

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 1st February 1873.*

Sir, In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 17th ultimo, 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 13th ultimo at Grindford Bar junction on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

The Grindford Bar coal branch joins the line from Chorley to Wigan about half a mile east of the Adlington station. The coal branch falls on a gradient of 1 in 150 and 1 in 120 towards the main line. The junction is protected by a chock block across the rail, which is worked from the signalman's cabin, but the points and signals are not interlocked. This has been ordered to be done since July last.

The 6.0 a.m. passenger train from Chorley to Wigan, which consisted of a tank engine, a guard's van with a guard, a second-class carriage, a first, and two third-class carriages ran into some waggons of a coal train, which came off the Grindford Bar coal branch. Five passengers were seriously hurt; one has since died. The driver, fireman, and guard of the passenger train and the guard of the coal train were also injured.

The coal train, which consisted of an engine, seven empty waggons, and a break-van, arrived at Grindford Bar from Preston at 6.5 a.m. When the guard's van at the tail of the train had been drawn clear of the junction, the guard gave the engine-driver a signal to stop. The fireman unhooked the engine from the waggons, and it moved ahead.

Immediately the engine was unhooked seven empty waggons and the van commenced to move back. The guard stated that on finding that his break would not hold them he jumped out, to try and alter a pair of slip points, so as to turn his train on to the up line, but the van had passed the points before he got there, and he could not do so. He then put down the break of the waggon next to his van, and was in the act of trying to put down the break of the second waggon, when his train was run into by the passenger train. He was knocked down the bank and cut in the head. His van and the waggon next to it were broken to

pieces, and knocked off the rails. The passenger train engine was damaged in the end and side, and the sides of all the carriages of the passenger train were stripped, but no part of the passenger train left the rails. The signals were all right for the passenger train to pass Grindford Bar junction, which it approached at a speed of about 16 miles an hour. The driver did not observe anything to be on the road before him, until he struck the van of the coal train. He was knocked down and stunned, but he jumped up as quick as he could, reversed the engine, and the passenger train was brought to a stand a short distance beyond the point of collision.

The signalman on duty at Grindford Bar cabin, having seen the coal train safely on to the coal branch, lowered the signals for the passenger train to approach, while that train was standing at Adlington station, but he forgot to close the chock block across the branch line. He stated that this chock block was not habitually used.

This man did not become aware that the coal train was running back until the passenger train was close to his cabin. He then held out a red hand lamp to stop the driver of the passenger train, but this was done too late for the latter to see it.

The accident appears to have been caused by the break of the guard's van of the coal train not being in good working order, or by the guard having failed to apply it properly. This man was in charge of the empty coal train as his head guard was absent from sickness, but although he is a young inexperienced guard, he appears to have been using his best efforts to stop the train, when it had commenced to run back, and he received a severe blow in the head while doing so. The accident could not have happened if the signalman on duty at Grindford Bar junction had placed the chock block (which is worked from his cabin) across the rails of the Grindford Bar coal branch before he lowered the signals for the passenger train. When the signals and points are re-arranged and properly interlocked, it will afford additional security at junctions of the kind.

*I have, &c.,
The Secretary,
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.*

*F. H. Rich,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.*

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the company on the 22nd February.

LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

Sir, In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 8th inst., 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 3rd inst., between Euxton and Coppull stations, on the London and North-Western Railway.

No persons were hurt. On the day in question, a pilot engine, which had assisted a goods train from Liverpool to Preston, left Preston about 12.40 a.m. on the return journey to Liverpool. It was returning empty with the engine in front of the tender. The driver on leaving Preston was under the impression that all the express trains for the south had gone forward.

When the pilot engine reached Euxton junction, the signals were at "all right" for it to pass. The signalman, on seeing it approach, opened his window to see if the engine-driver wanted to shunt.

The driver of the pilot engine stated that he saw a green hand-lamp in the signal-man's box, which he thought was intended as a caution signal to him. This

green light was not intended for the driver of the pilot engine, as the line from Euxton to Coppull was clear at the time; but it caused the driver to proceed at a moderate speed of about 16 miles an hour towards Coppull.

The express train from the north, which is due to leave Preston at 12.25 a.m., was late, and did not leave that station till 12.48 a.m. The signals at Euxton junction were at "all right" as the express train approached; but the signalman on duty at the junction, showed the driver of the express a green caution signal with his hand-lamp, as the pilot engine had only passed about four minutes previously.

The rules of the London and North-Western Railway Company require the fixed signals to be kept at "danger" for three minutes after a train has passed, and the caution signal is to be given until the section is clear.

The express train passed Euxton junction at a speed of about 30 miles an hour, and ran into the pilot engine about two miles south of the junction, at a speed of about 25 miles per hour. The buffer and buffer-beam on the tender of the pilot engine