

EAST AFR. PROT
3877

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C. O.
3877
REC
FEB 13 1913

Belfast 11
1913
8 Jan.
Last previous Paper
1920

Death of Guard Plummer

Confirms tel 7 Jan. & sends report of inquiry into Railway accident which resulted in Plummer's death

~~Mr. [unclear]~~ Sir J. Fuller noted 11/5

Do not think that we need pursue this matter. The local enquiry appears to have heard of what really happened & the attention in the notes ought to have the effect of preventing a recurrence of ^{an} ~~the~~ accident of this kind.

Put by

Put by

6/5

2/27

5/2/13

Notes L.P.R

12/2/10

4/2/10

6/11

Blaine P.

10/11, W1 20 897-24
11/12 A&E.W

Subsequent Paper

9/22/14

C.O.
3877

REC'D
FEB 13 1913

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

January 8th, 1913.

33

No. 11.

SIR,

*u
gpc*

I have the honour to confirm my telegram of the 7th instant which reads as follows:-

"Regret to report Guard Planner, from South Africa, engaged locally on Uganda Railway, killed in accident on December 22nd. Report follows".

Proceedings of Joint Enquiry.

2. I regret to report this accident and the consequent loss of life, but I agree with the finding of the Joint Enquiry, copies of the proceedings of which are forwarded herewith, that the fault lay with the guard who was killed.

3. I have further the honour to inform you that I have approved the alteration of the rules recommended.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your humble, obedient servant,

H. E. Woodhouse

GOVERNOR.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LEWIS HARCOURT, P.C., M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
DOWNING STREET,
LONDON, S.W.

REC'D FEB 3

11 Jan 8 1915

I accept the finding of the Joint Enquiry. It is obvious by the timings given that the accident was not caused by a bump from the Engine whilst uncoupling and was due to the Guard not carrying out the procedure as laid down in the Working Rules.

The train did not back to a suitable grading for cutting off, the wheels were not spragged and the hand brakes were not properly applied. The Guard who was solely to blame had his excuse for not backing, in the interest of the Railway working he wished to lose no more time, and he did not sprag the wheels as there was no timber available on the tender. This should have shown him the absolute necessity for backing to a level place.

The procedure of cutting off a portion of a train and leaving it unattached to an engine on the main line is contrary to usual Railway practice but has been regularized on the Uganda Railway and rules made to safe-guard the working. But the human element comes in and defeats all rules. It is therefore desirable that this procedure should be adopted as seldom as possible and when there be sufficient engine power on the Railway to properly work the traffic this procedure of cutting off trucks on the main line should cease.

It is essential the Guard be in a position to obtain sprags easily and there should be four in each
brake

brake van so disposed that they can readily be got at for service when required.

I agree to the alteration in the wording of the Rule so as to make the Guard absolutely responsible to see that the train be backed to a suitable spot.

In future whenever a train is so divided a telegraph report must be forwarded from the first station to the Traffic Manager with copy to Manager giving the particular reason for having to cut off load on the road.

sd. H. B. Taylor

General Manager,

Uganda Railway.

4-1-1913.

Minutes of Joint Enquiry into derailment
of a portion of 9 Up Goods of the 22nd December
near Kikuyu Station.

Enquiry held at Nairobi on December 23rd
at 16/30 hours.

COMMITTEE.

Mr. A. E. Church, Supdt. Way and Works (Chairman)

▪ G. A. Stanley, Traffic Manager.

▪ W. E. Nevill, Loco Supdt.

Mr. Taylor, Asst. Dist. Supdt. of Police was present.

Witnesses Examined.

1. Mr. Kay Mousti.
2. Police Inspector Bellier.
3. Ganpat Ram, S.M. Bamoru.
4. Girja Shanker, S.M. Kikuyu.
5. Guard Ryan.
6. Trolley boy Katika.
7. Mr. Michel, Loco Foreman, Nairobi.
8. Fireman Mahamed Khan.
9. Driver Zahoor Mahomed.

History of the Case.

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REC'D
FEB 3 1913

No. 9 Up Goods left Kikuyu on the 22nd December at 20/30 hours having attached a W.T. in addition to the load brought from Nairobi.

The Train encountered considerable difficulty in getting as far as mile 346 where after repeated attempts had been made to negotiate the grade, it was decided to part the train and take it on to Lamuru in two portions.

This was done the engine taking forward the water tank and 2 bogies.

The rear portion ran back and gathering speed wrecked itself on the curve at the entrance to Kikuyu Station.

The Guard named P. Plummer and an Indian Sweeper named of the Engineering Staff were killed. The Brake Van was demolished and very considerable damage done to 4 covered ^{goods} and one open bogie which was completely capsized.

Mr. E. W. Kay Mouatz of Kikuyu stated:-

I was going down to Nairobi by the Down Goods on the night of the 22nd instant. My house is two miles on the Lamoru side of Kikuyu and near the line.

I heard ~~of~~ a train going up she passed the house at 21/15, she was stopping a good deal.

