

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, August 20, 1860.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you for the consideration of the Directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Colonel Yoliand, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred on the 28th ultimo at the Hebden Bridge Station.

I am, &c.

J. E. TENNENT.

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

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, August 15, 1860.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that in obedience to your Minute of the 1st instant, I have inquired into the circumstances which attended a collision between a goods train and an excursion train, that occurred on the 28th ultimo, at the Hebden Bridge Station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, when 13 persons were injured.

The down line from Manchester at Hebden Bridge Station, is protected by two signals worked by the same wire—that nearest the station platform being 448 yards distant from it, and serving as a repeating signal to the most distant signal which cannot be seen from the platform. This most distant signal is 891 yards from the platform. The view in approaching Hebden Bridge from Manchester is very limited, and the station is on a falling incline of 1 in 182, so that it is of the utmost importance, that the signals should be carefully looked for, and their indications obeyed by engine-drivers. The distant signal can be seen for 320 yards before it is reached.

On the 28th July the Manchester and Mirfield goods train due at Hebden Bridge at 1.40. p.m. arrived there at 2.0. p.m. It had to take on from thence one waggon, and to leave two waggons, and the engine-driver had left the break van and one waggon standing on the main line, (the break van being 180 yards west of the platform), and had taken the others forward to make the exchange, and was in the act of taking water for the engine, when an excursion train from Manchester to Scarborough arrived at about 2h. 8m., and ran into the break van at a speed variously estimated at from 8 to 12 miles an hour. The injuries received by the passengers are stated all to have been not of a serious nature, and but little damage was done to the rolling stock.

The excursion train as it left Manchester and reached Hebden Bridge, consisted of engine and tender, seven carriages, and one break van at the tail of the train in which two guards rode, one of them being a spare guard sent up to Manchester to assist in relieving the pressure on the Company's servants on that day, but whose services were not actually required. This train stopped at Miles Platting, Middleton Junction Blue Pits, Rochdale and Todmorden, and according to the guard in charge, it arrived at the latter station at 2h. 2m., and left at 2h. 6m., or nearly about its proper time. Hebden Bridge is stated to be 4 miles from Todmorden, and there is an intermediate station, Eastwood, at which this train was not appointed to stop. The guard informed me that they travelled at great speed between Todmorden and Hebden Bridge stations; so great, in fact, that he says he thought it necessary to put on his break before he saw whether the Hebden Bridge distant signal was on or off, and he had got his break on, when he saw that the distant signal stood against them. He also stated, "That the driver did not sound the steam-whistle until the train was out of a short tunnel, situated between the two signals, and distant from the inside signal 237 yards." He was not certain whether

the steam was shut off or not, as they passed the distant signal; but the spare guard says he thinks it was, and both guards agree in saying that the sharp whistle for the breaks was not sounded until the driver could see the goods break van standing on the main line as well as the inside signal, and then, according to the statement of the spare guard, the driver reversed the engine and turned on the steam. The guard in charge considers that "they passed the distant signal at the rate of 30 miles an hour, and that they were running at about 8 miles an hour when the collision took place." The other guard places the speed at a higher rate, viz., at from 30 to 35 miles an hour, when passing the distant signal, and from ten to 12 miles an hour when the collision occurred. The statement of the guard in charge fixes the time, by his watch, when the collision occurred, at 2.11; and if he has made no mistake, this would allow five minutes for running from Todmorden to Hebden Bridge (four miles), and would require that the speed should considerably exceed 50 miles an hour.

On the other hand, the driver of the excursion train says, "that he was not running more than 25 miles an hour between these two stations; that he saw the distant signal on against him before he reached it, and told his fireman to put on the tender break, and he did so; that he had shut off his steam before he came in sight of the distant signal; that when he told the fireman to put on the tender break, he also whistled for the signal to be taken off; that as he was entering the tunnel he whistled three or four times for the guards break; that when he got out of the tunnel he saw that the inside signal was also on against him, and also that a break van stood on the line in front of him; that he then reversed the engine and turned the steam on, before he arrived at the inside signal; that when the fireman applied the break to the tender the break blocks took fire; that after he had reversed the engine he took the handle of the break out of the fireman's hands, and applied the tender break himself, and gave it three turns, while the fireman threw sand on the rails, and he thinks the collision would have been avoided if the break blocks had not taken fire." He estimates the speed at which he was running when the collision occurred, also at eight miles an hour. The fireman corroborates the statement given by the engine driver, who admits that he was shown a caution signal, intimating that a train was not more than ten minutes ahead of him, as he passed Eastwood Station, but it is quite evident that there are great discrepancies between the statements made by the two guards and by the engine driver and fireman. In one respect the evidence of a porter at the Hebden Bridge Station seems confirmatory of that given by the guards, as he states that the collision took place immediately after the steam-whistle was sounded; and the guard in charge of the train says he thinks the driver did not notice the distant signal at all, but passed it unseen, which I think not improbable, as it would not be very readily made out by a driver who was not very familiar with its exact position.

It is, however, quite certain, that whether the speed was or was not excessive between Todmorden and Hebden Bridge Station, the collision was caused by the engine driver having disregarded the distant signal or not having kept a sufficiently careful lookout for it.

