

My Lords direct me to call the attention of the Directors to the fact that this accident would appear to have occurred in consequence of the originally defective construction of the plates forming the boiler.

North London
Railway.

Boiler explosion at
the Camden Town
Station.

I have, &c.

*The Secretary of the
North London Railway.*

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, Royal Engineers.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, August 27, 1855.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that I have inquired into the circumstances connected with the explosion of the boiler of a locomotive engine, near the Camden Town Station of the North London Railway, on the 14th July.

The engine is known as No. 10 engine; it is a tank engine, built by Messrs. Stoddart and Slaughter, of Bristol, and was delivered new to the Company in 1854. It is employed exclusively for hauling passenger trains. On the day of the explosion it came on the line at 7.35 a.m., and made a trip of 20 miles every two hours, with seven carriages. The driver states that the explosion occurred about 5.20 p.m.; he had arrived at Camden Town about ten minutes, and the steam being low, he had slacked off the firebox valve to a pressure of 75 lbs. (the dome valve standing at 110 lbs.), for the purpose of warming his tea with the steam; the water in the glass gauge stood about 3½ inches. The fireman was under the engine, pricking the fire to make it burn up, and whilst so doing the explosion occurred, the chief effect of which was to blow off the entire cylindrical covering of iron boiler plate, leaving the tubes quite exposed. According to the statement of the driver, which I do not see any reason to question, the boiler must have exploded under a pressure not exceeding 75 lbs. In examining the material of which the boiler was composed, the plate forming the junction between the cylindrical part of the boiler and that covering the fire-box, was found to be very defective; it was 3-8 inch thick, and instead of being solid appeared to be composed of two plates, owing to imperfect welding of the parts in the manufacture. As it was torn through the middle between its attachments there is every reason to conclude that this plate was the weak part of the boiler which first yielded. The plate, which was originally defective, was no doubt further deteriorated from the *ogee* form into which it was bent. It is but justice to the builder to observe that this plate was from the Lowmoor Iron Works.

As far as dependance can be placed on the statements made, and the facts observed, this explosion affords another instance of the prodigious effects that may be produced by steam of comparatively low pressure, when it is allowed to develop itself by making its escape suddenly through a weak part of the boiler.

I have, &c.

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

GEO. WYNNE,
Lieut.-Col., Royal Engineers.

NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, September 13, 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 made by Lieutenant Colonel Wynne, Royal Engineers, the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into the circumstances which attended the fatal accident that occurred to Bridget Walsey on the 23d July last, at the Preston Station of the North Union Railway.

North Union
Railway.

Accident to
Bridget Walsey
at the Preston
Station.

My Lords direct me to observe that Lieutenant Colonel Wynne, has, first in 1851 and again on a subsequent occasion, pointed out the necessity of constructing a bridge over the railway for the accommodation of foot passengers who are

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obliged to pass from one platform to the other, and that the Directors in their letter of 3d January 1854, in referring to Lieutenant Colonel Wynne's report, stated that they fully concurred in his recommendation.

My Lords now learn with regret that the Directors have been so indifferent to the safety of the public as not to have taken any steps in the matter, although they advocated the necessity for erecting a bridge, when it could be urged as an argument against allowing the trains of the East Lancashire Railway Company to approach the western platform of the station. The consequence of this neglect of the Directors has been the death of this poor woman.

My Lords request to be informed upon what grounds the Directors have hitherto neglected to carry out the recommendation of the inspecting officer, and they trust that the bridge will be erected without further delay.

I am, &c.

*The Secretary of the
North Union Railway Company.*

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, Royal Engineers.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, August 27, 1855.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that I have inquired into the circumstances connected with the death of a poor woman named Bridget Walsey, caused by her being run over by an engine, while in the act of crossing the rails at the Preston Station on the 23d July.

The deceased had arrived from Liverpool that morning by an East Lancashire train, and was set down on the platform on the east side of the station. Her destination being to Ulverstone, she had to cross to the west side; whilst on one of the six lines of rails which run through the station an engine moved slowly along it from the north end; the driver was unfortunately looking out on the opposite side to where the woman was standing; she became paralyzed with fear, and, although a step to one side would have saved her, she could not move, and was run over and so dreadfully mutilated that she died a few hours afterwards.

The Preston Station, as I said, is traversed by six lines of rails, over which between 200 and 300 trains pass daily, and their Lordships will be surprised to learn that the thousands of passengers that at some seasons daily arrive at the east platform from the manufacturing districts have no means of reaching the west platform, from whence they have to continue their journey to the north or west, but by crossing these six lines of rails, always more or less blocked with carriages and endangered by engines moving up and down, and moreover, that there is no especial establishment of police to assist and point out to the passengers the times and places to cross with the least danger; that a passenger under these circumstances has been run over can surprise no one; the only matter of astonishment is that such accidents have not been of frequent occurrence, which, I think, can only be accounted for by the imminence of the danger keeping people continually on the alert.

