

is equally sure that the lid was in a position somewhat different from that indicated by the latter gentleman.

A platelayer, who was close to the spot when the accident happened, observed the lid *on*, and the lever right for the main line, before either of the superintendents reached the box; but from the manner in which he gave his evidence, I cannot place much reliance upon it.

The pointsman on duty with Morris never knew the points stick before the accident, except in winter, two or three times, from frost and snow. He had found them stick, however, two or three times, which afterwards decreased to twice, since the accident, though he could not tell why. He was pretty sure that they had not been "propped" for cleaning on that day, as they did not require cleaning on the back sides.

A third pointsman, who had been doing duty for four months at these points, had never heard of them sticking until after the accident, and had never found them stick before or afterwards.

From what I saw of the points, and from all the evidence that I have heard, I cannot help suspecting that Morris may have "propped" the points, either for the passage of the goods train, or for some other reason, and have forgotten to let them go before the approach of the passenger train; and that this may have been the cause of the accident; but I should not by any means be justified in assuming positively that such was the case. Morris had a short stick in his box, which appears to have been commonly used for propping the points whilst they were being cleaned; and, as the prop is inserted under the lid, the fact of the lid having been off after the accident affords, at least, a ground of suspicion that this had been done.

Whether Morris is to blame, however, or not, in this matter, there can be no doubt that, if the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company were to erect a suitable stage at this post, at which the handles of the points could be collected, instead of leaving the levers scattered about at different distances from the box, as they are at present, they would enable their pointsmen to perform their duties more easily to themselves, more satisfactorily to the Company, and more safely to the public.

I have, &c.

The Secretary of the

Railway Department, Board of Trade.

H. W. TYLER,

Captain, Royal Engineers.

*Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, Secretary's Office,
Manchester, September 13, 1855.*

SIR,

I BEG to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 11th instant, enclosing an extract from Captain Tyler's report of his investigation as to the collision at the Bolton Station on the 13th August ultimo, and conveying a recommendation of the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, to the effect that arrangements be made for the handles of all the points to be brought to the pointsman's box at the Bolton Station.

I have submitted same to the directors of this company, who desire me to inform you that the recommendation shall receive their best consideration.

I am, &c.

WM. S. LANN.

To the Secretary of the

Railway Department, Board of Trade.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, Oct. 17, 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 of their inspecting officer upon the accident which occurred on the 19th August last, near the Littleborough Station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, in consequence of a collision between a goods train and an excursion train.

My Lords direct me to observe that this accident would appear to have been mainly attributable to the very lax system under which the excursion trains are allowed to be run upon the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

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Lancashire and
Yorkshire Railway.

Accident at the
Bolton Station.

Extract inclosed in
letter of the 11th
September, to the
Lancashire & York-
shire Railway Com-
pany.

Collision near
Littleborough
Station.

Lancashire and
Yorkshire Railway.
—
Collision near
Littleborough
Station.

There can be no reason why the movements of the excursion trains should not be regulated by time tables, furnished to all the servants of the Company concerned, as accurate as those supplied for ordinary passenger trains, especially where (as was the case with the train in question) the intention to run the train was notified to this department two days before it was run.

My Lords have had occasion, in the cases of former accidents, to remark upon this subject, and also to draw the attention of the Directors to the great danger which is incurred by conveying excursion passengers in trains of unmanageable dimensions, and without adequate engine power.

As regards this latter point, my Lords are surprised to learn that it is the custom, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, for the engine-driver of an excursion train to request assistance from the drivers of goods trains in surmounting difficult parts of the line.

They direct me to point out that such practices appear to imply a want of organization in the locomotive department, which cannot fail to be detrimental to the safety of the public, as well as to the interests of the Company.

It is with great regret that my Lords learn that, notwithstanding the warning which former accidents have afforded, the Company continue to run their trains without a properly organized system, and I am to point out that a very heavy responsibility will rest upon the Directors, should further accidents occur from this cause.

My Lords direct me, in conclusion, to draw the attention of the Directors to the remarks of the inspecting officer upon the necessity of working the Summit Tunnel at all times by means of the electric telegraph, and they trust that his remarks upon this subject, as well as his other observations, will receive their careful consideration.

*The Secretary of the
Lancashire and Yorkshire
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 22d 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 19th August last, near the Littleborough Station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

A mile and a quarter to the north-east of Littleborough, and between that station and Walsden, there is a tunnel of considerable length, called the Summit Tunnel. The approach to it from Littleborough is on a rising gradient of 1 in 330, and this gradient extends for two miles and three quarters towards Walsden. The mouth of the tunnel is guarded by a signalman, who is expected to be on duty, ordinarily, from 7.30 in the morning (the usual time for the first passenger train) till the last passenger train has gone by at night, which is generally about a quarter past 10 o'clock; and, whilst he is at his post, he allows no train to pass into the tunnel until he receives notice from the signalman at the other end, by means of his telegraph, that the previous train has left it. At night, a less satisfactory method has hitherto been adopted for the protection of trains in the tunnel, inasmuch as the night watchman at Littleborough has simply been directed to enforce an interval of 20 minutes between the starting of all trains in the direction of Walsden, and no tunnel signalman has been provided.

