NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY.

Board of Trade, (Railway Department.)
Whitehall, 16th November 1871.

SIR,—I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in obedience to your request of the 16th ultimo, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances that attended a collision which occurred on the 16th ultimo at Maryhill station, on the North British Railway, near Glasgow, between a light engine and a goods van, in consequence of one of the porters having very improperly moved the waggon out of the goods shed line at the west end of the station, in order that it might be unplugged from another siding a little distance back, and also in consequence of having previously obtained the permission of the station-master or signalman on duty to do so; and thus it happened that just as this truck was being moved out of the goods shed siding and loaded line, the down signal lowered the down signal for a light engine (which was on its way from Cowhills to Dumbarton, having back a passenger train) to pass, and the engine came up running, according to the driver, without steam, at the rate of about 15 miles an hour, struck the truck, and knocked it off the line, and against the parapet wall of the adjacent viaduct, and breaking one of the axles of the waggon.

The signalman held up his arms as a signal to stop the light engine as soon as he saw that the truck was foul of the down main line, but owing to a curve in the line, which limited the view of the truck from the engine-driver, he had not time to do anything towards stopping the speed of his engine before the collision took place. The engine was not thrown off the rails, but the framing and footplate were damaged, and the tender had a hole made in its tank, as the engine was running with the tender in front, so that it was disabled, and the driver had to return to Cowhills for another engine.

The porter is the only servant of the company to blame for this collision; but if the sidings had terminated in a blind siding, and the points and signals had been properly interlocked with each other, and placed so that they should have been under the sole control of the signalman, it would not have been possible for the loaded waggon to have been moved out of the goods shed siding; so as to foul the main down line, at the same time as the down signal was lowered for the light engine to pass, and the subsequent very serious collision would not have occurred.

The loaded truck was knocked clear of the main down line. The station-master did not see the mishap take place, but saw the engine afterwards. He told me that the collision occurred at 7.18 a.m. and he saw the engine at 7.20.

All criminal proceedings have been taken against the station-master, as well as against others who are mixed up with the subsequent serious collision that occurred in the afternoon of the same day. I think it desirable to give his own explanation of his proceedings.

He says: "I did not at first intend to take any step towards getting the truck on the line, I thought it was sufficient to get the siding clear. The main down line was left clear after the collision in the morning. I changed my mind because I thought they could work the traffic, intending to ask for the travelling crane next morning. I had been 17 years employed with the Company on the north, 14 years as station-master, and six years of that time at Maryhill, and during the 17 years I had never seen the travelling crane used. At 12 o'clock the permanent way inspector (Mr. Drummond) arrived at my station from Milngavie. He asked me, 'Have you got sent for the travelling crane to get that truck off the road?' I said, there was no need for it; that I had written a letter to the locomotive department to come out early the next morning, and no efforts had been made at this time to get the truck on to the line. The inspector said, 'You will not get your goods train into the siding to-night, unless you get it lifted.' I said, 'All nonsense;' and he said, 'Come and see.' After I had gone to see, I said, 'I think you are right.' I then thought I would telephone for the travelling crane train, but it was my dinner hour, and I thought I would telephone when I got back from my dinner. There was a little time after the dinner train had gone, and I got back from my dinner I went to examine it again; to have another look at it, as I had my doubts whether it was necessary. I asked the signalman, Stewart" (against whom criminal proceedings have also been taken), "to go with me where the truck lay; and remarking that Drummond says 'that it will need the crane before we can get our goods train into the shed.' I say now, 'What is your opinion, Bob?' He said, 'If we could get the buffer out, I think we could get the train in, but it would be better to get the travelling crane;' and I said, 'I think so too.' I then went to the office, and told the clerk to telephone. He did so. I saw the message go. In the course of the afternoon I went to the signal box and asked the signalman if there was any signal of the train coming. I said, 'They will be late if they don't come soon.' This would be about 3 o'clock.

