



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND  
CIVIL AVIATION

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

REPORT ON THE COLLISION  
which occurred on  
25th August 1956 at  
FILEY HOLIDAY CAMP STATION  
in the  
NORTH EASTERN REGION  
BRITISH RAILWAYS

LONDON: HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE  
1956

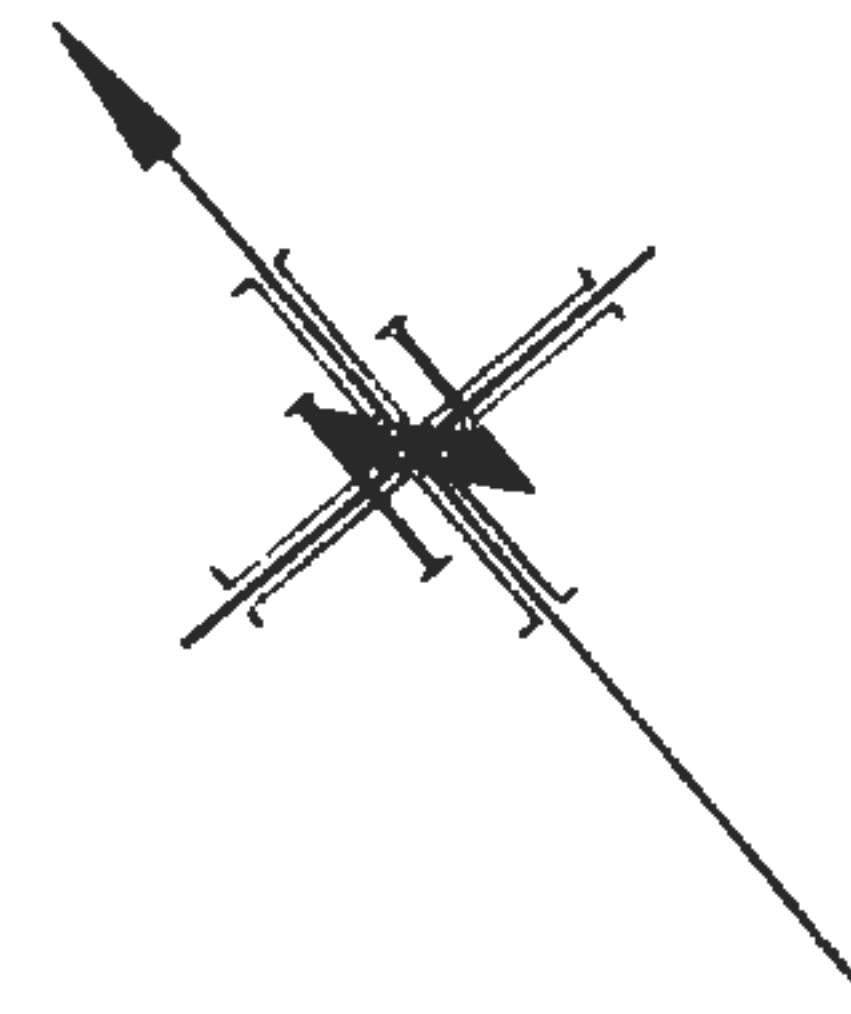
ONE SHILLING NET

To FILEY & SCARBOROUGH

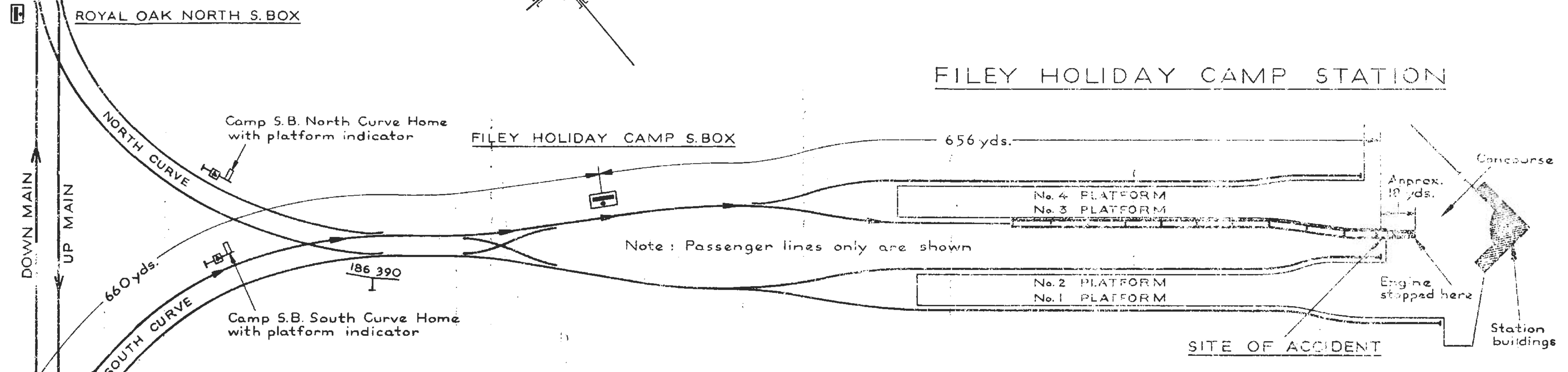
SITE PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

