

## **RAILWAY TRAGEDY AT RYDE**

Lengthman Killed By Passing Train

Another tragedy occurred at Ryde on Wednesday morning, when Mr. **Dudley SAUNDERS**, a 47 years-old lengthman employed by British Railways, of 23, Lower-Highland-Road, Ryde, was killed instantaneously by a train a few yards outside the Quay-Road entrance to Ryde Esplanade tunnel. His body was seen lying between the two tracks at about 10.20 a.m. by Mr. William BAKER, caretaker at the Esplanade Pavilion, who communicated with the police.

There were severe head injuries, and it is believed that he was struck by the Newport-Ryde train which passed at 10.10 a.m. although the train crew were unaware that anyone had been hit. Mr. SAUNDERS was one of the gang of four who were working in the tunnel and he had left the others to go to the Esplanade station to fetch a crowbar. No one saw the accident. The body was moved to the mortuary.

Mr. SAUNDERS, who was a native of Ryde, leaves a widow, but no family. He was well-known and popular in St. John's district and was a keen gardener.

The Coroner (Mr. J.V. BULLIN) sat with a jury at the inquest at Ryde Town Hall last evening. Dr. P.D. SWINSTEAD, pathologist, at the Royal I.W. County Hospital, said that there was severe injuries to the head and chest. Death was due to a fractured skull. The jury returned verdict of accidental death.

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## **Railwayman's Walk Through Tunnel Led To Death**

Accidental Death Verdict At

Inquest At Ryde

Four men working on the drain almost halfway along the 400 yards long Esplanade railway tunnel, Ryde, from the Quay-Road entrance on Wednesday last week. They found that they needed additional tools, and so one of them, Mr. **Dudley Harold Ernest SAUNDERS**, aged 47, of 23, Lower Highland-Road, Ryde, described as "an alert man thoroughly reliable," left the party to return to the Esplanade Station for more tools. That was the last time anybody saw him alive. About half an hour later his body was found badly injured 30 yards outside the tunnel entrance.

These were the facts disclosed at the inquest at Ryde on Thursday before the Coroner, Mr. J.V. BULLIN, into the death of Mr. SAUNDERS, whom it was revealed, died as a result of a fractured skull and other multiple injuries.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

The Island pathologist, Dr. P.D. SWINSTEAD, said that a post mortem examination had indicated that Mr. SAUNDERS, had been struck from behind with tremendous force and probably thrown forward onto his head, fracturing it.

Mr. S.W.T. NEWBURY, of 22, Prince-Street, Ryde, the ganger who was in charge of the work in the tunnel, said he and three other men, one of whom was Mr. SAUNDERS, started work in it at about 9.25. a.m. entering from the Quay-Road end. Because of the nature of the job he had not thought it necessary to post look outs. They discovered additional tools were needed, and at about 10 a.m. he asked Mr. SAUNDERS to return to the Esplanade Station to get some.

### **"Thoroughly Reliable."**

"He was a man fully conversant with the traffic and full alert," added Mr. NEWBURY. "I

had been working with him for four years and knew he was thoroughly reliable.” Mr. SAUNDERS walked back along the centre of the right hand “down” track, so that he would be facing any oncoming traffic - the regular procedure. He passed out of sight round the curve of the tunnel. About five or six minutes later the Cowes-Ryde train passed, went on Mr. NEWBURY travelling on the “up” track.

Answering the Coroner, Mr. NEWBURY said he was sure no carriage doors were open when the train passed him. Trains invariably sounded their whistles when entering the tunnel from the St. John’s Station end, and sometimes when leaving at the Esplanade end , although there was no whistle notice there.

Mr. W.H. LACEY of 110 Medina Avenue, Newport, the engine driver, said the train was the 9.31 a.m. from Cowes and was due to arrive at Ryde at 10.3 a.m. It was late however, and arrived at about 10.11 a.m.

**“Nothing Unusual.”**

Passing through the tunnel at 20 m.p.h. he had seen some men working but had felt or heard nothing unusual. As he emerged from the tunnel he had sounded his whistle. “It is very difficult to see the line ahead of you at the end of the tunnel,” he said “There is a curve and you have to get 40 or 50 yards out of the tunnel before you get on the straight. I did not know there was anything wrong until I returned from the Esplanade Station.”

Mr. H.W.A. SAUNDERS, of St. George’s Lane, Shide, Newport, brother of the deceased, said that so far as he knew, his brother had been in good health, and had perfect hearing. He had no reason to take his own life.

P.C. W. BUDD, of Ryde, said he went to the scene of the accident after being telephoned at Ryde Police Station by Mr. W.F. BAKER, caretaker at the Eastern Pavilion, who had seen the body. He found it lying about 30 yards from the tunnel entrance face upwards between the tracks. An examination of the engine showed no marks to indicate that it had struck Mr. SAUNDERS, and there were no tools in the vicinity to show that Mr. SAUNDERS had been returning from the Esplanade Station when the accident occurred. He had not confirmed at the station whether Mr. SAUNDERS had collected some tools.

Returning their verdict, the jury exonerated the engine driver from any blame.

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(Also in the I.W. Times dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1954 page 1 no further information)

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