"The travelling crane train arrived about 3.40 p.m., as near as I can recollect. On the arrival of this train I asked for Mr. Scott (locomotive foreman at Cowhills). Some one said, 'He is not here. Is it the gaffer you want?' And at last some one pointed out to me the being the gaffer. I said, 'You have been a long time in coming. I thought cranes were ready at a moment's notice. I am afraid you have come at a very bad time; but, however, come here. Do you see the buffer of the waggon; will that stop you from getting into the siding?' He answered, 'I am afraid it will;' that it would stop him. I then said, 'Get a hammer and chisel, and get the buffer out, and that will enable you to get off the main line into the siding to lift the truck.' He said, 'We have not got a hammer and chisel.' I said, 'I thought a travelling crane carried all sorts of things.' He said, he would go and see if he had any tools that would do. One of the other men remarked, 'Could I get a hammer about the station? a very small one would do.' My clerk was passing at the time, and I said, 'Lend these men your hammer; send it over by my son from the office.' By this time the foreman of the crane came back, and said, 'I won't be long.' That he had not tools. By this time the hammer and chisel came from my office, and it was handed to one of the men under the waggon, and I think he said it was too light, as the screw was a little bent; and I then began to speak about lifting the truck. I believe he asked how long he would have
"to do it, and I answered three-quarters of an hour,
but that there were two express and traffic with
a goods engine to come, all on the down line.
As we talked, the man took a red signal
given from the pointman's box for the travelling
train to get off the road. I said, 'There you go;
'there is a train which I had forgotten, which was
late in going down.' This would scarcely
be 3h. 50m. p.m. The travelling train was then shuttled
(on a cross-over road) to the up line. The up and
down lines were put at danger. After the question
of this 2h. 55m. p.m. mineral train from Sighthill
junction the travelling train came back to
the down line, and they began to work.
Captain Brownrigg came up to me and began to
speak of the accident of that morning, and asked
questions about the train, which I knew nothing
about. Captain Brownrigg, myself, and
engineer got into conversation about the case.
Captain Brownrigg asked me if it was an hydraulic,
and how it worked. I told him that I knew nothing
about it. They were at work at this time. I was
standing at the east end of the viaduct on the up line, and the engine-driver (of the travelling train)
asked me when there was any up train; I
told him there was the 3h. 50m. p.m. train from
Milibang, due at Maryhill at 4h. 5m., the express
due to pass without stopping at 4h. 21m., and a
slow train, 5.30 from Balloch, due to leave Maryhill
at 4h. 45m. The engine-driver told me that we
will follow the 4h. 45m., if we have
'time.' I said, 'You want to escape taking the
Milngavie down train.' I said then, 'When will you
be done?' and he answered, 'I know nothing about
it, speak to the gaffer.' I went across the road and
said, 'Well, gaffer, how are you getting on?' and
he said he was getting a chain round the wagon to
lift it. This conversation took place before the up
Milngavie train arrived at 4h. 5m. p.m.
The gaffer asked me would he have time to lift it,
I said he should know that better than me; I knew
nothing what his crane could do. He then said, 'I
think I had better slew it.' I said, 'That is the best
you can do, push the truck on one side.
For God's sake don't stop express.' I believe he
answered, 'I'm afraid I should have to stop the
express if I slewed it.' I said, 'It is necessary I
would do so.' By this time I saw the Milngavie
train approaching on the up line. I then said 'You'll
have to stop work and to shunt the up line after
'the engine-driver had a clear road through the wagon
expresses are past.' That is all I did. I left the
man in charge of the crane (the gaffer), and followed
the Milngavie train to the platform with Captain
Brownrigg, and got him his ticket, and gave it to
him in the carriage. I then saw the crane shunted
on to the up line, and after the 3h. 55m. p.m. down
express train had passed, I went to my tea and saw
'nothing more and did nothing more until after the
accident occurred.' In reply to questions which
I put to him, he also said, 'I saw the crane itself,
and the truck was not above a yard or two from the
main down line. I thought the crane could lift it
up and put it on the main down line, but the long arm
of the crane had not been shifted off the main down
line. It never occurred to me that the long arm
would be turned off from over the main down line
for the purpose of lifting the truck; it was not
shifted while I was there.'
Mr. Mr. Scott at Cowaila, was received at 1h. 55m. p.m. It
was to the following effect:
'Send travelling crane to lift wagon with broken
axle, before Carnbrough engine, due at 4h. 30m.'
It would seem there was an error of 20m. in
this message, as, according to the company's working
time tables; the time for this engine is 4h. 50m.
p.m.
The locomotive foreman at Cowaila, Mr. Scott,
received a telegram at 2 p.m., and he sent a train
with the travelling crane between 3h. 10m. and
3h. 30m., the crane being in charge of John Mayhur
with five other men to assist, besides the engine
and fireman of the engine No. 330, that took the
similar statute. He added that there was not
enough furnished with a copy of the company's recovery
or the company's time tables, and the men who
sent out with the travelling crane knew nothing
of the mode of working the traffic.