The driver of this excursion train was not, however, a regular driver, but had been employed occasionally to drive during the past two years. He had been a fireman for five years, and in the Company's service altogether eight years, and he should have been well acquainted with this line, as he had been much employed upon it as fireman. The fireman of this train, also, was not a regular fireman, but had acted as spare fireman occasionally for five or six months. He was under nineteen years of age, and thus it

appears that this excursion train was in charge of two inexperienced hands, and the lives of the public placed in serious jeopardy in consequence of the number of excursion trains which the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company thought proper to run at this time. Nine extra or special trains were required to be supplied with drivers and firemen from the locomotive establishment at Miles Platting on the day on which the accident happened, and if they were all supplied with drivers of the same experience as in this case, the public probably had some serious escapes.

The impropriety of running excursion trains at all is manifest, if a Railway Company has not the means of putting efficient men in charge of them, as they frequently become, from the low fares at which the public are enabled to travel in them, exceedingly heavy and unmanageable, and they are, in consequence, much more difficult to drive; and the effect of running such a number of excursion trains is also seen, in the manner in which this train was composed.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company make use of two very good continuous breaks invented by Messrs. Newall & Fay, and I am told that a large proportion of their regular trains are now duly supplied with one or other of these breaks. But this excursion train had only one break-van to eight vehicles, which is quite insufficient, and it is allowed that if that break-van had been connected with two or three adjacent carriages in front of it, fitted with continuous breaks, the collision would have been avoided altogether.

In conclusion I should state that Hebden Bridge appears to require a double semaphore signal at the station platform, and the situation of the down distant signal should be improved, or a higher signal substituted for it, so that it may be better seen.

I have, &c.

W. YOLLAND,
Colonel, R.E.

*The Secretary,
Railway Department,
Board of Trade.*

LONDON AND BLACKWALL RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, August 22, 1860.*

SIR, I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, for the consideration of the Directors of the London and Blackwall Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Tyler, R.E., of his inquiry into the circumstances connected with the accident which occurred on the 31st ultimo, near the Haydon Square Junction, from an engine attached to a North London passenger train quitting the rails.

*The Secretary to the
London and Blackwall
Railway Company.**

I am, &c.

T. H. FARRER.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, August 13, 1860.*

SIR, IN compliance with the instructions contained in your Minute of the 2d instant, 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 31st ultimo, near the Haydon Square Junction on the London and Blackwall Railway.

This junction is about a quarter of a mile from the principal terminus at Fenchurch Street, and is the point at which the Haydon Square goods branch joins the main line. Three lines of railway run past it from the terminus, of which one, in the middle, is used for down trains, while the two others, on either side of it, are for up trains. Fifty yards to the west of the junction box, there are a pair of meeting points on the south *up* line, which form the termination of a cross-over road leading to it from the north *up* line, across the middle or down line. These points are only used occasionally, when there is any obstruction, from accident or otherwise, to prevent a train from passing along its proper line, or when a train starting from the platform of the north up line is too long to be able to pass at once to the middle line, through the points usually employed for that purpose.

In the latter case, such a train is brought down the north up line to the cross-over road referred to,—is passed along that road to the south up line,—proceeds over the south up line to the box of the Haydon Square Junction,—and is turned across, through another pair of points, eight yards to the east of that box, to the middle line, on which it is intended to proceed.

This is an awkward mode of conducting the traffic; but it is not often adopted; and it is rendered necessary in certain cases, in consequence of the impossibility of removing the down-line points to a sufficient distance from the north platform at Fenchurch Street to accommodate the longest of the trains which are despatched from that platform. When these portions of the up lines are used for a down train, the running of all trains is stopped for the time by the different signals of the Haydon Square Junction being turned to danger.

On the 31st July, a shunter was sent at 9.15. A.M. by the station-inspector, under directions from the station-master, to the signalman at the Haydon Square Junction, to inform him that an excursion train, about to start from the north platform, was to pass over this cross-over road; and the signalman turned all his signals to danger, and prepared to receive it. He was told immediately afterwards that the excursion train was not ready to start, and he therefore took down his signals again for the two up lines, to let two trains into the station, one from the North London Railway and another from Loughton. At 9.24. the signalman to the west of him, at the Minories, put up his signal arm and rang his bell, to inform him that the excursion train was then ready to come out. He turned his signals to danger again, and removed the bolt from the meeting points on the south line west of his box, to enable the excursion train to pass down through them; and he held the points on the east of his box, to turn that train to the down line.

There were by this time two other up trains wanting to go in to the station, one from the North London Railway, and a local train from Barking. The signalman lowered his signals for these trains to pass, and turned his north line signal to danger after the latter had got within it. On looking round, he then observed that the meeting points on the south line west of his box had not fallen back into their places, and that they were therefore not set right for the North London train, which was approaching them at a speed of perhaps ten miles an hour.

He ran as fast as he could to the handle of the points, but the engine had passed through them before he could reach it.

The train which thus approached the meeting points, was a passenger train from Camden Town, composed of a tank engine and eight vehicles. It had started from Camden Town at 8.50 A.M. and was about 3 minutes late in reaching the Haydon Square Junction. The driver was checked by the distant signal from the junction, but he did not bring his

* Similar letter to the Secretary of the North London Railway Company.