Route of train shown →

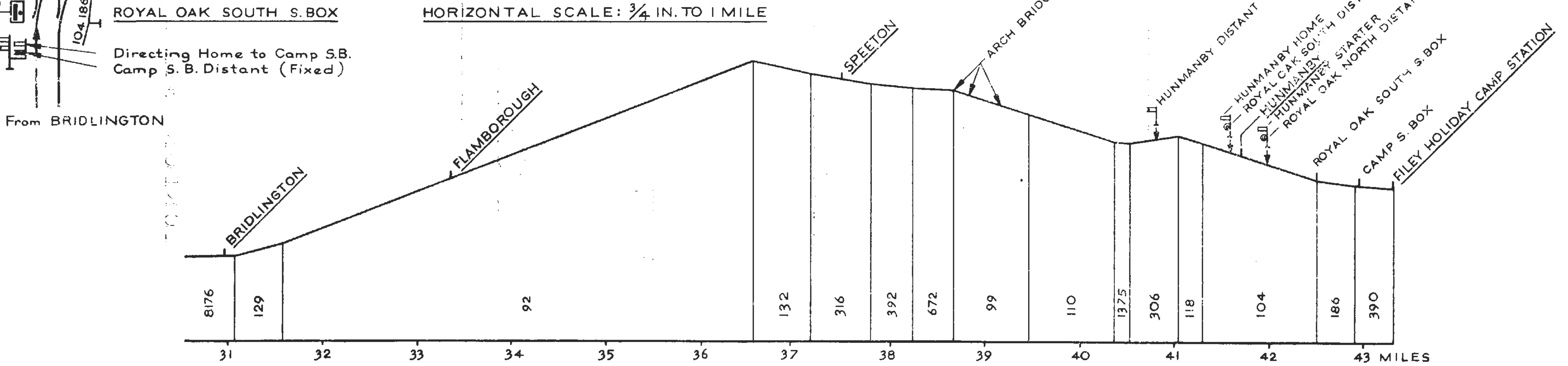


FILEY HOLIDAY CAMP STATION



GRADIENT PLAN

HORIZONTAL SCALE: 3/4 IN. TO 1 MILE



2nd October 1956.

SIR,

I have the honour to report for the information of the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, in accordance with the Order dated 30th August 1956, the result of my Inquiry into the buffer stop collision which occurred at about 7.42 a.m. on Saturday, 25th August 1956, at Filey Holiday Camp Station which lies just to the East of the coastal line between Bridlington and Scarborough, in the North Eastern Region, British Railways.

The 7.0 a.m. empty coaching stock train from Bridlington to Filey Holiday Camp Station left Bridlington with the vacuum brake operating only on the engine and tender and got out of control on the long falling gradient to the Camp station. The vacuum hose pipes had not been coupled between the tender and the coaches, and the brake had not been tested. The train struck the buffer stop at the Camp station at about 25 m.p.h., and the engine mounted the station concourse. The driver and fireman had left the engine before the impact and were slightly injured in falling; they were given medical attention in the Camp and later at Bridlington Hospital. Another member of the staff who was travelling on duty in the train received slight bruises.

