

No. 7.

## LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER RAILWAY.

REPORT of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Frederic Smith, on the Accident on the 18th June.

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II.  
Reports on  
Accidents.  
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Liverpool  
and Manchester.

SIR,

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

I HAVE had under consideration the accompanying letter and return from the secretary and assistant engineer of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company.

It appears from the details which they contain, that W. Wood, an engineman, who has been four years in the employ of the Company, and who is represented to have been careful and steady, met with his death when driver of the Manchester race train, on the evening of the 18th ultimo, by falling between the tender and the first carriage.

The return states that the deceased had gone from his engine when in motion, apparently for the purpose of speaking to some person in the leading carriage of the train, and that the fatal accident is supposed to have been caused by his foot slipping as he returned.

It appears to me difficult to conceive any conduct more culpable in a railway servant, than for a driver to quit his engine when in motion at the head of a train.

Had there been a necessity for communicating with any person on the leading carriage, it would have been the duty of the unfortunate deceased to have sent his fireman, and not to have himself quitted the responsible and important post entrusted to him, and as I presume that the orders of the Company clearly point out this course of duty to the driver, I am at a loss to account for Wood's conduct, provided he was sober at the time of the accident.

On an occasion of race trains being run, I conclude that the managers of this Company take more than usual pains to ascertain the state of those servants upon whom the safety of the public depends, and as I think it desirable that you should be informed on this and other points connected with the case under consideration, I have to suggest that the following inquiries should be made:—

1st. Whether there is any evidence to show that at the departure of the train from the terminus the deceased was perfectly sober.

2nd. Whether the deceased informed the fireman that he was about to quit the engine, and assigned any reason for doing so.

3rd. Whether the fireman remonstrated against it.

4th. The age of the deceased and his fireman, and how long each had respectively acted in the capacity he filled with the race train.

5th. Whether there is in the code of rules and regulations of the Manchester and Liverpool railway any order distinctly prohibiting any engine driver leaving his engine in the manner Wood appears to have acted, and if it would have been the duty of any other servant of the Company to have reported the irregularity, in the event of no accident having occurred.

I have, &amp;c.

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

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

LETTER sent to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company, transmitting copy of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Frederic Smith's Report on the Accident of the 18th June.

SIR,

Board of Trade, 8th July, 1841.

WITH reference to your letter of the 19th of June, enclosing a return of an accident by which William Wood, an engineman in the employment of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company, lost his life, I am directed to enclose a copy of a report made by Lieut.-Col. Sir F. Smith, to the President of the Board of Trade, and to request that the information therein specified may be afforded.

To the Secretary of the Liverpool and Manchester  
Railway Company.

S. LAING.

In reply to Letter from this Office of the 8th inst., with Copy of Sir F. Smith's Report.

SIR,

Lime Street Station, Liverpool, July 13, 1841.

I HAVE to acknowledge the favour of your communication of the 8th instant, with copy of a report from Sir Frederic Smith, respecting the accident which occasioned the death of William Wood, engineman on this line, on the 18th of June last; and in reply, I am instructed to transmit you copies of the assistant engineer and fireman's answers to the several queries comprised in Sir Frederic Smith's report.

Respecting the observation, that it is concluded that on occasions of race trains more than usual pains are taken to ensure the public safety, it is perfectly true that extra pains are taken on such occasions to accomplish this indispensable object, and have generally been successful.

Should you desire any further information than what is comprised in the enclosed papers, I shall be happy as far as may be to afford it, and have, &c.

H. BOOTH.

S. Laing, Esq.,  
&c. &c.

DEAR SIR,

Manchester, July 10, 1841.

IN compliance with your request, I beg to transmit you answers to the questions contained in the report of Sir Frederic Smith to the Board of Trade.

