

No. 3.

NEWCASTLE AND CARLISLE RAILWAY.

REPORT of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Frederic Smith, on the Accident which happened on the 10th May, 1841.

SIR,

Board of Trade, Whitehall, 30th June, 1841.

On the 14th May a return was received in this office from Mr. John Adamson, the secretary to the Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Carlisle Railway Company, giving an account of an accident that occurred on the 10th May, by which a man-servant in the employ of Mr. Algood was injured.

From this return, it would appear that the truck on which Mr. Algood's carriage was fixed, with two other carriages, got off the line of rails, and Mr. Algood's servant lost his balance and fell from his seat. The cause assigned for this accident by Mr. Adamson, is that a bale or truss of goods having got disengaged from its lashings fell from the waggon and formed such an obstruction as to turn out of their course the carriages which were immediately behind the said waggon.

Pursuant to your general instructions, I have made the necessary inquiries into this case which from its nature might have been attended with serious consequences, and I have to make the following report.

The Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company have, for the conveyance of goods, trucks, or waggons of various descriptions, some of them with frames, some with sunken bottoms, and some with flush, in which latter case the goods are secured entirely by lashings. The truck from which the bale or truss fell which caused the accident of the 10th of May was of the last description. Mr. Adamson informs me, in answer to my inquiries, that this truck or waggon was packed at Carlisle and was there properly secured by ropes and covered with a tarpauling.

Some of the articles which had there been placed upon it were taken off at the Hayden Bridge Station, and Mr. Adamson supposes that the lading had in consequence become disarranged, by which means, a truss containing carpeting or flannel weighing about six stone was thrown off, and falling upon the rails, forced off the truck in question. I also learn from that gentleman, that when goods' waggons form part of a train in which there are passengers' carriages, the former are usually placed between the latter and the engine.

This accident confirms me in the opinion which I had the honour to give you in my report on the Hull and Selby accident of the 13th October, 1840, viz. : that the goods conveyed in railway waggons should be enclosed between a frame-work and not left to depend upon lashings, and that it is better to place the goods' waggons behind the passengers' carriages. In the instance in question, although the accident was not of a fatal character, yet great blame attaches to the person whose duty it was to have secured the tarpauling after the truss of carpeting was taken off at Hayden Bridge, and I think the Directors should be called upon to mark their displeasure at the conduct of this person.

In order to obtain all the information in my power respecting this accident, I called upon the secretary to furnish me with a sketch of that part of the line on which it occurred. I accordingly yesterday received from Mr. Adamson a drawing of which the enclosed is a copy, and from this you will perceive that the accident happened on a plane falling 1 in 330, with the rails laid in a curve of only a quarter of a mile radius.

I need hardly remark that the greatest care is necessary in working lines with curves of such short radii, and I would suggest that the Directors of the Newcastle and Carlisle Company should be advised to issue strict regulations on the following points. First, for passing round such curves at a moderate pace. Secondly, for placing their goods' waggons more generally behind than before the passengers' carriages. And thirdly, for making their servants responsible for any neglect in securing the packages in the goods' waggons.

I have, &c.

FREDERIC SMITH, Lt.-Col., R.E.,
Inspector-General of Railways.

The Right Hon. Henry Labouchere,
&c. &c. &c.

Appendix.

II.
Reports on
Accidents.

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No. 4.

EASTERN COUNTIES RAILWAY.

REPORT of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Frederic Smith, on the Accident which happened on the 16th May, 1841.

SIR,

Board of Trade, Whitehall, 8th June, 1841.

You are aware that other and more important duties interfered with my inquiring at an earlier period, into the causes and circumstances attendant upon the accident which occurred on the Eastern Counties Railway on the 16th ultimo, by which the fireman of one of the engines had his leg crushed, and that it was not until yesterday that it was in my power to carry on the required investigation.

By the return received from Mr. Bulkeley, the secretary, it appears that the half-past four o'clock train on the afternoon of Sunday the 16th May, arrived at Ilford in the ordinary course

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and that the engine was forced off the rails in consequence of the points having been wrong, by which means the leg of the fireman was crushed.

I proceeded to Ilford accompanied by Mr. Braithwaite, the engineer of the line, and Mr. Hall, the manager, and I examined the station and the adjoining lines and sidings.

