

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, September 3, 1855.*

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 Great Northern Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into the circumstances which attended the accident that occurred to an excursion train at the King's Cross Station on the 20th ultimo.

Great Northern  
Railway.

—  
Accident to a train  
at King's Cross  
Station.

I am, &c.

*The Secretary of the  
Great Northern Railway Company.*

DOUGLAS GALTON,  
*Captain, Royal Engineers.*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
1, Parliament Street, September 1, 1855.*

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 27th 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 connected with the accident which occurred to an excursion train at King's Cross Station of the Great Northern Railway on the 20th August.

It appears, that as an excursion train from Hitchin to London, consisting of 13 carriages, including one break van, was proceeding through the last tunnel, after leaving the ticket platform, distant about 1¼ miles from King's Cross Station, the driver thought his speed was too great in descending the incline of 1 in 105, and he directed the fireman to apply the tender break; but not finding the speed diminish as he expected, he whistled for the guard's break, which was immediately applied, and he also reversed his engine and set on the steam; but when he got to the foot of the incline, he threw the engine into forward gear, as he thought he had not sufficient speed to take him on to the station, and when he had got half way through the station, which is about 800 feet in length, he again reversed his engine, and set on the steam, and did all he could to stop, but did not succeed in bringing the train to a stand-still until the engine came in contact with the permanent buffers at the end of the station.

One of the passengers, a lad of 14 years of age, who was looking out of the window, had his upper front teeth knocked out, and several others received slight contusions and bruises, but no injury was done to the engines or carriages, and it is said the speed was not above three miles an hour when the engine struck the buffers.

The excursion train left Hitchin about 10h. 22m. A.M., containing about 400 passengers, and arrived at King's Cross at 11h. 20m. On examination, it was found that the bolt connecting the tender's break slide-rods with the lever had been recently broken, but the fireman stated that it was in good working order when they stopped at the ticket platform, and the driver said he thought he heard it break immediately after they left the ticket platform as they passed through the first tunnel.

With reference to the cause of the accident, I am of opinion that it was entirely due to the want of judgment displayed by the engine driver in throwing his engine into forward gear when not more than 300 yards from the station platform at King's Cross.

I have, &c.

*Captain Galton, Royal Engineers,  
&c. &c. &c.*

W. YOLLAND,  
*Lieut-Col., Royal Engineers.*

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, September 11, 1855.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the enclosed extract from the report made by Captain Tyler, R.E., the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into

Lancashire and  
Yorkshire Railway.

—  
Accident at the  
Bolton Station.

Lancashire and  
Yorkshire Railway.  
Accident at the  
Bolton Station.

the circumstances which attended an accident that occurred to a passenger train at the Bolton Station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, on the 13th ultimo.

My Lords trust that Captain Tyler's recommendations, that the handles of all the points should be brought to the pointsman's box, and that arrangements should be made for them to be worked from one place, will receive the attention of the Directors.

*The Secretary of the  
Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway  
Company.*

I am, &c.

DOUGLAS GALTON,  
*Captain, Royal Engineers.*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, September 7, 1855.*

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 17th 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 the accident, that occurred on the 13th ultimo, near the Bolton Station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

There is a pointsman's box about 150 yards to the west of the Bolton Station, where two men are employed to work 12 pairs of points and a pair of three-throw switches, besides attending to their telegraphic and other signals. This post is approached on a falling gradient of 1 in 450, and on a curve, from the west; but the line runs on a level into the station. Two pairs of the points above alluded to are facing points on the in-coming main line: one leads to some goods sidings, and the other to a goods line running through the station, independently of the passenger line.

The points for the latter are self acting, and are always set for the main passenger line, so that, when in proper order, they require to be worked by the pointsman, in order to turn anything to the main goods line.

On the 13th ultimo, a goods train arrived at Bolton at 2.22 P.M., and was turned by one of the pointsmen, named Morris, to the goods line. Two or three minutes afterwards a passenger train arrived, and, instead of passing to its own line, it followed the goods train through the points, and came into collision with it at the rate of 6 miles an hour.

