupled together with Newhall's continuous breaks.

Two directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company were in the train.

The driver states that he approached Miles Platting, where the signals, including the main line home-signal worked from the platform cabin, were all off for him, at a speed of about 20 miles an hour; that he noticed the facing points leading to the siding set right for the main line when about 100 yards from them, but that on his engine reaching them he found it was being turned into the siding; that he at once did all in his power to stop, but his engine came into collision, at a slightly reduced speed, with a train of empty coal waggons, the first of which was standing about 50 yards from the points. The engine ran only a short distance after collision; its buffer plank was broken; and this was stated to be the only damage done to the passenger train, which was able, after a short interval, to proceed on its journey, and arrived at Bradford at its proper time. Seven empty waggons were thrown off the line and damaged.

The guard of the passenger train, who was in the break next the tender, states that he was keeping a look-out ahead at Miles Platting, and, just before reaching the siding facing points, noticed that they were open for the siding; that he at once applied his break; and that the speed of the train was reduced from 20 miles an hour to something less on collision. He stuck to his break, and was not knocked down or injured.

Neither driver nor guard noticed when the main line home-signal was restored to danger.

The signalman on duty had been stationed eleven months at Miles Platting, and had been a signalman for three years and a half previously. He had come on duty at 2 p.m. for a six hours spell. He states that he lowered his main home-signal—No. 10 lever—for the Bradford express, and as soon as the engine had passed it, restored it to danger with his right hand, taking hold of and pulling over with his left hand (as he thought and intended) No. 4 lever, working the siding signal on the Ashton branch, from which siding an engine was whistling for permission to come out; that he had, however, by mistake, grasped No. 5 lever (that working the siding facing points) and thus inadvertently opened them for the siding just before the engine of the express train reached them. He discovered his mistake at once, but wisely thought it best not to attempt to make any alteration in the points.

This collision, then, was caused by the mistake of the signalman in the use of a lever in an interlocked signal cabin. He could not have well made the mistake he did had he complied with the rule of the Company that a signal shall not be restored to danger until the whole of the train has passed it. The mischievous propensity which nearly all signalmen have of throwing up a signal as soon as the engine or a small portion of a train has passed it cannot be too severely reprehended. It entirely defeats the object of locking apparatus.

The little injury to the passenger train received in the present case, was no doubt, due in a great measure to its having been provided with continuous breaks, and to the guard in charge of them having become aware of the danger as soon as, or sooner than, the driver.

The signal arrangements at Miles Platting are now being re-arranged, and the facing points in question will be provided with a locking bar. The main line signal will also be removed to the facing points, instead of being 60 yards short of them, so that it will be almost impossible to have the recurrence of a collision similar to the present.

I have, &c.,

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

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