It appears to have been the practice for certain trains in running down to Brentwood, to leave a carriage at Ilford, which is usually put into a siding adjoining the "up line" and a little below the station at the latter place.

On the day in question, the "down train," which started from Shoreditch at four o'clock, left a carriage on the "down line" at Ilford, which was crossed over by police serjeant Otway and a policeman of the name of Andrews to the siding of the "up line" above alluded to, but after so placing the carriage, Andrews who was left in charge of it, omitted to set the points right for the approaching up train, and the engine in consequence, as before stated, went off the rails. The policeman Andrews justifies his neglect by stating, that the points were not in his charge, and that in moving the carriage he was merely obeying the orders of the police serjeant, Otway, who gave him no directions respecting the points, and he added that he had only recently been employed at the Ilford Station, and was therefore not aware of the necessity of adjusting the points for the up train.

The police serjeant, Otway, admits his having neglected to give any orders to Andrews about adjusting the points, but states that it was his intention to have *himself* performed this important duty, had not his attention been unfortunately distracted from it, first, by an altercation which he had with some passengers, who had joined the down train at the Devonshire-street Station, without having procured tickets there, and who refused to pay their fares to him, and secondly, by having to remove some trespassers who had got upon the line.

The manager informed me, that formerly there was a "pointsmen" specially attached to this station, but from it having been found that his services were very little required, he had been removed, and that in consequence the duty of attending to the points had devolved on Serjeant Otway.

I observed that the switches were not of the best description, and that Police Serjeant Otway did not appear to be at all dexterous in their management. On inquiry I ascertained that he has been two years and a half in the service of the Company, and that his character as well as that of the policeman Andrews have been very exemplary.

I feel that it is only in cases of urgent necessity, that it would become my duty to recommend a suggestion being made to a Railway Company to increase its establishment of servants, but I think that the accident now under consideration, which but for the steadiness of the driver of the engine, might have been still more serious, presents a case justifying an observation from the Lords of the Council; for either there should have been a proper "pointsmen" at the Ilford Station, or else the police serjeant and policeman stationed there, should have been better instructed in their duties than they appear to have been. The policeman Andrews should not have been placed there without being instructed, that if he passed a carriage to the siding, it was necessary to adjust the points for the expected train, and it was equally important, first, that Police Serjeant Otway should have known that the placing of the spare carriage in a position of safety and the adjusting of the "points" were of far more importance than any duties connected with the fare of the passengers, and secondly, I think he should have been rendered more expert in the management of the "switches" than he appears to be.

The out-door establishment of the Eastern Counties railway for working the line consists of the following persons:—

1 Superintendent.
 4 Inspectors.
 1 Sub-Inspector.
 2 Police Serjeants.
 30 Policemen.

And 23 Porters.

A strength which does not appear inadequate to the duties required, provided the men are efficient.

The blameable parties connected with the accident in question, are in my opinion not only Serjeant Otway and policeman Andrews, but also the inspector whose district embraces the Ilford Station, and who should have seen that Serjeant Otway was well acquainted with every part of the duty entrusted to him, and I would suggest that each of these persons should be severely admonished by their superiors.

It might be fairly pronounced in ordinary circumstances that the system is lax which would admit of passengers taking their seats in trains without having tickets, but I am informed that in the case in question, the irregularity is chiefly attributable to the defective and exposed state of the Devonshire-street Station which has since been given up.

That part of the Eastern Counties railway over which I travelled, I found to be in excellent order; the cuttings and embankments standing well, and the line well ballasted. I observed in several points where the line is curved in cuttings that the slope of the inner curve is at this moment being altered, so as to admit of the view of the engine-drivers being less obstructed, and Mr. Braithwaite, the engineer, informed me that with this object he intended to construct future bridges across his cuttings with arches in place of the long flank walls.

Mr. Braithwaite showed me a model representing a mode of preventing passengers at intermediate stations, having to cross the line of rails in joining or leaving the carriages. This is a great desideratum, and I trust it will be found to answer the purpose in view. It is to be tried at the Chelmsford Station.

Mr. Hall the manager is engaged in perfecting a system of signals which bids fair to prove superior to those formerly in use.

I have only to add that several of the weekly abstracts of the trains were laid before me, and that they show a degree of punctuality in their arrival at the termini which is very creditable.

