

The accident was entirely caused by the neglect of duty of the policeman, who, however, is represented as being a very steady, well-conducted man, and has attended to these points for years.

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

I have, &c.

W. YOLLAND,
*Captain Royal Engineers,
and B^t Major.*

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Great Northern
Railway.

Accident at
Doncaster.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, January 23, 1855.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the enclosed copy of Major Yolland's report upon the accident which occurred at the Central Station, Leeds, on the 3d instant, and to call the particular attention of the Directors to the remarks therein contained upon the causes which have led to this accident.

My Lords are glad to learn that the points at which the accident occurred have been removed; but they trust that the Directors will carefully consider the question of altering the access to the station at Leeds, so as to render the propelling of the train from behind unnecessary, and that until some change be made they will provide a parapet wall to the viaduct.

I am further to call the attention of the Directors to the remarks contained in the report upon the danger arising from the use of self-acting points, as exemplified in this accident, and also in that at the Doncaster Station; and my Lords are desirous of learning the views of the Directors upon the question, as suggested by Major Yolland, of dispensing with self-acting points on those portions of the line, at least, which are travelled over by trains at speed.

I am, &c.

*The Secretary of the
Great Northern Railway Company.*

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain Royal Engineers.

Accident at the
Leeds Central
Station.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
1, Parliament Street, January 16, 1855.*

SIR,

IN obedience to the instructions contained in your letter of the 6th 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 connected with the accident which occurred at the Central Station, Leeds, to the 6.25 p.m. Great Northern up passenger train, from Leeds to London, on the 3d instant.

The Leeds Central Station, on the High Level, is the joint property of the London and North Western, Great Northern, and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies, whilst the Low Level belongs to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company, and is used by that Company as a goods station. The passenger trains from the High Level Central Station pass partly along a viaduct over lines of rail belonging to the aforesaid Companies; and also over a portion of the Leeds Northern, down a steep incline, until they reach the Midland Railway, distant about 840 yards from the station, over which line they travel to the south-east as far as Methly.

All trains from the Central Station for London are backed out till they arrive at the Midland line of rails, when they are stopped, and proceed in an opposite direction, the engine being then in the proper position, in front of the train, for proceeding to Methly. At about 170 yards from the end of the platform there is a pair of self-acting facing-points, weighted to lie open for the up main line, but occasionally used for passing from the up to the down line, or vice versa: which points, I am informed, have been in use and have acted properly for upwards of five years, so that it has not been deemed necessary for a policeman to hold them, except when a train, or a portion of a train, is required to be passed from the up to the down line, when these points must be closed to the up main line.

On the night of the 3d instant, the 6.25 p.m. up train, consisting of two break vans and five carriages, left the station at the proper time, with the engine behind, and is supposed to have been travelling at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour when it reached these facing points, and the guard in the last break van, which was therefore the first carriage to pass over these points, felt that it had got off

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the rails, but the remainder of the carriages appear to have passed on the rails towards the down line: the first carriage next to the break van (a composite carriage) was shortly afterwards forced off the rails to the right, whilst the break van was previously off the rails to the left, and the latter was thrown on its side, turned round, and came in contact with a coal truck standing in a siding to the left or east side of the up line. The composite carriage, after the coupling with the break van had broken, must have deviated further and further from the line until it was forced westwards over the edge of the viaduct, and it fell end foremost on to a truck standing on the rails of the Lancashire and Yorkshire goods station on the Low Level, the difference of level between the two lines being 26 feet 6 inches. No passengers were in the second-class compartment which fell on the truck, and which compartment was completely destroyed. One first-class passenger (Mr. R. Hall, the recorder of Doncaster,) was in the central compartment, and I regret to say he was frightfully injured; and five or six passengers were in the uppermost second-class compartment, one of whom, a servant of the Company, was also injured.

I have not been able to ascertain any positive facts as to the nature of the impediment that caused the break van to quit the rails, as no injury was done to them, and the self-acting facing points were found to be in perfect order, and open to the up main line immediately after the carriages and engine had passed over them; but I have no doubt whatever, that these points were, in some way or other, the sole cause of the accident.

It appears that a Lancashire and Yorkshire carriage passed over these points at 6.10 p.m. from the down to the up line, and, in so doing, necessarily closed these points to the up line, and I imagine that some dirt or stones must then have got in and kept them in this position, until the vibration caused by the passage of the carriages of the 6.25 p.m. train shook off the obstruction and allowed them again to act freely. But this does not account for the break van quitting the rails, although it is almost certain that its wheels mounted the rails at, or very near, these points, and quitted the line at one side, and thus offered greater resistance to the progress of the rest of the train, and probably caused the composite carriage to be thrown off on the other side; and the propulsion of the carriages backwards by the engine, forced this composite carriage more and more to the right and over the edge of the viaduct, which unfortunately on this side was only protected by a slight wooden rail, and not by a side wall.

This is the second accident occurring on the Great Northern Railway in the course of three days, in which the inefficiency and danger resulting from the use of self-acting points has been forced on my attention. As regards those at Leeds which occasioned this last accident, instructions were given, whilst I was at Leeds, for their being immediately removed; but I would beg to suggest that the special attention of the Directors of the Great Northern Railway Company might be called to the following subjects: first, to the propriety of altogether disusing self-acting points on their main lines: second, that it is very desirable that some other means for passenger trains leaving the Leeds Central Station for London should be provided, so as to avoid the propulsion from the rear of the train; and third, that whilst this system is continued, if side walls to the viaduct were built, they would afford some additional security towards the safety of the public, as the fall of the composite carriage from the Higher to the Lower Level would probably, in this instance, have been prevented, had a side wall been there.

Captain Galton, R.E.
&c. &c.

I am, &c.
W. YOLLAND,
Captain Royal Engineers,
and B^t. Major.

Accident in the
King's Cross
Tunnel.

SIR,

Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, March 15, 1855.

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 accompanying copy of the report which their Lordships have received from their inspecting officer, upon the circumstances