

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, 4th January, 1861.*

SIR, I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, for the information of the directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Colonel Yolland, R.E., the officer appointed by their Lordships, to inquire into the circumstances which attended the collision at the Rochdale Station on the 24th ultimo.

I am, &c.,
T. H. FARRE.
*The Secretary of the
Lancashire and Yorkshire
Railway Company.*

SIR, *Edinburgh, 1st January, 1861.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, in obedience to your minute of the 27th ultimo, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended a collision that occurred at Rochdale Station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway on the 24th ultimo, when two passengers were slightly hurt.

Immediately adjacent to the up and down platforms at Rochdale Station, there are only two lines of railway, but N.E. and S.W. of the station there are sidings to accommodate empty trains, goods trains, and passenger trains that are shunted to one side, for the purpose of being broken up or joined to others, so that, altogether, it is an inconvenient station, in consequence of the number of lines passing the station being limited to two.

The station is protected towards the south west by a semaphore station signal, situated at the west end of the down platform; and a signalman is placed 156 yards west of the semaphore signal, opposite to a pair of back points leading out of the down line into a siding lying north of the main lines, in which space trains and empty carriages are placed when not required, or when the passengers have quitted them, in the event of the train stopping altogether at Rochdale Station. This signalman works a down distant signal which is 724 yards west from the semaphore signal, and which distant signal can also be worked direct from the semaphore signal. A second signalman is placed 459 yards west of the semaphore signal, opposite to a pair of back points leading by a through road over the down line to the siding to which I have already referred; and he works an outer distant signal 990 yards west of the semaphore signal.

On Monday the 24th ultimo, the inspector in charge of the traffic at Rochdale Station sent the signalman, who is stationed at the back points 156 yards west of the semaphore signal, in the morning to Manchester, and he returned from thence to Rochdale by the 10.15. a.m. Manchester mail, which is due at Rochdale in time to unite with the 9h. 15m. a.m. express from Liverpool due at 10h. 40m., and thence the united trains go on to Yorkshire. Sometimes the Manchester mail arrives first at Rochdale, and at other times the Liverpool express is first.

A stopping or pick up train leaves Liverpool for Rochdale at 8h. a.m., and it gathers up all the passengers at the various stations, and those going forward from Rochdale towards Yorkshire are sent by the united train composed of the Manchester Mail and Liverpool Express trains; but this stopping train, due at Rochdale at 10h. 27m. a.m. proceeds no further, and it is shunted backwards along the down line, by which it had reached the Rochdale down plat-

form 256 yards to the back points, and thence into the siding lying north of the main lines and west of the station.

On the 24th ultimo, in consequence of the state of the weather and the slippery rails, the 8h. a.m. stopping train from Liverpool did not reach Rochdale, until about 6 minutes after the Manchester mail had arrived at 10h. 50m., but it got to the station before the signalman, who had been sent to Manchester, had reached his proper post; as he had waited to assist in taking luggage out of the Manchester mail, before it was sent ahead and shunted into a siding lying east of the station and north of the main lines to wait the arrival of the Liverpool express. And as the signalman was going back to his post, he met the Liverpool express coming slowly up to the down platform just as the empty stopping train was putting back in order to get into the siding. Both trains were, it is said, proceeding about 3 miles an hour, and a slight collision occurred between them; the body of the break van at the tail of the stopping train being shifted 6 or 8 inches on its frame; but no other damage to either train was done. The cause of the collision was evidently the vicious arrangement which had been always followed since the stopping train was first put on about 8 months since, of shunting this train back on the wrong line of railway 256 yards, thus converting this portion of the down line into a single line. The station was properly protected at the time of the collision by both distant signals; but there was a very dense fog, so that it was impossible to see more than the length of a couple of carriages. The driver of the Liverpool express was not aware of the practice of shunting back the stopping train on the wrong line of rails, and he was only obeying his instructions in drawing slowly up to the station. While the accommodation at Rochdale Station continues to be so limited between the two platforms, the proper way of disposing of the carriages of the empty stopping train would be to put in a cross over road near the west end of the down platform, and to shunt the train from the down to the up line by this cross over road, and thence along the up road to the back points opposite to the second signalman's box, and thence into the siding. But this second signalman will require, on a line so crowded with traffic as this is, to have the west distant signal removed to a greater distance; to have a distant signal with a bell to the Rochdale semaphore signal; and also to have a station signal at his post, otherwise there will be collisions taking place while trains are going into this siding across the down from the up road.

I have, &c.
W. YOLLAND.
*The Secretary,
Railway Department,
Board of Trade.* Colonel, R.E.

*Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway
Secretary's Office,*

SIR, *Manchester, January 17 1861.*
REFERRING to Colonel Yolland's report as to the accident which occurred at the Rochdale Station on the 24th ultimo, I beg to inform you that the directors have referred it to one of their body, in conjunction with the engineer and the superintendent of the line, to ascertain and report the best mode of carrying out the recommendations therein contained.

Yours, &c.,
W. M. S. LAWN,
*The Secretary of the
Railway Department of the
Board of Trade.* Secretary.