The travelling crane train arrived at Maryhill
time of 5h. 37m. p.m., John Mayhur being in charge of
the station master. He added that there have also been against this man. He informed
me that he had been employed on similar duties before
but that no locomotive fireman or guard had been
with this train, which consisted of engine and crane,
waggon, and van; and on arriving at Mary
hill he asked the station-master where the crane
was which they had to lift, and he took them down and
pointed out the wagon; then he made inquiry in what
time they had to lift it before a train was due, and the
engine-driver of his train said there would be about
10 minutes before a train would be due from Glassgow;
the station-master then asked him if he had time to lift
it instead of waiting to go down to the yard, but the
engine-driver of the crane raised, and they shunted our train to the up line,
but he does not know who ordered it to be shunted.
They had previously tried to knock out the coter of
the spring buffer with a hammer and chisel, but they
could not get it out; he says he had a hammer and
chisel which belonged to the van, and did not use one bought by the stationmaster's son. He then told
that their train stood shunted on the up line until two
two trains had passed, and then they went back to
the down line; and he again made inquiries how long
time it would be before another train was due; that
some one called out three quarters of an hour; then
they commenced to work, and they were not working
at least 10 minutes before the train came up from Heslo-
burgh; that while they were engaged in lifting and
shoving the wagon round, some one called out that
there was a train coming, and he ran out to the up line,
and saw a passenger train coming which was then
at the head of the no. 4 line and nothing more.
He admits that he had not told anybody that the
tail of the travelling crane would foul the up line:
that it was quite evident to anyone that was there;
that they could not lift the truck without having the tail
of the crane foul of the main up line; the truck was too
off. He says that the tail of the crane stood fast on the
up line all the time they were working after getting
back from the up line, or for 10 minutes before the
collision took place.
He also states that the station-master has always
looked after the traffic when the travelling crane has
been used at other stations, when he has been
in charge of the signalman's office, and
'the signalman, Stewart, had been at the
station for the last nine months, and]{stated that the collision between the
the tail of the travelling crane and the 3h. 45m.
up express train from Hesloburgh occurred at 4h. 21m.,
and this statement is corroborated by the evidence of
the driver and guard of that train. It also appears
that the book kept at the station that the last
december shows that the travelling
train was last shunted to the up line at 4h. 18m.
and, according to the evidence already given, it
was immediately followed by the travelling crane train
to the down line. This would only leave an interval
of nine minutes for the crane to get back to the
station.
The signalman says that the 3h. 45m.
express train was signalled forward by bell from Miln-
gavie at 4h. 24m., and he took the distance
about 4h. 25m. His box is situated about 475 yards.

```
east of the point at which the collision occurred, and he states that there was nothing foul of the up line when he took the distant signal off; that he did not blow off the distant signal, but drew the distant signal first, and as soon as he had done so, he saw that the line was foul; that he saw that it was foul before the train came in sight; that it would not be above two seconds between the time of his taking off the distant signal and putting it on again; that the distant signal was whistled for, and it would be more than half a minute after the whistle was sounded after the engine he was approaching; he saw the train approaching; he saw the steam first; he could not tell when the tail of the travelling crane was first placed across the up line; he says the distant signal was on at danger again before, before the up train engine passed it with full steam on, two or three seconds before it got to it; and to his knowledge the steam in it was put on until the crane was over the track, and then he saw the wheels taking up dust, and he thought the engine was reversed; that the train was running at high speed when it came in sight; he says he sung out to the people at the crane, and he went out of his box with a red flag and ran about 12 yards towards the approaching train; he sung out to the people at the crane took no notice of his calling out, and he could not see whether any one was on the crane.

He gave the signal by a red flag to the driver of the engine that brought the travelling crane, when he wanted that train to slow down; that he had been nine years at the Maryhill station, and never saw a travelling crane used before, and did not know that it was liable to foul both lines; that nobody connected with the travelling crane told him that they would probably foul the up line that day.

I should explain that the tail of the travelling crane when turned at right angles to the down line on which it was standing, would project more than three-quarters across the up line, and that as the box which carried the weights would expose a surface of 4 feet long by 3 feet in height, in addition to the depth of the beam supporting it (about 3½ inches), it should be seen at a considerable distance by the driver of the up train, if he had been on the look-out.