On the 18th ultimo, amongst other excursion trips upon the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, a special train was appointed to leave Sowerby Bridge for Blackpool at 5.30 a. m., and to return at 6.0 p. m.; and it was intended to carry 1,500 passengers in 37 carriages. 1,930 people were conveyed, however, in 55 carriages, on the day in question; and, in returning from Blackpool, about two and a half hours late, the excursion train was run into by a goods train, in the tunnel before alluded to, at a quarter before one o'clock on the following morning. One person was seriously, and seven others were slightly injured by the collision.

The excursion train left Blackpool, on its return, at 6.30 p. m., with two engines—the one a first-class goods, and the other a first-class passenger engine;—

procured a third engine at Preston to assist it up the Chorley Bank, and a fourth at Bolton for the Bury Bank ; got rid of these engines again, the last at Heywood, and the third at Heywood Junction ; and started from Littleborough for Walsden at 12.24 with its two original engines. It proceeded tolerably well up to the mouth of the tunnel ; but it then began to slacken speed, for want of steam, and on account of the slippery state of the rails ; and it came to a stand at a quarter of a mile within the entrance.

Lancashire and
Yorkshire Railway.

Collision near
Littleborough
Station.

The hind guard states, that, knowing that a goods train was following him, he dropped off his van and ran back with his lamp and fog signals, as soon as it was safe for him to do so, for the purpose of stopping it ; but that he was unable to proceed more than 100 yards before the goods train passed him, partly for want of time, and partly because of the difficulty of getting over the inequalities of the ground in the dark. It appears that this man put two fog signals on the rails, at distances, respectively, of 50 and 100 yards from the rear of his train, and that the latter was the first intimation received by the driver of the goods train of his danger.

As before stated, the excursion train left Littleborough at 12.24 ; and, according to the guard's own account, the collision took place 20 minutes afterwards. As the guard states, further, that his train went at the rate of 12 miles an hour to the tunnel, and had only slackened to seven miles an hour when he dropped off, it would seem that he might have managed to go further back for its protection than 100 yards, particularly as he was aware that the goods train was following him.

The interval would appear, however, to have been even greater than 20 minutes, because the night watchman at Littleborough and the driver of the goods train both assert that the goods train was not started until 25 minutes after the excursion train, by the station clock ; and this is very likely to have been the truth, because they were both aware of the necessity, in this particular case, of strictly adhering to the regulations. At the same time, it must be admitted, that the tunnel was a most disagreeable, and even dangerous, place for the exercise of the guard's function in protecting the train, and that if proper protection had been afforded by means of a night watchman at the tunnel mouth, the safety of the train would not thus have depended upon the exertions of the guard.

The two trains were at Rochdale, as well as at Littleborough, at the same time ; at the former place about half-past 11 o'clock, and at the latter station soon after 12 ; and at both these places the driver of the excursion train sent to ask the driver of the goods train to hook on behind and help him. They could not, however, come to an agreement as to how this should be done, though it is a mode of working commonly practised on the Lancaster and Yorkshire Railway ; the goods driver would not push behind, but wanted to take his train in front ; whilst the passenger driver did not like the idea of being pulled, or of letting the other train have the opportunity of being afterwards before him. They therefore started separately from these two stations.

The tunnel signalman states that it is his habit to go to bed every night directly after the passenger train, due at 10.13, has passed his post, and that he should have done so on the evening in question, if it had not been his night for shaving ; but that for this reason he had not retired to rest when the excursion train went by. His hut being situated near the mouth of the tunnel, he heard it pass, but thought that it was only an ordinary goods train. He had seen the excursion train on its way to Blackpool in the morning, and a printed list had been handed to him by a platelayer, at half-past 12 on that day, after the train had passed, in which the hours of its starting from Sowerby Bridge and Blackpool were mentioned ; but he had altogether overlooked this train in the list, and only observed that another excursion train, which had also passed him on that morning, was not timed to return till the following day.

He says that this was only the third printed list which he had received ; that, previously, he had been furnished with a written order, when he was required, on account of extra trains, to remain on duty after the usual hour ; and that he had received no instructions to look upon the list as being given to him in place of such a written order ; and he adds that so many special trains pass him, of which he receives no warning, that the excursion train to Blackpool in the morning did not attract his particular attention. It does not appear to be

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Collision near
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Station.

denied on the part of the Company, that, to a certain extent, such is the case.

