

SIR,

Office of Commissioners of Railways, Whitehall,  
April 24, 1850.

Appendix No. 51.

I HAVE the honour to report to you, for the information of the Commissioners, that I yesterday inspected the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company's line, from Saxelby to North Leverton, including the Torksey Bridge.

In consequence of your letter to the Secretary of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company, dated April 6, 1850, I on this occasion confined myself to ascertaining that the recommendation as to ballast therein referred to had been complied with. I have to report that the Company's engineer has caused the longitudinal planking to be taken up, and transverse planking to be laid down, resting upon and spiked to the tops of the longitudinal bearers; the transverse planking thus comes within 3½ inches of the top of the rails, and thus precludes the use of any greater depth of ballast than a couple of inches.

I have, &amp;c.,

Captain Simmons, R.E.,  
&c. &c.R. M. LAFFAN,  
Capt. Royal Engineers.Manchester,  
Sheffield, and  
Lincolnshire  
Railway.  
(North Leverton to  
Saxelby.)Office of the Commissioners of Railways, Whitehall,  
April 25, 1850.

SIR,

I HAVE been directed by the Commissioners of Railways to inform you that they have received a report from Captain Laffan, in which he states that the recommendations as to limiting the quantity of ballast which can accumulate upon the platform of the bridge over the Trent at Torksey, detailed in the extract from my report forwarded to you on the 6th instant, have been complied with; and having also considered the resolution of the Board of Directors, forwarded in your letter of the 17th April, the Commissioners have desired me to communicate to you that they now have no objection to the line from Saxelby to North Leverton being opened for the purposes of public traffic.

I have, &amp;c.,

The Secretary of the

Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company.

J. L. A. SIMMONS,

Capt. Royal Engineers.

## APPENDIX No. 52.

## EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY.

Appendix No. 52.

East Lancashire  
Railway.

SIR,

Whitehall, February 19, 1849.

IN obedience to the order of the Commissioners, contained in your letter of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to inform you that, on the 8th instant, I proceeded to the Ramsbottom station on the East Lancashire Railway, to inquire into the circumstances of the accident which occurred there on the 22nd ultimo, and now beg to lay before you the following particulars.

The decision to which the magistrates came is as follows:—

“Case dismissed, it being considered that the signal-man gave the direction to proceed. At the same time the Bench expressed an opinion that the engineer was wrong in not having stopped the train, and also in having propelled it instead of having drawn it.”

Now, to understand the anomaly of a driver obeying a movable signal whilst the station-signal indicated stop, it should have been explained that, no watchman or policeman being kept up during the night, that as soon as the last passenger train has passed a *fixed* green light is put up at the signal-post, and the porters retire for the night. This fixed signal means that the train is to go slow and stop at the station; the breaksman or some person connected with the train is supposed (but this is not laid down in the printed code) to go forward and see that all is clear, and when he has signalled this to be the case, the train proceeds. The driver, therefore, having slowed his train on seeing the station-signal, attends to it no more, but depends upon himself or on some agreed signal with the person whom he sends forward. On the occasion of the accident, the driver was acting directly contrary to his instructions, in *propelling* instead of *drawing* a train of eight ballast-waggons, which he took up at the Bury station, down the line. He again disobeyed them in only *slowing* and not *stopping* his train. Had he been in his proper position and stopped, he must have seen that the gates were closed across the road, as the time of the accident was between seven and eight in the morning, and the gates are not more than 20 yards from the station-house. None of the persons belonging to the station were present; but a young man, a time-keeper, was there waiting to be taken up by the train, and he states that he saw the breaksman, who was on the first waggon, wave a white light, and this was considered by the driver as authority for him to advance. The breaksman himself was too ill to be examined, his thigh having been broken, or he, perhaps, might have given another version.

With regard to the gates being closed across the railway, no one could account for it. The level crossing is stated to be private property; but, as far as the public safety is concerned, it may be looked upon as an important public thoroughfare, leading, as it does, to the only bridge across the river Irwell, and to the district beyond.

Ramsbottom has a considerable population; it is situated close to the railway, and the road in question has the appearance of one that is much used, it forming, as it does, the shortest communication, though, perhaps, not the best, with the town of Bury. There, therefore, seems to

Appendix No. 52.  
East Lancashire  
Railway.

be a want of due precaution on the part of the Company in leaving a station of such importance without a watchman during the night. Had there been one, the accident could not have occurred; and had it terminated fatally, the Company would have incurred a serious responsibility. The circumstance of no one belonging to the station being on the alert at the late hour of the morning at which the accident is stated to have occurred, viz., 7.30, argues a general want of vigilance amongst the Company's servants at the station.