I heard a Down train goin by at 22/45, this was the runaway.

The train was travelling at excessive speed.

I then rode to the Station and arrived there about 22/55 and found two trucks off the rails.

It was dark. There was no mist.

I went straight to the Station Master's office, hung my mule up, and went into the Station Master's office and told him some trucks had been derailed; he came out with me together with his Assistant.

I went round the wreckage with an Indian with a lamp. The . . . returned to the Station to telegraph. I found the brake Van right down the bank, so started to look for the guard. I saw him pinned under a covered good wagon.

The guard was then dead. Dr. Arthur who turned up about half an hour later said he must have been killed instantly.

The guard was under the 1th truck from the Van. I cannot say what the position of the

Westinghouse brake cock was.

The brakes were hard on on the wagon that covered the guard, also on the last wagon. I noticed no smell such as would lead one to judge the brakes were hot when the train was running.

sd. E. W. K. M.

A. P. Church.

It was over half an hour after I got to Kikuyu that the engine of the train arrived on the scene.

E. W. K. M.

A. P. C.

Asst. Police Inspector W. Hellyer of Kikuyu
stated:-

I was called ^{at} about 23 hours on the 22nd and was told an accident had occurred near Kikuyu station. I at once went there and saw Mr. Kay Mout. He pointed out the body of the guard which was lying partly under the truck. I then looked to see if there were any more people in the smash.

We found the turban of an Indian close to the accident but could not find any body.

When I went to the accident I took a sergeant and 2 men with me. I mounted a guard over the accident before doing anything else. As we could find no other body ~~XXXXXXXX~~ I sent a sergeant to look along the line but found no trace. I then saw that everyone was horrified of the occurrence and pondered what assistance I could until daybreak. On looking round the wreck I noticed that the hook of the coupling on the end vehicle was hooked on to the Westinghouse pipe.

I collected what small bags I could and handed them to the station master.

I made searching enquiries as to whether the accident had been caused by any criminal offence such as anyone having attempted to wreck it.

I took a statement from the driver which read as follows:-

"I was Driver of 9 Up Goods train, about

20/30 I left Kikuyn station and proceeded to mile 346 and then found I could not proceed further with the load. I then stopped the train and uncoupled 4 trucks and the Brake Van and proceeded to Limoru with 2 trucks. I left the 4 trucks and Brake Van stationary with all brakes down, and after leaving the 2 trucks at Limoru I returned to fetch the other 4 trucks and Brake Van and found they had gone and later I heard of the accident".

The wheels were not hot if there was there any smell of hot metal. I took hold of the brake blocks on some wagons, they were not so warm as to attract attention.

I left about 6 a.m. P. Nelson, Traffic Inspector told me then that they had found the body of an Indian under a truck of timber.

There was no smell of liquor about the guard's body. I saw the body of the Indian before leaving.

Sd. H. Bellier.

Sd. A. P. Church.

Ganpat Ram, Station Master, Dimora, Pay Rs.100/-.

12 years service on the Uganda Railway.

9 Up goods left Kikuyu at 20/30. I was not on duty when Up engine arrived but my Assistant took her arrival at 22/45 and she left to go back for the remainder of the load at 22/50.

sd. Ganpat Ram, S. K. DIMORA.

sd. A. P. CHURCH

Girja Shanker Damodar, Station Master, Kikuyu.

Pay Rs.100/- 12 years service ~~is~~ stated:-

9 UP GOODS of the 2nd left Kikuyu at 20/30. The first ~~part~~ of the accident was when Mr. Ray Mount came and told me about 22/50. I then gave message to Limuru not to start ~~down~~ and while I was doing so Limuru told me that engine of 9 Up had gone back for remainder of its load.

The engine arrived back at Kikuyu at about 23/50. I asked the Driver what had happened. He said he parted his train at mile 34B and took part into Limuru and then came back for the remainder.

He said the brakes were put down on the portion left ~~on~~ the line.

sd. Girjashanker D. Shorkal,

S. Kikuyu.

Guard H. Ryan. 9 months service. Pay Rs. 120. European.

I was on S down of the 12nd instant coming to Nairobi on transfer.

The engine of 9 Up arrived at Limuru about a quarter to eleven.

On arrival the Driver of S down told the 9 Up driver the brakes on his engine seemed to be binding.

The Driver of 9 Up seemed rather nervous or excited when I saw him.

He was in the Station about 10 minutes and then went back for the remainder of his load. While he was at the Station we hammered at the brake blocks on his engine to release them.

When the Driver of 9 Up came back to Limuru after the accident he said he had wished to push the train back to Mwikuyu but the Guard said he was an old hand and knew what to do and to part the train and take half into station.

H. Ryan

G.I.

H. Church.

Katika. Trolley boy of Mr. Hearne, called:-

I was travelling to Escarpment by 9 Up on the 22nd instant.

The train went ~~very~~ slowly, after a time the train stopped. The Guard got out also Driver. They made a shauri and then decided to cut the train and take half into Limoru. I went to Limoru on the engine. The Driver put pieces of fuel from the engine in the wheels and put down the brakes.