Considerable blame is attached by the Company to the second driver of the excursion train, for not having done his best with his engine, and, in fact, he has been discharged from their service for his share in the catastrophe. This driver stated to me that he did all he could, but that his engine was in bad order,—that the blast pipe was too short,—that the valves were not working properly,—and that the coke was small and bad; and I therefore considered it desirable to subject it to a test, which I shall proceed to describe.

The excursion train was composed, as before stated, of 55 carriages, and carried 1,930 passengers; and its total weight would therefore have been, independently of the engines, about 400 tons. It was drawn by two engines,—the first, a passenger engine with 15-inch cylinders, 20-inch stroke, and 13 tons on driving wheels, 5 feet 9 inches in diameter; and the second, a six-wheeled goods engine, with four wheels coupled, (4 feet 9 inches in diameter, and supporting a weight of 21 tons,) with 15-inch cylinders, and with a stroke of 24 inches.

Not having been able to make up a train of the total weight of the excursion train, I started from Littleborough with the second engine attached to a goods train, composed of 19 loaded, and 28 empty waggons, and a break, and weighing altogether about 260 tons. On entering the tunnel, the draw-bar of one of the waggons was pulled out, and the first part of the train was obliged to put back, to be attached to the portion that was left behind. This placed the engine under a disadvantage, inasmuch as it had to start again from a point near the tunnel mouth, where the rails were wet and slippery, instead of running in at the speed which it had previously acquired; but it did not prevent the engine from taking the whole train through the tunnel to Walsden, after it had received a little assistance in starting.

From this circumstance, and from personal inspection of both engines, I am led to the conclusion, that, when clean from the shed, and properly managed, those engines would be capable of conveying such an excursion train through the Summit Tunnel from Littleborough; but, considering that the coke supplied for the journey to Blackpool (the ordinary coke, I understand, of the district) was worse in quality than that in use on the eastern portion of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which is not good, and that therefore the drivers had a difficulty in keeping up their steam, it is not a matter of surprise, that, towards the end of so long a day, they should come to a stand, with a load of 400 tons, on a gradient of 1 in 330, *in a slippery tunnel*.

The leading driver cleaned out his fire twice in the course of the trip, first at Blackpool, and afterwards at Blue Pits on the journey home; and he states that the second driver attempted to clean *his* fire at the former place, but did not complete his job, nor renew his endeavours at Blue Pits, though asked by him, through the fireman, to do so. The locomotive superintendent at Preston remarked, certainly, that the second driver's fire was good when he passed that station, but the superintendent at Bolton thought it had been pulled out because it looked so black. Altogether, the second driver appears to have been wanting in the zeal displayed by the first driver, to do the best he could under the circumstances in which he was placed; not liking, doubtless, to get under his engine and clean out his fire. They could not make use of the pit at Blackpool on account of the number of vehicles there, and there was no such convenience for them at Blue Pits.

On the return journey, the time does not appear to have been lost so much on the road as in stoppages at different stations, which altogether amounted to upwards of two hours. They stayed 20 minutes at Kirkham on account of the couplings giving way; 20 minutes at Maudland, getting coke and water; 20 minutes at Lostock Junction, waiting for the Liverpool train to pass; a quarter of an hour at Bolton, for coke and water, and for the pilot engine; 20 minutes at Heywood Junction for the engines, and to cast off the pilot; a quarter of an hour at Rochdale to get up the steam, and another quarter of an hour at Littleborough for the same purpose. The assisting engines before referred to were supplied to the train by the locomotive foremen on the most severe portions of the line, and the leading driver thought, when he allowed the last engine to leave him at Heywood Junction, that he would have been able to convey the train to its destination with the two that were permanently attached to it.

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There is no doubt that the excursion train would have been a heavy load for the two engines in that slippery tunnel at any time, and that it was *too* heavy a load for them after a long day's work with inferior coke, when there was a difficulty in keeping up the supply of steam. I may add, further, that, in my opinion, it is highly undesirable that an excursion train of these dimensions should be run at all, on a line like the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. Besides the risk of such an accident as the present, there must always be danger of the couplings breaking on heavy gradients; and it is very difficult to control so great a number of people. On the occasion in question, the guards, though there were five of them, could not keep the people in the carriages. They were continually creeping out of the windows to the tops of the vehicles whilst the train was in motion, and the scene after the accident may be imagined, when it is remembered that there were nearly 2,000 passengers, a quarter of a mile from the entrance, in a dark wet tunnel at 1 o'clock in the morning. They might have been killed by hundreds if a train had happened to pass soon afterwards in the opposite direction.

Lancashire and
Yorkshire Railway.Collision near
Littleborough
Station.