The train comprised 10 bogie coaches including two with brake compartments which were third and ninth from the front, and it weighed 304 tons. With the brake vans in this position the marshalling was incorrect, and this matter is receiving attention. The train was hauled by a Class 6 M.T. engine with 2-6-0 wheel arrangement weighing, with its six-wheeled tender, 125 tons in working order. This class of engine is equipped with the vacuum brake and is driven from the right hand side; 57% of its weight, or 71 tons, is available as brake power. This was the only brake power and it represented no more than 16.7% of the total weight of the train which was 429 tons.

The engine stopped with the rear end of the tender above the point where the buffer stop had stood. A block of concrete weighing some five tons which formed the upper part of the stop was pushed forward on to the concourse under the front of the engine and it forced the pony wheels backwards against the coupled wheels with heavy damage to the pony truck frame. The main frames of the engine were splayed slightly outwards and the buffer beam was bent. "Flats" 4—5 ins. long were found on the tyres of all the coupled wheels and there were also some smaller skid marks on the tender wheels. The leading coach was heavily damaged, with the front end crushed against the tender, and the next four coaches also received some slight damage.

The train service was not seriously affected. The returning holiday-makers from the Camp, who were to have travelled to Derby in the train, were taken by road to Filey Station on the main line and accommodated in regular train services. The tool van was ordered from Dairycoates Motive Power Depot, Hull, without delay and arrived at 11.30 a.m. and the engine was rerailed at 4.30 p.m.

The weather was fine and the rails were dry.

#### DESCRIPTION

With reference to the sketch plan opposite, the double line between Bridlington and Scarborough runs roughly North and South close to the east coast, and Filey Holiday Camp Station lies at right angles to it and on the coast about 11½ miles north of Bridlington. The station has four platforms, and it has double line approaches from both the Scarborough and Bridlington directions, known as the North and South Curves. The junctions of these curves with the main line are controlled by two signal boxes known as Royal Oak North and Royal Oak South, and the junction of the curves and the entrance to the station is controlled from Filey Holiday Camp Station box.

In a northerly direction from Bridlington the lines rise steeply, mainly at 1 in 92, for 5½ miles through Flamborough to a summit, and they then fall almost continuously at about 1 in 110 for 6 miles through Speeton and Hunmanby to Royal Oak South box. From there to the Camp Station the line continues to fall for ¼ mile, at 1 in 186 over the South Curve and onwards at 1 in 390. The speed limit between the summit and Royal Oak South box is 60 m.p.h. and on the South Curve it is 25 m.p.h.

#### REPORT

The stock of the 7.0 a.m. empty coaching special train arrived in Bridlington overnight and was placed in a siding, and the engine arrived at the shed from Hull, early the next morning. Driver G. Goforth of Bridlington took over the engine at 6.40 a.m., leaving the shed 10 minutes later, but the engine did not reach the siding until 7.0 a.m. as it was detained en route for another movement. Goforth backed the engine on to the coaches which moved away on contact, and so Guard R. C. Wharam put on the hand brake in the leading van. Fireman D. Bentley was then able to couple up the engine to the coaches; he placed the link on the hook and did not tighten the coupling. He did not connect the vacuum hose pipes of the tender and the leading coach. Goforth had destroyed the vacuum on the engine and tender for the coupling to be done. He asked Bentley if everything was all right and on receiving his assurance that it was, he re-created the vacuum, obtaining 22 ins. with the large ejector, and then placed the handle in the running position.

Guard Wharam had arrived at the siding some 15 minutes before the train was due to start. He had left his equipment in the rear brake van and walked to the front of the train to wait for the engine. After the coupling had been done he took off the brake in the front van and got down, and then shouted to Goforth to start when he (Goforth) was ready. The train moved off almost at once, at 7.4 a.m., 4 minutes late, and Wharam jumped in midway along the train. The movement was direct from the siding to the main line.

The engine was working well up the bank and the Specton distant near the summit was clear; at the station Goforth shut off steam and allowed the train to coast. Shortly after that, and somewhere near the arch bridges (see the sketch), he made a slight application of the vacuum brake but did not notice any weakness in it. The train continued to gather speed down the gradient with the regulator shut and the brake handle in the running position.

The Hunmanby distant was first seen at caution and was cleared as the train approached it. The Royal Oak South distant, a colour light signal situated below the Hunmanby home, was at yellow, so Goforth applied the brake, but found that it did not reduce the speed which had then risen to 40—50 m.p.h. At about this stage Fireman Bentley realised that he had forgotten to couple the vacuum hose pipes between the engine and the coaches, and he told Goforth. Goforth instructed him to apply the hand brake hard and to keep "popping" the whistle, indicating that the train was out of control, while he himself put the engine into reverse gear and opened the regulator slightly.

