SIR,

I am directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, to be laid before the Directors of the Great Western Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Tyler, R.E., the officer appointed by them to inquire into the circumstances connected with the serious accident that occurred to an excursion train, on the 7th instant, near the Rednal Station on the Great Western Railway, and to express the hope of their Lordships that the recommendations contained in the inspecting officer's report will receive the careful consideration of the Directors.

I am, &c.

The Secretary of the Great Western Railway Company.

JAMES BOOTHE.

Board of Trade (Railway Department), Whitehall, 17th June 1865.

SIR,

In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 8th 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 connected with the accident that occurred on the 7th instant, near the Rednal Station on the Great Western Railway, and to express the hope of their Lordships that the recommendations contained in the inspecting officer's report will receive the careful consideration of the Directors.

I am, &c.

The Secretary of the Great Western Railway Company.

Board of Trade (Railway Department), Whitehall.

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The Secretary of the Great Western Railway Company.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

The driver of the leading engine, Anderton, did not observe this flag; but the driver of the second engine, Evans, happened to move to the left side of his engine as he approached it, and caught its eye.

He shut off his steam, his mate applied the tender break, and he "touched his whistle" to attract Anderton's attention. He thought Anderton noticed it when he saw him shut off his steam. But Anderton, who has since died, has, in his dying declaration, attributed the accident to the neglect of the platelayers in not receiving the careful consideration of the Directors.

I am, &c.

W. XOLAND.

Whitehall.

SIR, Whitehall, 17th June 1865.

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The Secretary of the Great Western Railway Company.

Whitehall.
framing, and were 24 ins. in diameter, with a stroke of 24 inches. The tyres of the leading wheels were much marked and indented, in consequence, evidently, of their having run for a very considerable distance over the chairs after leaving the rails. The driving and trailing wheels were slightly marked in a similar way.

I had this engine lifted, and its leading wheels taken from under it; and I found upon examination that the right leading wheel had, upon the journals of the axle, been in good order, and that the axle-boxes worked freely in the horn-plates. The leading wheels were about 3/4 of an inch out of gauge on opposite sides, showing that the axle was slightly bent, which was no doubt a result of the accident. I also had all the springs taken to pieces, and found that the top plates of that spring were freshly broken, and one of the driving wheels was knocked off the engine altogether, but the others were in or near their places, though they were more or less thrown out of their proper positions. I had them all taken to pieces, and found that the top plate of the right leading spring was freshly broken about 10 ins. from the end, the short portion remaining on the engine, as well as that the fourth and seventh plates of that spring were freshly broken, about half of the latter fracture having been an old flaw. The left leading and left driving springs were sound. The upper plate of the right driving spring was freshly broken about 5 ins. from the end, and the two middle and 13th plates of that spring were half broken. The trailing springs were both sound. Of the inside driving springs, that on the right was sound, and that on the left had one plate freshly broken. These springs had evidently been in good working order before the accident.

The permanent way is of a substantial description. It has double-headed rails, in lengths of 21 or 23 feet, weighing 80 lbs. to the linear yard, and firmly set in their shoes. The chairs weigh about 35 lbs. each, and rest upon good sound sleepers, about 9 feet long by 10" x 5", placed on the average rather less than the centres, and even after its leading wheels were broken off, the chairs were not thrown out of their proper places, the chairs being fastened to the sleepers by tang-bolts, which is the strongest mode of attachment.

The first disturbance of the permanent way was about 1,100 yards from the caution flag before referred to; and at this point, where a chair was fractured under the right rail, the leading wheels of No. 5. engine had dropped off the line to the left. The engine traveled for about 600 yards in this condition, without many of its other wheels leaving the rails; and for that distance, neither the second engine (No. 72.), nor any of the carriages, were thrown off the line, although the permanent way was much damaged, and some of the rails were bent. A large proportion of the chairs were marked, chipped, cracked, or broken; the outer jaws of many of the chairs were broken off on the right, from the lateral pressure of the right leading wheel of No. 5. engine, as its right side grazed along the outside edge of the rail, and many of the keys on the inside of the right rail were crumpled by the wheels on it. The whole of the carriages, as well as the engines, came to a stop against the Rednal Junction on this occasion if the permanent way had been in proper order; and even after its leading wheels left the rails, it would not have turned to the left so suddenly but for the circumstance of its meeting with the check rails and siding rail at the Rednal Junction.

One reason why the accident was so fatal in its results is to be found in the sudden way in which the carriages were brought to a stand, in consequence of the line having been obstructed by the tender of the leading engine; but another and more important reason was a want of sufficient break-power in the train.