In answer to the first question, respecting the sobriety of Wood at the departure of the train from the terminus, I beg to refer you to the statement of E. Knight, who was fireman to W. Wood at the time of the accident: he states that Wood was sober when he started from Newton race-course, and in this statement he is borne out by B. Derbyshire, engineman of the other race engine, and by others who saw Wood immediately before he started. When the train was ready to start from the race course, I cautioned him and ordered him to proceed slowly until he was fairly upon the train line; and it appears he did proceed with due caution up to the time of the accident. Had he been in a state of intoxication at the time I spoke to him it is not likely that it would have escaped my notice.

In answer to 2 and 3 also, respecting whether Wood assigned any reason to the fireman for leaving the engine, I beg to refer you to the statement of the fireman, from which it appears that Wood, immediately after starting the engine at Newton, requested Knight to take care of it while he went to the first carriage; Knight cautioned him, and said that everything being wet his foot might slip, and that he had better not try, or something to that effect.

This was all that passed between them; Knight did not know why Wood wished to get to the carriages, nor did he ask him the reason. His farther movements were not particularly observed by Knight, who says that had Wood exhibited any signs of intoxication he would have taken care to prevent his attempting to leave the tender. Question 4—William Wood was 29 years of age at the time the accident happened, and had been an engineman on this line from the 26th March, 1837. E. Knight, fireman to W. Wood at the time the accident occurred, is 22 years of age, and has been fireman on this line since 19th July, 1839. Question 5—In the code of rules and regulations given to each of the enginemen and firemen, it is ordered, Rule 1st, line 6th, that "every engineman and every fireman shall stand up and keep a good look out all the time the engine is in motion, except as to such fireman only when he shall be otherwise engaged about his other duties on the engine or tender."

This is, I think, sufficiently to the point, and clearly shows that Wood acted contrary to orders, by leaving the engine and tender at the time and in the manner he did.

As regards reporting irregularities, it is the duty of every servant of the Company to report to the proper authorities misconduct on the part of any other servant, whether that misconduct may be productive of any accident or not.

Any further explanation you may deem necessary I shall be glad to give.

I am, &amp;c.

GEORGE SCOTT.

H. Booth, Esq.  
&c. &c.

EMANUEL KNIGHT.

I WAS fireman to William Wood on Friday, June 18, when he met with the accident which occasioned his death; I observed him when we started from the race course, and at that time he appeared to be quite sober. He did his duty and worked his engine up to the time of the accident with his usual care.

Shortly after the train started from Newton, and before the engine had acquired much speed, he requested me to look to the engine while he went to the first carriage; I said he "had much better stop, as every thing being wet he might very easily slip." I did not pay particular attention to his movements after this, nor did I observe him leave the tender; I saw him in the act of returning from the coach to the tender, and I also saw him fall. Had he not appeared to me to be sober, I would have prevented his leaving the tender.

(Signed) EMANUEL KNIGHT.  
Witness, GEORGE SCOTT.

No. 8.

NORTH UNION RAILWAY.

North Union.

REPORT of Lieut.-Colonel Sir Frederic Smith on the Accidents of the 7th instant.

MY LORD,

Preston, 18th September, 1841.

YOUR Lordship's instructions of the 13th instant having directed me to report on the two accidents which happened on the North Union Railway on the 7th instant, I have carefully inquired into the circumstances, and I have the honour of laying before your Lordship the following details respecting them.

The first accident was that at the Euxton station, where the road from Chorley to Eccleston and Southport crosses the North Union Railway on a level.

At this point a train of empty coal waggons, belonging to a Mr. Pearson, and drawn by the Asa locomotive engine, came into collision with the Chorley and Southport stage coach, when on its journey to the latter place. The coal waggons were proceeding from Preston to the Springfield colliery at Ince, near Wigan. There were several passengers by the coach, and, according to the return furnished to your Lordship's department by Captain Chapman, the secretary to the North Union Railway, it appears that one of them was killed and six were injured. The return also specifies that the driver and another servant of the coach proprietors were severely hurt, and that Thomas Nickson, the gate-keeper of the Euxton station, had received such injury in his left leg as to render its amputation necessary.