

As regards the speed of the train: it left Cork at 8.42 p.m. and arrived at Queenstown at 9.2 p.m., having thus travelled the 11½ miles in 20 minutes; the speed of the train throughout the journey generally cannot therefore be said to have been excessive. When passing Rushbrooke Station the driver and guard concur in estimating the speed at 35 miles an hour; the signalman at that point states that he does not consider that it passed his box at a faster speed than most through trains usually do, but he admitted that it was going "pretty lively." Driver Coulter however states that immediately after leaving Rushbrooke Station he noticed that the train was running too fast, so he shut off steam, applied the hand brake and subsequently the vacuum brake; it is clear however that he never again got his train properly under control, though until he reached the carriage shed he does not seem to have realized that he would not be able to stop at the platform. This view is corroborated by the guard who states that when the train reached the Queenstown distant signal, distant 1,356 yards from the buffer stops, he felt sure that the driver had lost control of the train.

There appears therefore to be little doubt that this accident was really due to the fact of driver Coulter having allowed his train to approach the steep falling gradient between Rushbrooke and Queenstown at too high a rate of speed, and that consequently after commencing to run down the incline he was never again able to get his train properly under control. Doubtless the rails were slippery, and the brakes did not act with their full force, but Coulter was aware of the condition of the line, and should have made allowance for it. On him therefore must rest the responsibility for this accident.

It should be noted that though driver Coulter has passed the examination for driver, and has been employed as such for nearly three years, including several journeys between Cork and Queenstown, he is not yet a regularly appointed driver, and his mistake may therefore have been due to inexperience.

The Assistant Secretary,  
Railway Department, Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,  
P. G. VON DONOP,  
*Lt.-Col., R.E.*

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#### APPENDIX.

##### DAMAGE TO ROLLING STOCK.

Engine. No. 41.—Chimney broken off; hole knocked in the end of tank; canopy damaged; four buffers broken; step broken; dome casing bent; life guards broken off; lubricator broken off; vacuum brake pipes broken.

Second class, No. 438.—Both end sole-bars broken; end sheeting broken; step-board broken; vacuum brake pipes broken.

Third class brake, No. 51.—One end sole-bar broken; step board broken; buffer rods bent.

Third class, No. 458.—No damage of any consequence.

Third class, No. 459.—No damage of any consequence.

Third class brake, No. 43.—No damage of any consequence.

##### DAMAGE TO PERMANENT WAY.

Buffer stops demolished, and platform in rear destroyed.  
Lavatory and station master's office wrecked.

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Printed copies of the above Report were sent to the Company on the 20th June.

## GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

Board of Trade, Railway Department,  
8, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London, S.W.,  
June 16th, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 25th May 1900, the result of my enquiry into the circumstances under which goods guard W. Callen was fatally injured at about 6.15 p.m. on the 16th May at Pontypool Road Goods Yard on the Great Western Railway.

At the time mentioned above, the deceased was found lying on his back near the Pontypool Road goods transfer shed with his body in the 6-foot way and his legs lying

across the rails of an adjoining siding. Blood was at the time flowing from the back of his head, and he expired a few minutes later without having recovered consciousness.

### *Description.*

At Pontypool Road, where this fatal accident occurred, there is to the south of the station a goods yard containing a number of sidings and a goods transfer shed. This transfer shed is used in connection with three sidings immediately alongside it for the purpose of the sorting and distribution of goods waggons arriving at Pontypool Road from various directions. The waggons are for the most part shunted into these three sidings from the south end of the goods yard, and are then sorted and distributed under the superintendence of a goods guard, known as the shed pilot, who deals with them from the north end. The three sidings, which are known as Nos. 1, 2 and 3 respectively, are on the east side of the transfer shed, No. 3 being the one nearest to it.

The timekeeper's office, at which the men report when coming on duty, is about 25 yards from the transfer shed and on the west side of it.

### *Evidence.*

*Edwin Alfred Davis*, goods guard, states : I have been 11 years in the Company's service, during the last 15 months of which I have been a goods guard. I came on duty at 6 a.m. on the 16th May to work till 6 p.m. The deceased, goods guard W. Callen, had to relieve me at 6 p.m. that night. I met him on the ground opposite the middle signal box just about 6 p.m. We separated, he going on towards the timekeeper's office and I going down northwards across the siding to get my kit out of my brake van. When I met Callen he had just come up from the Griffith's Town end of the sidings. A few minutes subsequently after getting my kit I returned to the timekeeper's office to sign off, and I met Callen again there. We walked together from the timekeeper's office to the spot where the fatal accident occurred. We then separated, and I commenced to walk northwards towards the station. At that time there were a considerable number of vehicles standing on No. 3 and No. 2 sidings. I cannot say exactly how many—and at the point where I separated from Callen there was a gap of about 2 feet between a waggon and a brake van. Callen said good night to me, and I saw from his attitude that he was going to pass through the gap, but he did not say anything to me about doing so. I do not know for certain why he wanted to go through, but I surmise that it was in order to see how the waggons were standing in the next siding, as it would be part of his duty to deal with them. In returning to the office to sign off duty I had myself crossed both No. 2 and No. 3 sidings by means of going through brake vans, and in the case of No. 3 siding I had gone through the brake van adjoining the gap. Just after I left him I heard the noise of the waggons being pushed up against the brake van, and I looked between the wheels of the brake van and saw Callen lying on his back, with his body on the 6-foot and his legs across the rails. I at once ran through the brake van and pulled his legs from off the rails; he could not speak, and there was blood coming out of the back of his head. I obtained assistance, and an ambulance was brought, but he expired in about 10 minutes time without having said anything. I considered that he was quite sober when I spoke to him. I live at New Inn. My work for the day was that of shed pilot, *i.e.*, to deal with the waggons at the transfer shed, and to run two or three trips to Pontypool Town. Callen's duty would