After leaving Bridlington Guard Wharam travelled in the seventh coach, a "corridor second", with District Relief Porter W. D. Burns who was travelling on duty. As the train passed Hunmanby they parted, Wharam going back to the brake compartment of the ninth coach and Burns to the front of the train. At that time neither of them had realised that anything was wrong.

Relief Signalman H. Metcalfe in Filey Camp box had accepted the train from Relief Signalman W. G. Clarke in Royal Oak South box under Regulation 5 as he had already accepted and cleared the signals for a train over the North Curve. Clarke had therefore kept his directing home signal to the Camp at danger in order to caution the driver. When the train was near that signal Clarke realised that it was going much too fast to stop and sent "Train Running Away on the Right Line" to Metcalfe. The latter, on receipt of this signal and hearing the popping of the whistle and seeing the train enter the South Curve much too fast, replaced the signals against the train approaching from the North which he saw had just entered the Curve; he also re-set the road to give the runaway train as straight a run as possible into an unoccupied platform, No. 3, and then telephoned to the Camp Station to warn the staff of the danger. On receipt of this information, and hearing the "popping" of the whistle, District Inspector E. Webster, who was in charge of the station, and Ticket Inspector H. Murgatroyd moved a number of passengers who were waiting on the concourse to safety.

The train was still travelling at 40—50 m.p.h. when it passed over the points from the main line to the South Curve, and it rolled severely. Porter Burns had by then reached the second coach, an open type, and was thrown violently against a table. He heard the "popping" of the whistle, realised that the train was out of control and went back to the leading brake van and screwed the brake hard on.

The available brake power reduced the speed on the flatter gradients beyond Royal Oak South box and the train was probably travelling at 35—40 m.p.h. when it passed Filey Camp signal box home signal at danger, and at 30 m.p.h. as it reached No. 3 platform. About half way along the platform Bentley jumped from his side of the engine and rolled over, and shortly afterwards Goforth jumped from the right hand side on to the ballast. The train hit the buffer stop at about 25 m.p.h.

When Bentley picked himself up, he ran straight back to the rear brake van and informed the guard that he had forgotten to couple the vacuum hose pipes. Wharam told Bentley to couple them at once and Bentley ran forward and did so, but he was unable to fix the securing pin.

Carriage and Wagon Examiner D. Harris arrived at the site soon after 8.0 a.m. He inspected the train and found the brakes of the front brake van "on", and those of all the remaining coaches including the rear brake van "off". The pistons of all the vacuum cylinders were down, but he saw that the vacuum hose pipes of the tender and leading coach were coupled together. Harris asked Wharam whether there was vacuum in the brake van when the train left Bridlington and Wharam answered 'yes, 20 ins.'.

#### EVIDENCE

Driver Goforth, Fireman Bentley and Guard Wharam were questioned closely about certain aspects of the case. Goforth, who is 62 years old and has been a driver for nearly 20 years, said that Bentley had worked as his fireman for about 6 months and was reliable. He accepted Bentley's assurance that everything was all right at Bridlington and did not get down himself to see that the coupling had been done properly, which was his usual practice, particularly when the train was against a platform. He said that he watched the gauge when re-creating the vacuum and noticed that the needle rose more rapidly than he would expect on a train with 10 coaches, but it did not strike him that anything was wrong. He usually made a test by destroying and re-creating the vacuum, watching the needle while he did it, but he omitted

to do so on this occasion. He knew that it was the duty of the guard to test the brake from the brake van and he agreed that from the position of the guard when giving the "right away" this could not have been done. Goforth said that he had ample rest before the trip and that no one was trying to hurry him to get the train away, and he could offer no explanation for his omissions. He gave his evidence in a straightforward way.

Bentley is 27 years old and has been a fireman for 6½ years. He said that he entirely forgot to couple the vacuum hoses and could offer no explanation for it. Except on Saturdays he worked on non-vacuum braked goods trains but he did not believe that he thought even momentarily that the empty coaching special was such a train. He did think it possible that he would not have forgotten the vacuum pipes if he had tightened the screw coupling, which he would have done if there had been passengers in the train. Bentley said that he was shocked as a result of his fall and did not appreciate what he was doing when he coupled the hoses after the accident, and he realised later that it was a foolish act. He said that he had gone straight back to the rear brake van because he wanted to see if the guard was all right.