On this day, the 3d, 45m. p.m. express passenger train from Helensburgh consisted when it left Dumfriesshire, about 4010m., of engine and tender, seven carriages, and a van at the tail of the train; and the driver of this train, of 25 years’ service, informed me that he could see the distant signal about 300 or 400 yards before he reached it; and when he came in sight of it he sounded the whistle, and the signal was lowered as soon as he whistled, and remained lowered until after he had passed it; and on this point, which is of importance, he is confirmed by the evidence of the guard, who rode in the van at the tail of the train, who says that the signal was in the act of being lowered when he got sight of it, and it was put up again to “danger” as the carriage in front of his van was passing it. The driver further says, that as he came through the cut on to the straight road, he saw the crane before him, that he put off the steam, put the tender’s brake, and reversed his engine; that he whistled for the guard’s brake, two whistles, and then kept the whistle sounding, in order to call attention to get the crane moved out of the way, that he was going about 25 or 30 miles an hour when he first came in sight of the distant signal, and as soon as the distant signal was lowered, he had his brake on the line; but the man who saw the signal to be taken off, he went out of his box, turned to the left, to the place where the lever for working the distant signal is fixed, and pulled the signal off; and while at that, while he was doing it, he could not look along the up line to the west, as the signal box would interfere with the view of the signal.

As there were a good many passengers in the train, it is remarkable that there were not hurt.

The evidence placed before me, coupled with a careful investigation of the locality, has led me to form the following conclusions:

1. There is no doubt that the up distant signal was taken off for the 3d, 45m. p.m. express train to proceed, and I think it likely that it was not put on again at “danger” until the engine had passed it. The driver therefore had no time to consider that there was something wrong with the signal, in reply to his whistling for it to be taken off, as an intimation that he might proceed; but, on the other hand, I am satisfied that he was not keeping a proper look-out ahead, as he should have been, and did not take the steps towards reducing his speed, which he has described in his evidence, when he came out of the cut-off; and he was up on the front end of the viaduct. The line falls 1½ feet from the distant signal to the viaduct, and thence it is level through the station. The platforms, station signal, and tail of the travelling crane would all become visible before he had got 200 yards inside the up distant signal, which is about 650 yards from the spot at which the crane is recorded as having been struck, about 300 yards after it had struck the travelling crane before it stopped.

2. It is highly probable that the signalman did not look along the up line towards the west end of the station before he took off the distant signal for the express train to pass, or he would have seen that the tail of the travelling crane was then foul of the main line, or that he would have given the signal for the signal to be taken off, he went out of his box, turned to the left, to the place where the lever for working the distant signal is fixed, and pulled the signal off; and while at that, while he was pulling it off, he could not look along the up line to the west, as the signal box would interfere with the view of the signal.

As soon as he recognised that the tail of the crane was in the main up line he immediately turned on the distant signal again to danger, to endeavour to remedy what he had done; but the travelling crane could not be traversed and the chain hooked on to the truck in the two
seconds which are referred to in the signalman’s evidence.

3. I do not think that blame attaches to the man Mayberry in charge of the working of the travelling crane. He was not supplied with any copy of the company’s time tables or book of regulations. He asked questions of the signalman, as to the time he would have for lifting the truck, and his work was twice interfered with by the train being shunted to the up line, once by signals from the signalman to the driver of the train, and once by the order of the station-master himself.

What may have hitherto been the practice on the North British Railway on similar occasions, a guard should, in my opinion, have been sent from the Cow lum with the travelling crane train, as it might have broken down on the journey, and his services would then have been required to protect it; but when this train reached and stopped at Maryhill station, in accordance with a telegraphic message from the station-master, for the purpose of lifting the loaded truck so as to clear the entrance to the goods shed and sidings, the question has been raised with whom the responsibility then rested for providing for the safety of the public.

Unfortunately, on this point the superintendent of the line, Mr. McLaren, and the locomotive superintendent, Mr. Wheedly, differ in opinion. Mr. McLaren considers that a guard should have been sent with the travelling crane train, and that he would have been responsible for taking the necessary steps that would have averted this sad accident; while Mr. Wheedly says the responsibility would still have rested with the station-master if a guard had been sent with this train.