There were only in this case, as I have stated, two guards and break-vans to 32 carriages, besides the breaks on the tenders—a proportion which is quite insufficient for a reasonable degree of safety on any gradient, and which was especially so on gradients such as this train had to descend, the steepest having been 1 in 60 in the valley of the Calne, which combined its break in obedience to a whistle from one of the engines; and the other, who did not hear the engine-whistle, when he found his van bumping over the rails after the permanent way had been disturbed by the front wheels of the leading engine. It frequently
happens in cases of accident that the amount of break-power upon a train makes all the difference of life or death to the passengers. In this particular instance, there was (leaving the 1,100 yards from the green flag to where the platelayers were working out of the question) a clear 600 yards for the application of break-power after the leading engine left the rails with two of its wheels. And a sufficient amount of break-power applied to the carriages over that distance would have caused them to act as a drag upon the engines instead of forcing them forward, and have so far reduced the speed that the great destruction of carriages which took place would have been prevented, and probably no lives would have been lost, when the carriages were finally brought to a stand.

Having reference to the present accident, as well as to that which has recently occurred with such lamentable results on another railway, I would observe, in conclusion, that whenever it is necessary, in consequence of an alteration in the permanent way of a railway, or from any other cause, to warn the engine-driver of a train at a point where there are no fixed signals, it is desirable that explosive (commonly called fog) signals should invariably be employed in addition to those hand signals—flags by day and lamps by night— which are too frequently used alone on such occasions. An engine-driver, properly acquainted with the line on which he is running, knows where the fixed signals are situated, and exactly the points at which he ought to look for them; and he is less liable to miss seeing those signals: but he is not, though he ought always to be on the look-out, so sure to catch sight of an unexpected flag or lamp at the proper moment. Travelling at high speed, perhaps at 30, perhaps even at 60 miles an hour, or, in other words, at from half a mile to a mile in a minute, he may, during a glance at his fire, or his gauges, or at some portion of the machinery of his engine, omit to observe a flag at the side of the line, or a man in front of him at a point where he would not expect to find the permanent way obstructed.

The servants of a company in charge of the permanent way may be compelled to replace damaged or broken materials at any moment, in order to secure the safety of the traffic; but it is incumbent upon them, under the printed rules which are in force upon the different railways, to exhibit a warning signal when the line is not safe for traffic at the speed ordinarily employed, not only to a train that may be expected, but also to any train that may approach them without notice. It is necessary, for the reasons above given, that they should, in doing so, appeal, by the use of explosive signals, to the sense of hearing as well as to the sense of sight of the engine-drivers, in order to ensure their obeying a signal thus made to them on a part of the line where they may not expect to find it.

I have, &c.

H. W. TYLER,
Capt. R.E.

The Secretary
Board of Trade,
Whitehall.

SOUTHEASTERN RAILWAY.

Board of Trade
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 22nd June 1865.

Sir, I am directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, to be laid before the Directors of the South-Eastern Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Rich, R.E., the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into the circumstances connected with the accident which occurred, on the 9th instant, to the tidal passenger train near Staplehurst on the South-Eastern Railway.

My Lords trust that the Directors will give the recommendations contained in Captain Rich's report their careful consideration.

I am, &c.

The Secretary of the
South-Eastern
Railway Company.

Sir, Dulwich, 21st June 1865.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 10th 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 which attended the lamentable accident that occurred on the 9th instant, near Staplehurst station, on the South-Eastern railway, by which 10 persons were killed and 40 others injured, some of them very seriously.

It appears that a gang of 4 carpenters, 1 labourer, and 3 platelayers, all of whom worked under the direction of the foreman, and who had been employed for the last 8 or 10 weeks in taking out and renewing the longitudinal timbers that carry the rails on three viaducts, situated to the east of Staplehurst Station.

It was deemed expedient to execute these repairs during the intervals when the line would not be required for passenger traffic, rather than stop the traffic on one line, and turn the whole traffic over a single line. The repairs, executed as they were one length at a time, (the new work always being fitted, ready for inserting, before the rail was disturbed,) could have been executed easily and safely, at properly selected intervals.

As the banks had to be fitted ready for inserting before disturbing the road, it was desirable and necessary for the man on the spot who was in charge of the work to select these intervals. The platelayer or foreman of the gang, under whose orders all the carpenters and other platelayers were working, was that person. He bears the character of being a very steady and intelligent man, has been employed by the South-Eastern Railway Company 10 years, and has acted for 2 years and 10 months as foreman of platelayers on the two miles of road where the repairs were being executed.

His daily presence on this length of road must have given him a thorough knowledge of the times when all trains were due, except the tidal train; and he must have been equally aware that the time when the tidal train passed was always changing. The time service table that was furnished to him, that he had in his possession, and was seen to refer to, on the morning of the unfortunate calamity, afforded him the necessary information as to the time the tidal train would pass.

When at breakfast on the morning of the 9th inst. he informed some of the men sitting near him that the tidal train would not pass till 5.20 p.m. that day. He had the time service book in his hand at the time, and was seen to refer to it, but he mistook the time: the tidal train would be due at Healdon on the 10th June, for the time that it was due on the 9th, and read the time as 5.20 p.m. instead of 3.15 p.m., about which time it arrived.

The leading carpenter was also supplied with a time service book, but it had been cut in two, by a wheel passing over it, and as he was working under the orders of the foreman of platelayers, who had a