SIR,

I have the honour to acquaint you for the information of the Lords of Committee of Privy Council for Trade that I have inquired into the circumstances attending an accident that occurred to a train near Staleybridge, on the Manchester and Huddersfield section of the London and North Western Railway on the 10th inst.

The train was the 4 p.m. up train from Leeds; it consisted of engine and tender, guards van, three passenger carriages, one horse box, and one passenger carriage, ranged in the order of enumeration; after passing the Mossley station about one mile the leading wheel of the engine mounted the rail on the near side, ran along the top of it some distance and then fell off: in this way the engine ran a distance of 386 yards, breaking as it went about 400 chairs; it then ran into the bank on the same side, pitched on to its right side across the up line, throwing at the same time the tender and van on their right side across the down line, and materially injuring the two following carriages: all the carriages remained on the rails except the one next the van. The part of the line which presented the first indications of the engine being off the rails was a little beyond the centre of an S curve; at a joint chair the meeting rail had the mark of a blow and a scar along the top for some distance, which had every appearance of being produced by the flanch of the wheel; it is conjectured that the wooden key had dropped out; if this was the case, it would be sufficient to account for the accident, as the engine went off on the convex side of the curve, and the late long drought would require very great vigilance to keep the keys tight. If the accident arose from this cause, the question immediately suggests itself, would the accident have occurred had the rails been fished as is very generally the case throughout the London and North Western lines? Certainly not. There can be no doubt that the practice of fishing the rails, which is becoming very general, is a great element of safety, and the principle cannot be too much encouraged.

The engineer of the permanent way informed me that it was under the consideration of the Company to fish the rails on all the curves of this line. I would hope that they will not stop there, but extend the system to the straight portion as well.

I have, &c.

Geo. Wynne,

The Secretary of the
Railway Department, Board of Trade.

CHESTER AND HOLYHEAD RAILWAY.

SIR,

I am directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you the enclosed copy of a report which they have received from their Inspecting Officer on the accident which occurred on the 10th ultimo near the Penmaenmawr Station, on the Chester and Holyhead Railway.

It would appear from the report that this accident was due partly to the insufficiency of the distant signal at a goods siding, and partly to the goods train having been stopped at the siding for the purpose of shunting some wagons within ten minutes of the expected arrival of a passenger train, and that this short interval of time between the trains at this siding arose from a discussion which took place between the goods foreman at Conway and the breaksman of the goods train, which lasted for an hour and ten minutes, and would appear to have been occasioned either by verbal orders only having been given to the breaksman of the goods train by the goods manager at Chester, or to the want of a proper understanding among the Company's servants respecting the conduct of the goods train.

My Lords direct me to request you to call the circumstances of this case to the particular attention of the directors of the Company, in order that they may carefully consider what steps should be adopted to prevent a recurrence of a similar accident.

I am, &c.

Douglas Galton,

Captain Royal Engineers.
SIR,

In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 13th instant, 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 that attended the accident which occurred on the 10th instant, near the Penmaenmawr Station of the Chester and Holyhead Railway.

The Penmaenmawr Station is about fifty miles from Chester, and nine and a half miles to the east of Bangor; and at three quarters of a mile westward from Penmaenmawr, there is a siding, called Wright's siding, used for the sett stones which are quarried in a neighbouring mountain. A goods train, which started from Chester at 1.15 P.M. on the 10th instant, arrived at Wright's siding at 6.12 P.M.; and in obedience to the instructions of the breaksman, the driver shunted six waggons to the up line, and then returned to the down line to the head of his train, whilst these waggons were being pushed by the breaksman and one of Mr. Wright's servants, towards the siding. The gradient of the railway descends towards the siding, at the rate of 1 in 100; but before these men could get the waggons off the main line, the up passenger train leaving Bangor at 6. P.M., ran into them, and one passenger was slightly injured.

Wright's siding is furnished with a distant signal in each direction; that to the west being worked by wires 800 yards in length, and not being visible from the signal lever from which it is worked; the signals were not placed under the charge of any servant of the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company, but were under the control of the agent of the proprietors of the quarry, by whom a carpenter was appointed, to render assistance when trains had waggons to leave at the siding, and to work the points and signals. It appears, however, that these latter duties were more frequently performed by the breaksman of the trains, than by this man.