Mr. McLaren has drawn my attention, in support of his views, to the following rules in the company’s book of regulations, viz., 18, 19, 25, 26, 291, 292, 345, and 373. I have carefully considered the whole of these rules, and I have already stated that a guard should have been sent with the travelling crane train, and to that extent I agree with Mr. McLaren, and it is quite possible that if one had been sent the accident might not have occurred; but Rule No. 273 is so precise and definite that I cannot but hold that at a station, according to these rules, the responsibility entirely devolves upon the station-master. Rule No. 273 says, “When a train is at the station the guards are under the orders of the station agent,” &c., &c. Rule 177, “The instruction of a station agent to give a train signal to cause the train to move on the line on which it stands, to the station agent, and he must appoint his best porter to attend to them,” &c. In addition to these, Rule No. 60 says, “When a train is stopped by an accident, or by any other cause, on the main line (except at a station), the guard if there be only one,” &c., &c., “should take certain steps.”

Rule 63 states, “In case of the stoppage of either a line of rail from any cause, or there being any danger apprehended in the passage of an engine or train in the direction of the station, or of other servants of the company, shall place a fog signal on the line or lines of rail so obstructed every 200 yards from the point of danger,” &c.

Again No. 241, “When an engine, or train without a guard, is stopped on the line (except at a station)” &c., &c., “should take certain steps, or from any other cause, the engine-man,” &c., &c.

It is unfortunate that, although these regulations do say what is to be done in other cases, there is nothing as to the steps to be taken when an accident or a stoppage takes place at a station, except what may be inferred from Rule 63, and it is certainly to be regretted that the regulations are sufficiently indefinite that any question could arise on the subject.

But as the station-master had telegraphed for the travelling crane to be sent to Maryhill; had shown the man in charge of it what was required to be done; had told him to direct the other line of rails, &c., I don’t think there is any excuse for his absconding himself from his duty just at the time when the crane was about to be used, to lift the truck, more especially as there had been a serious collision at that station in the morning, and an opportunity was then afforded to him for the first time after 17 years’ service of becoming acquainted with the mode of using the travelling crane. If he had been present he must have seen at once, when they prepared to traverse the crane, that the trailing end would foul the main up line; and he could have directed them to wait until the express train had passed, or have had the up distant signal kept at danger, until the operation of lifting the truck had been completed.

I believe also that the practice on other lines of railway would make the station-master responsible until a superior officer or inspector specially charged with this duty had arrived.

I have only to add that this express train was not provided with a sufficient amount of break power. One break to seven carriages, exclusive of the tender, is not an adequate amount of retarding force for a train timed to travel at high speed; and it is quite possible that if it had been fitted with continuous breaks on the last carriages, worked from the guard’s van, that the results of the collision might not have been so very serious.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, W. Yolland, Railway Department, Colonel, Board of Trade.

NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY.

Ref: 75 for 21 chains,
1. 121 53
2. 116 77
3. 80 55
4. 65 11
5. 50 70 through Stobs Station, and then again at 1 in 80 for a further 70 chains. Shank End Station itself is on a gradient falling towards Stobs of 1 in 250, the change from 1 in 250 to 1 in 75 occurring at a point about 60 yards north of the end of the platform.

On the evening in question a local goods train from Rosewood to Riccarton via St. Boswells, left Roxton at 4.5, five minutes late, and after doing its work along the road, reached Shank End at 9.25, a quarter of an hour late, when it consisted of an engine and tender, eight loaded and seven empty wagons, and a van with two guards. There was nothing to take off at Shank End, but a single waggon in a siding at the south end of the station had to be attached to the train.

Sir,

Ref: 20th October 1871.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the movements of ordinary into the station at instances tending the collision which occurred on the 18th ultimo, near Stobs Station on the Hawick and Riccarton branch of the North British Railway, between one goods train and a runaway portion of another one.

The guard of the runaway train was severely shaken and bruised. Stobs Station lies about four miles south of Hawick; the next station south of Stobs again being Shank End, about three miles from Stobs. In consequence of the sharp curves and steep gradients which occur on this portion of the line, it has for some time past been worked on the absolute block telegraph system. Between Shank End and Stobs, in a very nearly direction, the line falls all the way on gradients of
NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY

PLAN OF MARYHILL STATION

Showing points where accident occurred 16th Oct 1871.

Scale: 75 feet = 1 inch.