

break-van with the second guard. A composite carriage, a parcels van, and an empty horse-box were attached to the rear portion of this train at Tebay, to be taken on to Shap.

The London and North-Western Railway between Tebay and Clifton stations is at present worked on the permissive block system; arrangements are now being made to work this part of the line on the absolute block, as soon as the necessary signals can be erected.

In accordance with the rules of the permissive block system the signalman at Shap Summit should have given a caution signal to the driver of the passenger train, and the man on duty at Shap Summit stated that he did so, by means of his semaphore signal as well as by holding out a green flag to the engine-driver of the passenger train as the latter passed. The engine-driver and fireman of the passenger train stated that they did not see any caution signal exhibited at Shap Summit, but that on the contrary, the semaphore signal was at "all right" as they passed, and that they saw the signalman at the window of the signal-cabin, but that he did not show them a green flag.

The line from Shap Summit to near Shap station falls on a gradient of 1 in 100 and 1 in 125; the down distant-signal is about 800 yards to the south of the station, and it can be seen for about a mile before it is reached. The signalman at Shap station had moved the levers that work the signals, so as to place his signals at danger to protect the goods train which was standing at the station, but it was snowing heavily at the time and he could not see his down distant-signal, which did not work, owing to the semaphore arm having got jammed by the snow. This signal was consequently showing "all right" as the engine-driver of the passenger train passed it, and this man did not see the goods train which was on the road in front of him until he got within about 100 yards of it. Steam was shut off at the time, as the passenger train was timed to stop at Shap station, and the engine-driver on seeing the goods train, reversed his engine, put on steam, whistled for the guard's breaks, and the fireman applied the tender break, but the passenger train was not stopped before it ran into the goods train, at a speed of about 10 miles an hour. Five waggons and the guard's van of the goods train were knocked off the rails, and four of them were damaged. The engine and tender of the passenger train were thrown off the rails and damaged, and the guard's van and composite carriage next to it were also slightly damaged, but did not leave the rails. One passenger is reported to have been shaken.

This accident was caused by the down distant-signal at Shap station having become clogged with snow, and consequently not flying to danger when it was worked by the signalman at Shap station.

There is a discrepancy between the evidence of the signalman at Shap station and the evidence of the man on duty at Shap Summit. The latter stated that he gave the "be ready" signal to the man at Shap station as soon as he received it from Scout Green,

which is a telegraph station about two miles and a half to the south of Shap Summit, but the man on duty at Shap station stated that he did not receive such a signal, and that the first intimation he had of the approach of the passenger train was the telegraph that it had passed Shap Summit. There appears to be some misunderstanding by the station-master and other men employed at Shap station as to whether they should receive notice when passenger trains that are due to stop at Shap station pass Scout Green, or whether such intimation is only required to be sent for fast passenger trains which are not due to stop at Shap station.

When the absolute block system is adopted, no two trains will be allowed to be in the interval between two block stations at the same time, but until that system can be adopted, it would appear desirable, that the signalmen at Shap station should receive notice of all trains as soon as they have passed Scout Green.

The rules of the London and North-Western Railway Company provide that the stations should be kept clear for ten minutes before the arrival of a passenger train, but as this rule is not enforced it is the more necessary that stations like Shap, when blocked by goods trains, should receive the earliest possible intimation of the approach of passenger trains.

The goods train in question should have been shunted at Shap Summit, instead of proceeding to Shap station, where there was no siding of sufficient length to allow it to be placed clear of the passenger lines. The station-master at Shap station was not aware of the arrival of the goods train until he saw the engine of that train pulling it through the station, with the object of getting it out of the way of the passenger train.

I think the station-master should have been informed of the arrival of the goods train, particularly as the passenger train was over-due at the time. If he had been informed the moment the goods train arrived, he should have decided at once what to do with it, and he should not have allowed the shunting operations to be commenced.

Station-masters should, in my opinion, take measures to keep themselves informed of all that goes on at their stations. They should be held responsible for the proper carrying out of the rules and regulations of the company, and that all persons at their stations act in conformity with the company's instructions and in obedience to their orders. If such had been the case at Shap, the doubtful interpretation of the rules for the telegraph signalling of the trains, which has existed at that station, would not have occurred. The station-master would have instructed all those persons at the station who are under his orders, how they should have acted, in order to carry out the instructions which are issued by the company, and he would then have felt himself responsible that the men at the station had complied with their orders.

I have, &c.,

*The Secretary,
(Railway Department),
Board of Trade.*

F. H. Rieu,
Colonel R.E.