Their Lordships may, perhaps, remember that, in August 1851, they directed me to report upon a certain diagonal crossing, which the East Lancashire Railway Company had laid down, with a view of driving their trains up to the west platform, and to the use of which the North Union Company objected, on the grounds of the great danger the public would incur thereby. I fully concurred in this view, and after stating in my report the dangers and objections to such a crossing, I proceeded to say,—

“The advantage which the East Lancashire Company propose to themselves by crossing to the west platform is that of depositing their passengers proceeding northward on the spot from which they will have to start, instead of subjecting them to the danger and inconvenience of crossing six lines of rails in a very crowded station; but to meet this objection, the other Companies propose making a bridge from one platform to the other.”

In another report I was called upon to make last year, I said,—

“I must remark that the North Union Company and the other Companies in connexion with them have shown a great disregard to the public convenience, in not having made what has been so long called for, viz., an over or under crossing between the two platforms.”

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The North Union Company and the other Companies in connexion with them having succeeded in resisting the attempt of the East Lancashire Railway Company to use the crossing, have found it convenient to forget their own proposal of an over bridge and to pay no attention to the remark made in my report of the past year on the subject. When it suited their policy they were too glad to prefer the plea of the public safety, but, having obtained their object, the public safety became to them an object of indifference, and the consequence has been that a poor widow woman, the sole support (I am informed) of three very young children, has been killed.

In these remarks which I have felt it my duty to make, I have not the slightest intention to throw censure on the station superintendent, or those employed under him. I have had frequent occasion to observe the arduous duties he has to perform, and were he not an extremely active and intelligent officer, the safety of the public would be much more seriously compromised, for the difficulty of marshalling the trains and working them with safety and order through the station is inconceivable; and it may not be out of place here if I venture to express an opinion of the importance of the Government giving every assistance to the Company in any future bill they may introduce to carry out measures for enlarging the station, and affording increased facilities for the passage through it for the enormous and still increasing traffic that it has to accommodate.

I am not aware of the grounds on which the Company lost their bill of this year for enlarging the station, but I heard of their failure with great regret, as a matter in which the public safety and convenience was much concerned.

I have, &c.

The Secretary of the

Railway Department, Board of Trade.

GEO. WYNNE,

Lt.-Col., Royal Engineers.

*North Union Railway, Lessees' Office,
Preston, October 2, 1855.*

SIR,

Your communication of the 13th Sept., referring to the fatal accident which occurred at Preston Station, on the 23d July last, whereby Bridget Walsey lost her life, having been submitted to the Directors of the North Union Railway, I am instructed to inform you that they have painfully felt the inadequacy of the station accommodation, and anxiously sought the needful powers for its improvement, which, on grounds altogether unintelligible to them, were refused by Parliament, after great expense had been incurred in preparing plans and the Bill, under the highest engineering and legal advice; that, in consequence, every effort is now being made to accomplish as much as is practicable by private arrangement amongst the different Companies, contemplating another application to Parliament, if there should be any better prospect of success.

It is much to be regretted that the sanction of Parliament could not be obtained for more perfect arrangements.

I am, &c.

The Secretary of the

Railway Department, Board of Trade.

JAMES CHAPMAN,

Secretary.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, October 6, 1855.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd inst., relative to the fatal accident which occurred on the 23d of July last, at the Preston Station upon the North Union Railway, and to inform you that it does not appear to my Lords that the rejection by the Legislature of the Bill for the improvement of Preston Station has any bearing upon the question of the construction of a means of communication by which passengers would be enabled to proceed from the east to the west platform, and *vice versá*, without walking over the several lines of rails.

I am at the same time to observe, that the danger to which the public are subjected, from the want of such a means of communication, has been brought

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repeatedly to the notice of the Directors; and if, therefore, they continue to neglect to take measures for the removal of the danger, a heavy responsibility will rest upon them should further accidents occur.

*The Secretary to the
North Union Railway Company.*

I am, &c.
DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, Royal Engineers.

*North Union Railway,
Preston, October 27, 1855.*

SIR,
I DULY laid your letter of 6th Oct. before the Directors, relating to a cross-over road at Preston Station, and they have ordered a plan and estimate of foot-bridge to cross the station to be furnished.

*Captain Galton,
Railway Department, Board of Trade.*

I am, &c.
J. CHAPMAN.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, November 6, 1855.*

SIR,
I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ultimo, in which you state that orders have been given for a plan and estimate of a foot-bridge to cross the railway at the Preston Station. My Lords instruct me to say, that they will be glad to be informed when the bridge in question shall have been completed.

*The Secretary of the
North Union Railway Company.*

I am, &c.
DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, Royal Engineers.

OXFORD, WORCESTER, AND WOLVERHAMPTON RAILWAY.

Oxford, Worcester,
and
Wolverhampton
Railway.
—
Accident
to a train at the
Priestfield
Junction.

*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, for the information of the Directors of the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton } Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Tyler, R.E., the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into the circumstances which attended an accident that occurred to a Great Western passenger train, on the 21st ultimo, at the Priestfield Junction of the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton Railway.

*The Secretary of the
Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton
Railway Company.*
*The Secretary of the
Great Western 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 24th 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 21st ultimo, near the Priestfield Junction of the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton Railway.

It appears, that as the 11.30 a.m. Great Western passenger train from Chester, was approaching the Priestfield Junction, at two o'clock, on the afternoon of the 21st ultimo, the engine suddenly left the rails; that, after running for 56 yards over the sleepers and the ballast, it fell on its side at the edge of the line, and that it knocked down the trestle of a bridge carrying a road over the railway in its course.