

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Lancashire and
Yorkshire
Railway.*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitthall, November 17, 1854.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the enclosed copy of the report which they have received from their inspecting officer of his inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 21st ultimo, at the Todmorden station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, and to request that it may be laid before the Directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company.

My Lords direct me to state that they will be glad to be informed of the result of the deliberations of the Directors upon the recommendation of the inspecting officer, that the line be worked between Eastwood and Todmorden by means of the electric telegraph.

I have, &c.

*The Secretary of the
Lancashire and Yorkshire
Railway Company.*

DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain Royal Engineers.

SIR,

Leeds, November 9, 1854.

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 28th 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 Todmorden station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

There is a tunnel, called the Milwood tunnel, about three quarters of a mile to the east of Todmorden, and as a train heavily laden with grain was proceeding towards the Todmorden station, after having passed through this tunnel from the east, about 9.33 on the evening of the 21st ultimo, it was run into by a passenger train following on the same line of rails, at the rate of some 25 miles an hour. Fortunately, the injuries to the passengers, and to the company's servants, were not of a serious nature, and they appear to have been confined to three of the passengers and three of the guards.

The evening is described as having been dark and rather foggy, and the tunnel as having been full of steam from the engine of the grain train, as well as from the engine of a goods train on the other line of rails; and, under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that the driver of the passenger train could not see the lights of the grain train until he had arrived within, as he states, sixty yards of them.

The grain train was composed of engine, tender, twenty nine loaded waggons, and a van, and was, considering the weight of grain waggons, a heavy train. It left Hebden Bridge, a station four miles to the east of Todmorden, at 9.2, and the collision took place at half a mile to the east of Todmorden at 9.33, and it must, therefore, have travelled at an average rate of about seven miles an hour; the guard and driver, however, state the speed to have been ten or twelve miles an hour, at the time of the accident, though they admit that it had been slower on first leaving Hebden Bridge. The driver of the grain train was unable to proceed at a greater rate, because the gradient rises 1 in 128 the whole way from Hebden Bridge to Todmorden, and on account of the weight of his load.

The passenger train was about four minutes late in starting from Eastwood, a station half way between Todmorden and Hebden Bridge, and therefore two miles to the east of the former, and is stated to have been travelling at the rate of twenty five miles an hour at the time of the accident, which is probably rather under, than over the mark. Now, taking the speed of the grain train at eight miles an hour, it would appear, that, as it was caught by the passenger train, which was travelling at twenty five miles an hour, at half a mile to the east of Todmorden station, there must have been about seven minutes interval between the respective times of departure of the two trains from the Eastwood station, at which, I should mention, the grain train did not stop; and this agrees with the statement which I understand to have been made by the clerk in charge at the Eastwood station. I learn that this man has been discharged from the company's service, for not having *warned* the driver and guard of the passenger train that the grain train was in front of them.

A longer interval would not have sufficed to secure, with certainty, the safety of the trains, and, as for the system disclosed by the nature of the crime which is

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laid to the charge of the Eastwood clerk, it appears to me to be no less unfair upon the driver than unsafe for the public. Before further explaining my meaning in this remark, I must, however, in order that the whole of the circumstances may be more fully understood, refer to the principal features of that portion of the railway which lies between Eastwood and Todmorden.

In the two miles between those stations, there are three tunnels, of the respective lengths of 230 yards, 185 yards, and 275 yards; the two former being 252 yards apart, and the two latter being 642 yards apart. The tunnel nearest to Eastwood is on a considerable curve, and, as before stated, the gradient rises 1 in 128 from Eastwood to Todmorden. As one or all of these tunnels may, upon occasion, be filled with steam, and as the view of a driver may thus be obscured by each of them, the three tunnels are liable to cause nearly the same amount of danger as if they formed one long tunnel 1500 yards in length.

But, even under these conditions, it appears that the driver of a passenger train, timed to travel at the rate of thirty miles an hour between the two stations, may be started from Eastwood with an intimation that a heavy train is so many minutes in front of him; or, in other words, he may be placed in a position in which it is incumbent upon him to hit off a particular rate of speed by which he shall avoid running into a train in front of him, the progress made by which he has no means of ascertaining, and at the same time avoid the blame that must inevitably attach to him for unnecessary delay. There is, also, in some such cases, a danger for which he must further provide, of being run into from behind; and I may remark that this latter is not a mere imaginary danger, as I have known more than one instance, on other railways, in which the second of three trains has, in going cautiously through a tunnel, in order to avoid running into the first, been run into by the third.

I think it is not fair upon a driver that he should be placed in a position of so much doubt and difficulty, particularly on so dangerous a portion of the line, and I consider that such a system must subject the public to a considerable liability to accident. For these reasons, I would beg to recommend, for the consideration of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, that, with a view to the prevention of accidents of this nature for the future, they should cause a telegraph wire to be laid between the Eastwood and Todmorden stations, to be used for the sole purpose of telegraphing the trains; and that no train should be allowed to start from, or pass the Eastwood station, until the line has been telegraphed to be clear for a train to run into the Todmorden station, or from the Todmorden station until the line has been telegraphed to be clear into the Eastwood station: which is, in fact, only recommending particularly, for two miles of the railway, the adoption of a system which has recently been recommended by their Lordships, as a safe means of working the whole of this, as well of the other railways of the United Kingdom.

I have, &c.

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

H. W. TYLER,

Captain Royal Engineers.

LONDONDERRY AND ENNISKILLEN RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, October 10, 1854.*

Londonderry
and Enniskillen
Railway.

SIR,

I HAVE been directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, for the consideration of the Directors of the London and Enniskillen Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report which they have received from their inspecting officer upon the accident which occurred on the Londonderry and Enniskillen Railway near the Trillick Station, on the 15th ult., from an excursion train having left the rails.

My Lords direct me to request you to call the particular attention of the Directors to that part of the report which remarks upon the remissness which allowed of a train of such large dimensions having been started in charge of only one guard.

I have, &c.

DOUGLAS GALTON,

Captain Royal Engineers.

The Secretary of the

London and Enniskillen Railway Company.