The pointsman, Morris, states that when the goods train arrived, the van remained on the points; and that he went into his box to use his telegraph, leaving it in that position. He adds, that he saw the passenger train coming up soon afterwards, and observed that the points had "stuck," instead of falling back to their proper position; and that he then made an attempt to alter them, but could not get to the lever until the passenger engine had passed through them.

The pointsman further asserts that these points have stuck often before the accident, within the last eight months, but not within the last six months; that they have stuck with him three times since the accident; and that he has complained of their sticking, and called people to witness it on different occasions. His complaints, however, are not corroborated, nor were his witnesses satisfactory.

The superintendent of permanent way was in his office at Bolton when the collision occurred, and, upon being informed of it, he went at once to the spot. As it was represented to him by Morris that the points had stuck, he tried to make them stick again, both by passing a train over them in a similar manner, and by hand, but he could not succeed. The suspicions of the superintendent were aroused by his finding the lid of the box in which the lever works, off, and only resting against the edge of the box; and, in reply to his questions on this subject, Morris told him that he had kicked it with his foot in his hurry to get to the lever.

Morris denied to me that the lid was more than a little moved out of its place, and said that it might have been "a little askew" from his falling over it, or from the handle knocking it off. His colleague says that it was moved about 3 inches out of its place; and the goods superintendent, who was on the spot with the superintendent of permanent way five minutes after the accident, is confident that the end of the lid only rested on the edge of the box, though he

is equally sure that the lid was in a position somewhat different from that indicated by the latter gentleman.

A platelayer, who was close to the spot when the accident happened, observed the lid *on*, and the lever right for the main line, before either of the superintendents reached the box; but from the manner in which he gave his evidence, I cannot place much reliance upon it.

The pointsman on duty with Morris never knew the points stick before the accident, except in winter, two or three times, from frost and snow. He had found them stick, however, two or three times, which afterwards decreased to twice, since the accident, though he could not tell why. He was pretty sure that they had not been "propped" for cleaning on that day, as they did not require cleaning on the back sides.

A third pointsman, who had been doing duty for four months at these points, had never heard of them sticking until after the accident, and had never found them stick before or afterwards.

From what I saw of the points, and from all the evidence that I have heard, I cannot help suspecting that Morris may have "propped" the points, either for the passage of the goods train, or for some other reason, and have forgotten to let them go before the approach of the passenger train; and that this may have been the cause of the accident; but I should not by any means be justified in assuming positively that such was the case. Morris had a short stick in his box, which appears to have been commonly used for propping the points whilst they were being cleaned; and, as the prop is inserted under the lid, the fact of the lid having been off after the accident affords, at least, a ground of suspicion that this had been done.

Whether Morris is to blame, however, or not, in this matter, there can be no doubt that, if the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company were to erect a suitable stage at this post, at which the handles of the points could be collected, instead of leaving the levers scattered about at different distances from the box, as they are at present, they would enable their pointsmen to perform their duties more easily to themselves, more satisfactorily to the Company, and more safely to the public.

I have, &c.

*The Secretary of the*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade.*

H. W. TYLER,

*Captain, Royal Engineers.*

Lancashire and  
Yorkshire Railway.

Accident at the  
Bolton Station.

Extract inclosed in  
letter of the 11th  
September, to the  
Lancashire & York-  
shire Railway Com-  
pany.

*Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, Secretary's Office,  
Manchester, September 13, 1855.*

SIR,

I BEG to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 11th instant, enclosing an extract from Captain Tyler's report of his investigation as to the collision at the Bolton Station on the 13th August ultimo, and conveying a recommendation of the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, to the effect that arrangements be made for the handles of all the points to be brought to the pointsman's box at the Bolton Station.

I have submitted same to the directors of this company, who desire me to inform you that the recommendation shall receive their best consideration.

I am, &c.

WM. S. LANN.

*To the Secretary of the*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade.*

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, Oct. 17, 1855.*

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 their inspecting officer upon the accident which occurred on the 19th August last, near the Littleborough Station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, in consequence of a collision between a goods train and an excursion train.

My Lords direct me to observe that this accident would appear to have been mainly attributable to the very lax system under which the excursion trains are allowed to be run upon the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Collision near  
Littleborough  
Station.