The adoption of a fixed caution-signal *always* exhibited, whether danger exists or not, without any one to attend to it, is objectionable, being more likely to induce carelessness than otherwise, it appearing from the evidence that this was not the first occasion of its being disregarded: and such will always be the case when there is no one to enforce obedience or report the neglect of it.

A centre stop has been put in in the middle of the road, which will prevent the gates again closing across; but there is still the great objection that some careless passenger may leave the gates open and allow cattle to stray on the line. In my opinion the public safety requires that the gates should be locked at night, and that the keys should be placed in charge of a watchman.

Capt. Harness, R.E.,  
&c. &c.

I have, &c.,  
GEO. WYNNE, Capt. R.E.,  
Inspector of Railways.

Appendix No. 53.  
Caledonian  
Railway.  
(Rockcliffe Station.)

APPENDIX No. 53.

CALEDONIAN RAILWAY.—(Rockcliffe Station.)

Whitehall, February 23, 1849.

SIR,  
I HAVE to report to you, for the information of the Commissioners of Railways, in compliance with their instructions, dated the 13th February, "that I should examine and report upon the circumstances of an accident that occurred upon the Caledonian Railway on the 10th instant, near Rockcliffe station," I proceeded on the following day to Carlisle, and on the morning of the 15th examined the spot where it occurred, being about four miles north from Carlisle, and the engine and various carriages which composed the train; and afterwards attended the inquest, then sitting at Carlisle, and which was subsequently adjourned to the 21st instant, on which day I also attended; and having made known my instructions to the coroner, was furnished by him, as well as by the Railway Company, with every assistance to enable me to arrive at satisfactory conclusions. The accident having occurred on the night of the 10th instant, the railway at the precise spot had been repaired, so as to avoid the inconvenience and risk consequent upon a stoppage of the line; but the extent of the damage was pointed out to me, and afterwards verified by evidence adduced before the coroner. And I was informed that none of the roadway had been disturbed, except where absolutely necessary for the restoration of the traffic. The accompanying plan, furnished to me by the superintendent of the railway, shows the position of the train after the occurrence.

The engine was upon the line, and not in the least degree damaged, being one of the ordinary class of passenger-engine, in use upon the Caledonian Railway. The tender, which was constructed with four wheels, was entirely off the line, (its wheels being about six or eight inches from the rails,) but not uncoupled from the engine. It was much damaged, the left-hand front wheel having been forced back against the area or lever of the brake, carrying away the axle-box and one arm of the guard-plate; the brake was broken, and the trailing-wheel on the left hand was found to have shifted inwards upon its axle about four inches. The luggage-van, the coupling-chains of which were still fast to the tender, was off the rails a few inches on the same side as the tender, but not much damaged. The first-class carriage next to the van had one pair of wheels off, and the other on the line, and was held to the guard's van by the left side chain, the screw couple and right chain having been wrenched asunder.

The second-class carriage, in which the five persons were killed, and another of the passengers injured, who has since had a leg amputated, succeeded the first-class carriage. It lay at the bottom of the slope of the embankment (about 10 feet high) on which the accident occurred, having been turned upside-down, and was partially under the Post-office, one pair of wheels having been forced from the carriage, the other pair remaining in their place, but both of their axles much bent. The body was entirely crushed. The Post-office, a heavy carriage upon six wheels, probably with its load nearly nine tons in weight, was not damaged in the under framing, but a hole had been knocked in the fore-end of the body. A composite carriage followed, but was not much injured. Three horse-boxes followed, which were considerably broken, probably by the weight of the horses, as they lay over on their side on the embankment. Next followed a first, and then a second-class carriage, and last of all a horse-box. The whole of these last nine vehicles were off the rails, and with the exception of the last, either upon or down the slope of the embankment. From a few feet from the leading first-class carriage (coloured red) to the last horse-box, the left hand or west rail was either torn up or very much damaged; the right rail, with the exception of one length near the first-class carriage, which was out of its position, was scarcely stirred; and from the horse-box southwards neither the rails, sleepers, nor ballast were injured, and I was informed had not been in any way touched, up to the period of my inspection on the 15th instant. The road was in gauge, and in good condition; and there appeared nothing as regards the permanent way or works in any degree to account for the disaster. From the rear of the last horse-box, for a distance of about 215 yards, the cast-iron chairs, securing the left-hand rail