Guard Wharam, who is 55 years of age and has been a passenger-guard for 14 years, admitted that he did not test the vacuum brake before the train started by lifting the valve in the brake van and that he also failed to test the brake on the coach "outside" the rear brake van by lifting the vacuum hose off the dummy. He knew that the Rules required him to make both these tests. He had in fact only recently been given an examination in the Rules and had passed it satisfactorily. He could offer no explanation for his failures, except that the train was already late in leaving. He said that he had never started a train in this way before.

Wharam said that he did not look at the vacuum gauge when he went to the rear van after passing Hunmanby. He felt a severe jerk over the Royal Oak South junction points and realising that the speed was excessive, he lifted the van vacuum valve but it did not work; only then did he notice that there was no vacuum and he said that he applied the hand brake fully. When asked how it was that the carriage and wagon examiner had found the brakes of his van "off", Wharam replied that he might not have screwed them on fully and that he had taken them off after the train had stopped.

Wharam said that he was not "shocked" by the impact, and that, in fact, he did not know that the train had hit the buffer stop. He explained his action in telling Bentley to couple the vacuum hoses after the accident by saying "I thought we would look so foolish with all railwaymen looking at it". Wharam agreed that when Carriage Examiner Harris asked whether there was vacuum in the brake van at Bridlington, he replied that he thought there was 20—21 ins. vacuum; he also agreed that this might have been "a misleading statement".

#### CONCLUSIONS AND REMARKS

This accident was the result of failures by all three members of the train crew. I consider that the fireman made a genuine mistake in not coupling the vacuum hose pipes between the tender and the coaches, but his mind could not have been on his work. The rules are however framed to cover such mistakes. They lay down quite clearly that the driver must satisfy himself that the pipes have been properly connected and that the guard must make certain brake tests before starting the train; they also require the driver to test the brake, when the train is running, in good time before a steep falling gradient. Neither the guard nor the driver obeyed any of these rules and if either had complied with even one of them, the accident should not have happened.

I am unable to accept the guard's suggestion that this was the one occasion on which he had not made a brake test and that, quite by chance, it had coincided with a most unusual omission on the part of the fireman. As further evidence of his slackness the guard also did not travel in the brake van as required by the rules but sat in a compartment, and he did not even look at the vacuum gauge directly he returned to his van; he was thus unaware during the greater part of the journey that there was no vacuum in the train pipe. Nor does it seem reasonable to suppose that the driver's failure to satisfy himself that the brake was properly coupled was an exceptional lapse on his part. I find it difficult, therefore, to come to any other conclusion than that both men were in the habit of serious laxity in the observance of the rules for train working. The safety of trains must always depend to a large extent on the strict compliance with the rules by individuals, much of whose work has to be done without the possibility of close supervision, and it is disturbing to find such lack of discipline as there was in this instance especially among senior and experienced men.

I consider that the actions of the guard and the fireman after the accident were most regrettable. The fireman said that his first impulse had been to run back and see if the guard was all right and also that because of shock he did not know what he was doing when he coupled the vacuum hoses. If, however, he had nothing on his mind, it would have been much more natural for him to be concerned about the driver whom he had left on the footplate, and I have little doubt that his one thought at the time was to see the guard urgently about his omission. The guard had realised before the fireman arrived that

he had failed seriously in his duty. His object in instructing the fireman to couple the hoses and in telling the carriage examiner that the normal vacuum was indicated on the van gauge when the train left Bridlington could only have been to relieve himself of the responsibility; this statement which was made some time later was nothing but a deliberate untruth.

I am glad to record some redeeming features in this otherwise dismal affair. District Relief Porter Burns acted with decision and Signalmen Clarke and Metcalfe did everything that could have been expected of them. Metcalfe undoubtedly rose to the occasion; he appreciated the situation rapidly, stopped the train approaching from the North, re-set the road to give the runaway train the straightest and longest possible run and then telephoned to warn the station staff of the danger, all in the space of a very short time. At the station, Inspectors Webster and Murgatroyd did not lack initiative and lost no time in clearing the concourse.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

D. McMULLEN,  
*Colonel.*

The Secretary,  
Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation.