

The line is worked upon the absolute block system; and under a special rule trains for the bay lines are required to be brought to a stand at the home-signal, and then to proceed at a speed not exceeding three miles an hour.

Evidence.

Edward Banks states: I have been between 14 and 15 years in the service of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company as signalman at Preston. On the 7th instant I came on duty at 6 a.m. for 10½ hours in the goods yard box. This box upon week-days is an eight hours box. At 2.25 p.m., the 1.30 p.m. train from Accrington to Preston, due at 2.22, arrived at the down main platform. The 1.10 p.m. down train from Liverpool to Preston, due at 2.33, was offered to me from Whitehouse junction at 2.29, and was accepted. It was given on line at 2.31, and is booked as arriving in the bay at 2.34. I kept my home-signal at danger, in accordance with the rule, until the train had come to a stand, or as nearly as possible to a stand. I had set the points for No. 1 bay as soon as the train was given on line. As soon as the train had come to a stand I lowered the home-signal (No. 3). Before doing this I have to lower either No. 35 or No. 34 for No. 1 or No. 2 bays. I had lowered No. 35 for the train to go into No. 1 bay. As soon as I lowered No. 3 signal the driver put on steam, and he passed my box at a speed of about 4 miles an hour. Steam was still on. I did not pay any more attention to the train after seeing that the tail lamp was on the last vehicle, as it was running at the usual speed. I did not think any more about the train until I heard the crash of the collision with the buffer-stop. This train usually runs into the same bay. Both the Accrington and the Liverpool trains have to transfer passengers for the Blackpool train, which runs in from Manchester on the far side of the station. As soon as the driver passed through the crossing at No. 11 facing-points he should have known that he was going into one or other of the bays, even if he had not the signals to guide him. If he had been going to the down main platform he would have got No. 2 home-signal, and then a signal covering the platform worked from No. 3 North Union box. There was no room at the down main line platform for both these trains. Sometimes two short trains are run to this platform. In this case I get "Line clear" from the North Union (No. 3) box, and this allows the train to run up to this home-signal. We do not work the "Section clear but station blocked" signal between my box and North Union box (No. 3).

James Partington states: I have been 25 or 26 years in the service, and a driver about 13 years. On the 7th July I came on duty at Bolton at 7 a.m., having gone off at 4.55 p.m. on the previous day. My engine, No. 643, is a tender-engine, with leading bogie, and driving and trailing wheels coupled. The tender has four wheels. I took the 7.52 train from Bolton to Liverpool, arriving at 9.19. I was then occupied in shunting until 11.45, and then turned and got ready for the 1.10 train from Liverpool to Preston, due at 2.33. My next duty after shunting would be to take the 4.55 train from Preston, due in Liverpool at 6.18, and then the 8.5 train, due in Bolton at 9.58. This was an exceptional, not a regular, day's work, and I would be off duty the next day. I left Liverpool at 1.10, the booked time, and stopped at all stations. I had eight vehicles in the train, which was fitted throughout with the automatic vacuum brake. I used the brake at all stations and it acted well. The last stop was Preston junction, about two miles out of Preston. From this station the line falls to the bridge over the river, and is then level and slightly rising into the station. I shut steam off at the distant-signal, which was at danger, and came steadily down to the home-signal, which was also at danger. I did not come quite to a stand, as

the home-signal was lowered a little before I got to it, when I was running at about four miles an hour. The middle signal-arm was lowered for me. I do not know the signals very well, and I thought that I would have to run to the platform on the main line. I was on the East Lancashire side of Preston station last Good Friday, and previous to that I had not been there for six or seven years. Before leaving Liverpool I told the guard that I was rather "strange into Preston," and asked him if there had been any change. He said "No, nothing particular," and I said, "Will you then keep a good look-out." My regular fireman was off duty, and I had a cleaner acting as fireman who had not been on that road before. I then looked ahead for the signal at the end of the platform and saw it was at danger, and then I found that I had been crossed on to the bay lines. I did not find out that I was going into the bay line until I came to the splitting points for the two bays. I thought that I was going to run to the centre of the platform as I did on Good Friday. After the home-signal was lowered for me I put on steam, and got up to a speed of between four and five miles an hour. After passing the cabin I shut off steam, and I had reduced to two or three miles an hour when I got to the splitting points. I did not know then that I was on a bay line with buffers, but thought I was going along to the middle of the up platform. The line is on a sharp curve to the right, and I was on the left side of the engine. I did not see the buffers until I was within about three yards of them. I had my brake slightly on at the time. I had applied it slowly after passing the cabin. I had been running with 19 or 20 inches of vacuum, and I reduced it to between 14 and 15 inches. As soon as I saw the buffers I applied the brake full power. I think I struck the buffers at a speed of two or three miles an hour. The shock knocked me over against the small ejector. The engine did not leave the rails. The buffer-beam was slightly damaged. I know that it is the duty of a driver to ask for a conductor if he does not know the road. I am not aware if there is a printed rule to that effect. I considered that I did know the road as far as Preston, although not the station itself. If I had not known the line to Preston I might have got a conductor at Lostock Hall, the last station but one. After passing Lostock I had no opportunity of getting a conductor. When I was some way along the platform my mate, whom I had told to look-out, told me that a porter was signalling us on. I went across the footplate and saw him, and thought that I was to go out on the main line, so I released my brake a little. I then saw that the points were not set for going out, and then I saw the buffers and applied the brake hard, but it was too late.

Albert Hutchinson states: I have been about three years 10 months in the service as cleaner, and I sometimes act as fireman. On the 7th instant I was acting as fireman to driver Partington. I have never been into Preston on the East Lancashire side, but have often been on the other side. I did not know when entering the station whether we were going up the main line or up a bay line. When about a carriage length and a half up the bay a porter on the platform kept calling us on, and my mate released his brake a little. I informed my mate that the porter kept calling us on. I saw the buffer-stops when about a carriage length and a half away from them, when we were running at between three and four miles an hour. I called out to my mate to stop, and he turned round and applied the brake full power.

Robert Scream states: I have been 25 years in the service, and a guard for 16 years. On the 7th July I came on duty at 7.30 a.m. at Liverpool. My Sunday tour of duty lasts till 10.10 p.m., but I am booked off from 10.40 a.m. till 12.40, and from 2.33 till 8.45 p.m. I was guard of the 7.10 p.m. train from Liverpool to Preston. We started at 1.10 p.m. with train made up as follows:—Engine, tender, milk truck, brake-van, one composite, one first-class, and four third-class carriages. I was riding in the brake-van. The train was fitted throughout with the automatic vacuum brake. Before starting the driver said he had not been into Preston since Good Friday, and asked me to check him if he was going by the stations. I told him that I would. He did not ask me anything particular about Preston station. I did not know that he was uncertain of the road and signals at Preston. Coming into Preston we came nearly to a stand at the home-signal, reducing to a speed of between three and four miles an hour. The proper signal for our line was lowered, and we proceeded at the usual speed of about four miles an hour. I looked ahead and saw that the proper signal for No. 1 bay was lowered. I knew that as usual we would turn into this bay. After passing the cabin the driver applied a little steam and then shut off again. After

passing the splitting points I thought he was going a little too fast, so I applied the vacuum brake, reducing the vacuum from 17 lbs. to 13 lbs. When about 20 yards away from the buffers we were still not pulling up, so I put the vacuum in full power, but it struck the buffers at a walking speed. There were 30 or 40 passengers in the train. Only two complained of injury. I was badly shaken myself.

Matthew Robert Harwood states: I have been about 11 years in the service, all the time at Preston as porter. On the 7th July I was standing on the platform when the train from Liverpool, due at 2.33, arrived. I was standing near the points leading out on to the main line. I saw the train coming, and just before the engine reached the end of the platform I thought the driver was going to stop short of the points, as they often do, so I called him on. I remained near the points, and as the engine passed me I called out "steady," as I thought he was going too far up. He was going at about four miles an hour at the time. I did not think he would strike the buffers. There was, I think, room to stop after the points. I did not see the driver apply the brake after he passed me. None of the train left the rails.

Conclusion.

This slight collision was due to the fact that the driver was not only entirely ignorant of the signals and lines leading into Preston from the East Lancashire line, but was singularly unobservant. Had it been otherwise he must have found out that his train was going into one of the bays when he was turned through the facing-points on the down main line, 300 yards outside the down main line platform, and across the up main line. Having then so completely lost his way, it was not surprising that he did not see the buffer-stops until close upon them, for No. 1 bay line runs alongside the up platform, without any platform outside it, and it is upon a sharp curve to the right. The train was running at very moderate speed, and the driver had released his brake slightly upon being called forward by a porter, who thought that he was going to stop too soon, so that it might easily have been pulled up in time if the driver had known where he was.

It was the driver's duty to ask for a conductor at Lostock Hill station, as he was strange to the road, but I do not think it right that a driver in this position should be sent out with a cleaner to act as fireman who also was not familiar with the line.

The evidence discloses the fact that the working hours of the driver, who at the time of the accident had been on duty for about $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours, were upon this day a great deal too long. It is true that it was not a regular, but an exceptional, day's work; but no man can keep his attention up, so as to be an efficient driver, for a period of 15 hours.

There was a breach of the actual letter of the rule regarding trains entering the bays at Preston, for the signal was lowered for this train before it had actually come to a stand. This did not contribute to the accident, but the signalman should be warned that the rule must be literally obeyed, or else the rule should be modified.

The Assistant Secretary,
Railway Department, Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,
F. A. MARINDIN,
Major, R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 14th August.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade, (Railway Department,)
1, Whitehall, London, S.W.,

9th January 1890.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 9th ultimo, the result of my enquiry into the causes of a double collision which occurred on the 7th ultimo, at Cheetham Hill junction, near Victoria station, Manchester, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.