I rode on the engine all the time.

The Guard was standing alongside but did not himself put down ~~the~~ brakes.

The engine went straight ahead when it ~~started~~ started and did not bump ^{back} into the train.

sd. A. F. Church.

On the said instant I received the message regarding the accident at 9/30. I got on the miller train and reached Kilmora at 11/30. The engine of 3 Up was a British engine on transfer to Kilmora. The engine and Driver arrived at Kilmora the day before. The Driver had had full rest before going out with 3 Up.

The engine was not touched here as she was not broken for any repairs, so far as I know. The Driver had worked on the Kilmora-Kilmara section before and was well acquainted with the road.

I examined the brakes on the derailed vehicle the position of the handle of the Van Hand brake above the wheels was correct hand on.

To the best of my knowledge the Westinghouse brake cast on the leading vehicle was closed and the pipe on the head. I should say from my experience that the wheels had not been hand on while the train was running back. In my opinion, I consider the Westinghouse brake would leak off a stationary train in about half an hour.

The Driver was aware of the rules re parting his train to the best of my knowledge.

SD/- C. Michael

SD/- A.P. Church.

Driver Zahoor Mahomed, 8 years service on Uganda Railway. I was a Driver in India before coming here.

I was Driver of 9 Up Goods on the 22nd instant. On the way from Nairobi to Kikuyu we stopped twice. We arrived Kikuyu at 22/8 and left at 22/30. At Kikuyu I attached a water tank.

Between Kikuyu and Limuru we stopped owing to the train slipping. The Guard came to me and I suggested going back to Kikuyu and cutting off the water tank, but the Guard said "No, cut the train here and take a portion on to Limuru".

The Guard uncoupled with his own hand. Before we cut the train the hand brakes were set down. We did not stop the wheels because we had no fuel. We put ballast under the wheels.

The Westinghouse pipe was left full open. When I opened the regulator the engine went straight ahead. It did not go back at all.

I arrived Limuru at 22/45 and stayed there 5 minutes. I returned for the balance of my train, on approaching where I left it 3 fog signals exploded. After hearing the fog signals I sent my Fireman ahead with a lamp but there was no sign of a train. I know the rules regarding parting trains.

I drew the Guards attention to the steep grade but the Guard said. "Never mind, I know all about it there is another train waiting, cut the train and go into Limuru". What could I do.

I got written order from the Guard only a verbal one to go to Limuru and come back.

Sd/- Zahoor Mahomed.

Sd/- A.F. Church.

FINDING.

Seeing that No. 8 Up Goods left Kikuyu on the 22nd December at 20/30 and passed Mr. Kay Moutat's house at 21/15 it is evident that great difficulty was experienced in mounting the grade.

As the Driver arrived with the first portion at Limuru Station at 22/45 it may be assumed that he left the first portion at mile 248 at 22/25.

As the runaway passed Mr. Kay Moutat's at 22/40 we may again assume allowing for the high speed at which it was travelling that it started to run back at 22/30, which is 14 minutes after the engine left for Limuru with the first part and probably 20 to 25 minutes after the Westinghouse brake pipe was cut.

This precludes the possibility of the engine having started the rear portion by giving at a bump either before starting away for Limuru or after returning therefrom.

The Driver in his evidence states he wanted to go back to a level place in accordance with Subsidiary Rules to General Rule 77, but was overruled by the Guard. There is a level space of 400 ft. about a mile nearer Kikuyu.

We believe that the Westinghouse Brake pipe was opened fully but was not coupled up after the train had been parted and there was therefore no reserve of pressure to be applied from the Brake Van in case of need.

The hand brakes were dropped but no particular pressure applied to them and no attempt was made to sprag or block the wheels; this may be due to the fact that there was no fuel on the tender. It is well known that there is always a liability for any automatic brake to leak off after being fully applied and get maintained,

maintained, as a very small leak in the apparatus will admit of this. In our opinion this happened.

Seeing that such difficulty had been experienced in the run from Nairobi to Kikuyu the water tank should certainly not have been attached at Kikuyu in addition to the existing lead.

The accident was due to subsidiary rule to General Rule 77 (1) having been broken in two vital particulars:-

1. Not going back to a place where the guards did not exceed 1%.
2. Not spragging the wheels, which might easily have been done by using ballast under the wheels if fuel was not available.

The Guard being a European must be held responsible for this breach of Rules.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

To consider that Subsidiary Rule to General Rule 77(1) regarding uncoupling between Stations be amended to read as follows:-

"If the Driver finds he is unable to proceed with the lead he must inform the Guard of this fact, and the Guard must see that the train is backed until it reaches etc etc."

In view of the fact that the Railway is now at times using coal we consider 4 sprags should be fixed in each Brake Van to be ready for use at any time and the Guard be responsible for seeing they are there before starting out with a train.

(Sd) W.R. Nevill (Sd) G.A. Stanley (Sd) A.F. Church
Chairman.