have been the same, except that he would have no trips to Pontypool Town. The wheels had not passed over Callen's legs. I did not think of warning Callen that it was dangerous for him to go through the gap. I have known Callen well for fifteen months, and I consider that he was well acquainted with his duties. I consider that going through the gap was a dangerous act, but I thought that Callen had enough experience to know what he was about. If there had been no brake van for me to go through when returning to the office with my kit to sign off, I should have had to either go under the waggons or go round, and I should probably have gone round; this would have meant walking up and down about fifteen waggons length. At the time the accident occurred, the engine was away at the old yard for water, and Callen could not therefore actually commence shunting operations till it returned, and it would probably not have been back for five or ten minutes.

*John Rees*, shunter, states : I have been 3½ years in the service of the Company, during 8 or 10 months of which I have been a shunter. I came on duty on the 16th May at 2 p.m. to work till 10 p.m. I was employed as under shunter at south junction, Pontypool Road. Between 6 p.m. and 6.15 p.m., I remember shunting waggons into No. 3 siding from the south end, and after doing so walked back to the south junction box, and the signalman then sent me for a doctor, but I did not know at the time that any accident had been caused by my shunting. I had previously during the afternoon been shunting waggons into No. 3 siding, and continued to do so after the accident. It is the usual way of shunting waggons into No. 3 siding, and is what goes on daily.

*Stanley Bowen*, messenger, states : I have been five months in the Company's employ, and am employed as messenger in the timekeeper's office, but I carry on his duties between change of duties, *viz.*, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. I remember guard Callen coming into my office on the 16th May; it was just 6 p.m. when he came in; he remained in the office talking to guard Davis for about 10 minutes, and both of them then went out together. I asked him what train he was going with, and he told me "town goods," which is the same as shed pilot. I thought that he was quite sober at the time.

*Conclusion.*

The above evidence is all that can be produced to throw light on this fatal accident, but there appears little doubt as to the circumstances under which it occurred.

The deceased, goods guard W. Callen, signed on duty at 6 p.m. on the 16th of May at the timekeeper's office and took over the duties of shed pilot from goods guard Davis, who had been acting in that capacity during that day. At that time there were a number of waggons standing in No. 3 and No. 2 sidings, and Callen's duty would be to pick these out and distribute them into their proper places in the transfer shed. The engine with which he would carry out this work was at the time of the accident away for water and was not expected back for five or ten minutes, so Callen was unable to at once commence his work when coming on duty.

Davis and Callen met at the timekeeper's office a few minutes after 6 p.m.; they appear to have had a few minutes conversation in the office and then to have walked together across the short intervening space between the office and No. 3 siding.

There were at that time a number of vehicles standing on this siding, but at the point at which Davis and Callen reached it there was a gap of about two feet between a brake van and a waggon. The evidence on this point is fortunately very clear owing to the fact that Davis had had to cross No. 3 siding a few minutes previously, and he had consequently noticed this gap; he had not however gone through it, but had passed through the interior of the brake van instead.

At or about 6.15 p.m. Davis and Callen parted at this point; Davis walked away northwards towards the station, and he states that when parting from Callen he saw from the latter's attitude that he was going to pass through the gap. This is clearly what Callen did do, for immediately after they parted company Davis heard the noise of the waggons being pushed up against the brake van, and on looking round he saw Callen lying across the rails. There is therefore no doubt that Callen had been caught between these vehicles when endeavouring to pass between them. Davis at once went to his assistance, but he found that Callen was unconscious and he expired in the course of a few minutes.

Callen did not say anything to Davis as to his intention to cross No. 3 siding or as to his reasons for doing so, but Davis surmises that the reason was that Callen wished to see what vehicles were standing in No. 2 siding. As Callen's work was to deal with the waggons in No. 2 siding as well as those in No. 3, it seems only natural that having seen those in No. 3 siding he should go and see what there were in No. 2 siding, and this appears therefore to be the reasonable and natural explanation of his action.

There was however no necessity for Callen to have passed through the gap between the brake van and the waggon in order to accomplish this object. He could either have passed through the brake van itself, as Davis had done a few minutes previously, or he could have walked round the waggons, which would have entailed walking up and down a distance of about 15 waggons length. Callen was in no immediate hurry, as owing to the absence of his engine he could not at that time commence work, so there was nothing to have prevented his adopting either one of these two courses, which were both perfectly free from danger. This accident must therefore, I consider, be attributed entirely to the deceased's own want of care in passing through the gap between the brake van and the waggon when there was no necessity for his doing so. He himself is therefore entirely responsible for this accident, and no blame rests either on the Company or on any of their other servants.

As endeavours appear to have been made in some quarters to connect this accident with the position of the timekeeper's office, I would add that from the evidence produced and from an inspection of the locality there appears to be absolutely no reason for connecting the two matters. Every opportunity was purposely given at the inquiry for the production of any evidence to connect them, but none was forthcoming.

I have, &c.,

The Assistant Secretary,  
Railway Department, Board of Trade.

P. G. VON DONOP,  
*Lt.-Col., R.E.*