I am induced to draw attention the more forcibly to these considerations, because the excursion trains on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway are very numerous, because the train in question does not appear to be considered as a particularly large one on this line, and because I am authentically informed of a train having been run on this railway, on a previous occasion, with carriages loaded *inside and outside* with upwards of 2,600 passengers. Dangerous practices are often carried on for a length of time on railways without accident, but I cannot avoid taking this opportunity of impressing upon the Directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company the awful responsibility which is incurred in running these enormous trains, and especially when proper precautions are not taken for their safety.

On this occasion, the printed list announcing the hours of departure of the train from Sowerby Bridge and Blackpool, was not handed to the tunnel signalman until *after* it had passed him on its way out, and if he had made proper use of it, that list would have entailed upon him the necessity, apparently, of remaining 17 hours at his post. This large train did not, however, attract his particular attention, because he mistook it for another; and that other he thought no more about, because he so often sees trains pass, of which he receives no information. The printed paper supplied to the tunnel signalman, as well as to the other servants of the Company, did not inform him anything more, in regard to its time, than that it would leave Sowerby Bridge at 5.30 a.m. and return at 6 p.m.; and the train was altogether upwards of 13 hours on the road, in going and returning, the distance between Sowerby Bridge and Blackpool being not more than 64 miles.

The immediate cause of this accident was undoubtedly the neglect of the Company to appoint a night signalman at the mouth of the Summit Tunnel; but, after the evidence that has been brought under my notice in the course of the present investigation, as to the mode in which the large excursion traffic of this line is conducted, I cannot but feel apprehensive lest more serious and fatal results should some day occur; and I think, therefore, that it is my duty to take this opportunity of recommending that greater precautions should be taken for the future—that the size of such trains should be limited to, perhaps, 1,000 passengers each—that regular time-bills should in all cases be distributed for them, showing the hours at which they may be expected to pass all the principal stations on the line—that they should be provided with such an amount of engine power as should leave no doubt about their punctuality, and some margin for contingencies; and that, in fact, instead of being run in a hap hazard manner, greater precautions, if anything, should be taken, and more careful provision made in regard to them, both on account of their irregular character, and of the vast number of people they convey, even than with the ordinary trains.

I have, &c.

To the Secretary of the
Railway Department, Board of Trade.H. W. TYLER,
Captain, Royal Engineers.

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*Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway,
Secretary's Office, Manchester, 26th October, 1855.*

Lancashire and
Yorkshire Railway.
—
Collision near
Littleborough
Station.

SIR,

I HAVE submitted to the Directors of this Company your communication of the 17th instant, handing a copy of Captain Tyler's report of his investigation as to the collision in the Summit Tunnel on the 19th August last.

Referring to the recommendations contained in your letter, I am instructed to inform you,—

1st, That the Directors have already ordered the adoption of a time table, to regulate the excursion trains.

2d, That they have restricted the number of carriages to be run in such trains in future to 25; and,

3d, That they have arranged for a night watchman at each end of the Summit Tunnel, which arrangement they hope will supersede the necessity for the adoption of the electric telegraph, inasmuch as the watchmen can communicate with each other by means of a wire telegraph.

I am, &c.

WM. S. LANN,
Secretary.

*To the Secretary of the Railway Department,
Board of Trade, Whitehall, London.*

THE MIDLAND RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, August 11, 1855.*

SIR,

Midland Railway.
—
Accident to a train
near the Shipley
Gate Station.

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 Midland Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report that their Lordships have received from Lieut.-Col. Yolland, R.E. the officer appointed to inquire into the circumstances attending the accident that occurred near the Shipley Gate Station of the Midland Railway, on the 15th ultimo.

I have, &c.

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain, Royal Engineers.

*The Secretary of the
Midland Railway Company.*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Parliament Street, August 8, 1855.*

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 17th ult., 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 attending the accident which occurred on the 15th July, near Shipley Gate Station, on the Erewash Valley Branch of the Midland Railway.

It appears that as the 6.50 a.m. passenger train, consisting of five carriages, including two break vans, was proceeding from Mansfield to Nottingham down a falling gradient of 1 in 150, about half a mile south of Shipley Gate Station, at the rate of five or six miles an hour, the leading wheels of the engine mounted the rails, and after running about 33 yards, the right leading wheel is supposed to have struck the wing rail of a cross-over-road, and the ash-pan came in contact with the same wing rail and was torn off and remained beside it; the engine then entirely left the rails, going off to the left, and after running about 30 yards further, ran partly down an embankment, and fell over on its left side, with its wheels uppermost, and the body of the engine resting on the chimney and fire-box. The driver and fireman were thrown into a quickset hedge at the foot of the embankment; the latter and four of the passengers were slightly injured. The tender and front break van were also off the rails, but the coupling between the engine and tender having broken, the engine only went down the embankment.

This occurred about 300 yards south of a portion of the line, then, and still under repair, in consequence of the road having sunk from the recent abstraction of coal immediately beneath it; but that part where the engine is supposed, from the marks on the rail and ballast, to have mounted, was found in proper