The goods train was one hour and nine minutes late in arriving at Wright's siding, in consequence of a want of proper understanding between some of the servants of the Company. It seems that the head clerk of the goods manager at Chester, had verbally instructed the breaksman, before he left Chester, not to take any waggons from Conway to the Pendyffryn siding, which is about three and a quarter miles to the west of Conway; but that when the goods train arrived at Conway, the goods foreman of that station would not admit the force of any other than written instructions, and ordered the breaksman to take three waggons on to Pendyffryn. The breaksman said he would not take on the trucks, unless the goods foreman would let him have a man with a flag to protect his train; but this request was not acceded to, and the train was kept waiting for an hour and ten minutes at Conway, whilst the dispute was going on. At last, the goods foreman of Conway threatened to send another man in the place of the breaksman, if he did not start within ten minutes; and the breaksman was thus induced to yield. This dispute might perhaps have been avoided, if the clerk at Chester had delivered written, instead of verbal instructions to the breaksman, but the part taken in it by the goods foreman at Conway, appears to have been but little to his credit.

The goods train arrived, as before stated, at Wright's siding, at 6:12; and the breaksman considered that he had sufficient time to get his waggons into the siding, before the arrival of the passenger train, which was due at Penmaenmawr station at 6:22; but this station is three quarters of a mile to the west of the siding, and the passenger train came into collision with the waggons at 6:18, or 6.19. Before slenting the train, the breaksman was seen to work the signal lever for the purpose of setting the up line distant signal at "danger;" but it does not seem to have shown danger when the passenger train passed it; and, upon examination afterwards, by the servants of both trains, it appears that the arm of the signal would not answer at all, to the motions of the lever. The inspector of permanent way, and another man who tried it three quarters of an hour afterwards, state, however, that it worked then, though not as well as it ought to have done. The driver of the passenger train was not able to discern the waggons until he was very near to them, because they were in a short tunnel; and only shut off his steam, reversed his engine, and whistled for the breaks, in consequence of a signal which he received from the driver of the goods engine, who saw him advancing to the spot with his steam on.
This accident appears to be principally attributable,
1. To the unpunctuality of the goods train.
2. To the inefficiency of the distant signal.
3. To the shunting of the goods train too near to the time of arrival of the
passenger train.

And I would beg to suggest the following measures for the consideration of
the Company:—
1. That better signal arrangements should be adopted for the protection of
Wright's siding from the west.
2. That Wright's siding should be placed in charge of a signal-man in the
service of the company.
3. That this man should be instructed not to allow any shunting operations
to be performed at the siding, within such a number of minutes as it may be
considered safe to fix, before the expected arrival of a train.

I have, &c.,
H. W. TYLER,
The Secretary of the
Railway Department, Board of Trade.

Chester and Holyhead Railway,

SIR,
Secretary's Office, Chester, May 2, 1854.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your communication of yesterday's date,
enclosing copy of Captain Tyler's report on the late accident near Penmaenmawr
Station, and will lay them before my directors at the next meeting.

Pending a meeting of my Board, arrangements have been made in accordance
with Captain Tyler's report to prevent the recurrence of any similar accident.

I have &c.,
ROBERT S. MANSEL,
Secretary.

MANCHESTER, SHEFFIELD, AND LINCOLNSHIRE RAILWAY.

Railway Department, Board of Trade, Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway.

SIR,
I have been directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for
Trade to transmit to you the enclosed copy of a report which they have
received from their Inspecting Officer upon the accident which occurred at the
Clarborough tunnel on the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway, on
the 11th ultimo, in consequence of a goods train belonging to the Manchester,
Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company having run into a coal train
belonging to the Great Northern Railway Company.

My Lords direct me to request you to lay this report before the directors
for their consideration, and they trust that the directors will lose no time in
establishing such a system of working at this tunnel as shall prevent one train
from entering the tunnel until the preceding train on the same line of rails shall
have passed out of it.

I have, &c.,
DOUGLAS GALTON,
Captain Royal Engineers.

The Secretary of the
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company.