I inquired into the circumstances attending the accident on this railway on the 2nd instant, by which a waggoner's boy of the name of Ward had some ribs broken, and received a severe contusion of the knee, while driving an empty waggon on an incline of the Brentwood Hill works. Mr. Braithwaite informed me that this unfortunate boy was in the service of the contractor, and engaged in the construction of that part of the railway which is not yet opened to the public, and as the boy is now doing well, and the accident appears to have been chiefly through his own neglect, I have no further observations to make upon it.

I have, &c.

FREDERIC SMITH, Lt.-Col., R.E.,
Inspector-General of Railways.

The Right Hon. Henry Labouchere, M.P.,
&c. &c. &c.

Appendix.

II.

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No. 5.

LONDON AND GREENWICH RAILWAY.

REPORT of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Frederic Smith on the Accident which happened on the 28th May, 1841.

No. 5.
London
and Greenwich.

SIR,

Board of Trade, Whitehall, 3rd June, 1841.

I HAVE the honour to acquaint you that I have this day inquired into the circumstances connected with the accident which occurred, in the course of the public traffic, on the London and Greenwich Railway, on the 28th ultimo, and I have to submit the following report:—

In the return sent in by the Company, dated the 29th ultimo, and signed by Mr. Akerman, the secretary, it is stated that a carriage of the half-past 2 o'clock up-train from Greenwich was thrown off the rails, by coming in contact with a log of wood or post, which had been left on the line by the preceding up-train, to be used in a fence about to be substituted for a part of the parapet wall which had been pulled down. It is further stated that John Nash, the conductor or guard of the train, fell under the carriage that was off the line, and in consequence broke one of his legs; and also that a carpenter's labourer, in the employ of the Company, named Jabez Delderfield, being under alarm, on seeing the carriage thrown off the line, jumped from the new works in the hope of alighting on the scaffolding, but fell and injured his spine.

It is remarked by Mr. Akerman, that a watchman, named Joseph Fryer, had been placed at the spot to keep the line clear, but that from negligence he omitted to remove the post from the rails, and hence was the primary cause of the accident.

Mr. Akerman and Mr. Miller, the resident engineer and superintendent of the line, afforded me every facility for conducting the investigation with which I was charged, and at my request furnished me with such details respecting the accident as were personally known to them.

I examined Mr. Henry James, the overlooker of the line; John Barrett, the foreman of carpenters; Pankhurst, the conductor of the previous train; J. Walker, the driver of the half-past 2 o'clock train; Joseph Fryer, the breaksman or guard of the hinder carriage of the half-past 2 o'clock train; and William Forster, the watchman, whose duty it is alleged to have been to remove from the rails the timber which caused the accident now under consideration.

It appears that the Greenwich Railway Company are now constructing a part of the line which they have covenanted to form for the Croydon, the Brighton, and the South Eastern Railways, and that the workmen are at present engaged on that portion of this new line which lies between the Blue Anchor Road and the junction with the Croydon Railway. In order, as it would seem, to appropriate the materials to the new work, portions of the south parapet wall had been taken down, leaving the line at such places exposed to depredation. But recently, on the representation of the resident engineer, that danger might result from leaving these openings during the Whitsuntide holidays, the directors determined that they should be filled up by means of a wooden fence.

From the evidence of the parties whom I examined, I learn that the wood for this purpose was conveyed from the station at Greenwich to the spot where it was required to be used, partly by the passenger trains and partly by a special engine before the starting of the first train on the morning of the 28th.

The timber and planks, when carried by the passenger-trains, were placed on the hinder platform of the last carriage, and pursuant to the verbal orders of Barrett, the foreman of carpenters, were thrown off the carriage upon the line by the breaksman or guard, without the trains being stopped.

The "beat" of William Forster, the watchman, which was about a quarter of a mile in length, between Blue Anchor Road and the Croydon Junction, comprehended that part of the line where the wooden fence was in course of construction. The 28th ultimo was the first day on which he had performed the duty of watchman on that beat, but by his previous employment in the service of the Company he appears to have had sufficient knowledge of his duty to have been aware that it devolved upon him to clear the line of any obstruction left upon it by other parties.

The timber which caused the accident was conveyed by the train which left Greenwich at quarter past 2. It was placed on the platform of the hinder carriage under the charge of Pankhurst, and was by him thrown upon the line, together with some planks. He had done the