

NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

North Union
Railway.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, October 5, 1851.*

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 which they have received from their inspecting officer upon the accident which occurred on the 16th ultimo, at the Preston Station on the North Union Railway.

My Lords direct me to request you to call the attention of the Joint Committee for managing that portion of Railway to the remarks of the inspecting officer upon the system under which the trains arriving from the south at the Preston Station are worked, and they direct me to request you to inform them whether the Committee propose to take any steps to remove the sources of danger pointed out by the inspecting officer.

I have, &c.

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain Royal Engineers.

*The Secretary to the
Committee of Management of the
North Union Railway.*

SIR,

Chester, September 25, 1854.

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 19th 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 inquiries into the circumstances which attended the accident that occurred, on the 16th instant, at the Preston Station of the North Union Railway.

The portion of the North Union Railway extending between Preston and the Euxton Junction, and including, therefore, the scene of the accident now referred to, is leased by the London and North Western and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies, and is worked under the superintendance of a Joint Committee of those Companies.

The traffic through Preston is very extensive, and the coal trains and goods trains from the south either remain upon, or pass over the main line of that station, whilst the passenger trains from the south are turned into sidings, through facing points which occur at the entrance to the station, by pointsmen whose duty it is to work these points, the London and North Western trains passing through one pair of facing points to the second siding from the station buildings, and the Lancashire and Yorkshire trains passing through two pairs of facing points to the nearest siding to the station buildings.

It appears, that, on the 16th instant, a coal train belonging to Mr. Pearson of Wigan, arrived at Preston, and that some of the waggons were left on the main line, whilst the engine was conveying the others up the incline which occurs to the north of Preston. The 11 a.m. train from Liverpool arrived at Preston about 3 minutes before its time, and came into collision with these waggons, to the injury of the guard and some of the passengers, because the pointsman on duty neglected to turn it into the siding appointed for its reception.

This pointsman had only been 4 days on duty at this spot, and was appointed temporarily in the place of another man who had taken the night duty for a third man who was sick. The pointsman on duty had been about 6 years in the service of the lessees of the North Union Railway, as a platelayer, and had been employed temporarily as a pointsman on some previous occasions, for short periods, at other parts of the Preston Station; but he does not seem to have received any instructions as to his duties on this or any former occasions of his appointment, having been left to pick up a knowledge of his duties in the best way he could.

On the previous days on which this pointsman (Parker) had been on duty at this post, a Lancashire and Yorkshire train had arrived before the 11 a.m. London and North Western train from Liverpool, and as Parker expected that this would again occur, he went to his cabin, which is situated some 20 or 30 yards from the points, and asked his colleague to move an engine and train out of the way, which was standing on the siding allotted for the Lancashire and Yorkshire train; but his colleague, whose duty it was more especially to attend to this latter siding, and the second pair of facing points leading to it, replied

that there was plenty of time, as it was not yet half past 12. As Parker turned round from this conversation, he saw the London and North Western train approaching, but was not able to get to his points in sufficient time to prevent the collision. It was raining hard at the time of the accident, and Parker's colleague had for that reason repaired to the cabin for the purpose of getting his leggings; it is possible, also, that this may have been an additional inducement to Parker to join him.

The accident is, no doubt, attributable as much to Parker's inexperience as to his neglect, and he has been, I think, sufficiently punished by a fine which was imposed upon him by the magistrates before whom he was taken. The system of working, as above described, which led to the accident, appears to be rather a hazardous one, inasmuch as any relaxation of vigilance on the part of the pointsman is pretty sure to produce a collision with any passenger train that approaches the station when the main line is obstructed, which appears to be very frequently the case.

I learn that it is proposed to divert the coal traffic to another route, and if this be not carried out, I trust that by an alteration in the station arrangements, the present system may be improved.

I have, &c.

H. W. TYLER,

Captain Royal Engineers

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

SHROPSHIRE UNION RAILWAY.

Shropshire Union
Railway.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, November 7, 1854.*

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 the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into the circumstances attending the collision that occurred on the 26th ult. at the Newport station of the Shropshire Union Railway, and to request that you will lay it before the Directors for their consideration.

I have, &c.

DOUGLAS GALTON.

Captain Royal Engineers.

*The Secretary of the
Shropshire Union Railway Company.*

Board of Trade,

Whitehall, November 6, 1854.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, in obedience to their instructions of the 28th ult., the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended a collision on the 23d ultimo at the Newport station of the Shropshire Union Railway.

It appears that the 9.40 a.m. goods train did not leave Stafford for Shrewsbury until 10.50, the delay having been occasioned by other goods trains being on the lines at Stafford, and by having to shunt to admit of an excursion train and the down Shropshire Union express due at 10.35 passing on. The driver of this goods train states that he had difficulty in getting up steam prior to leaving Stafford, and he was obliged to stop twice before he succeeded in bringing the train to within about 1000 yards of the Newport station, distant $11\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Stafford, being unable to bring the train, which consisted of twenty-two loaded waggons and ten empty waggons, on to the station. The breaksman went back for the purpose of stopping the next train, but was recalled by the driver, who in the meanwhile had succeeded in bringing his train until his engine stood just opposite to the distant signal which is worked from the platform, from which it is 240 yards distant. Standing on the platform it is impossible for the head porter who attends to the signals to be certain whether a train is just within or without the distant signal, and he did not turn the signal to "danger" to stop the next following train, but he reported to the stationmaster that there was a goods train just outside of the signal and suggested that some one should be sent down the line to stop the next train, which was already a good deal over-