

Fatal Accident

Guard's Sad Death

Inquest Evidence

How a Civic Guard was pitched over a wall and sustained injuries from which he later died, was described at an inquest on Civic Guard John Kelly (44), a native of Co. Roscommon, which was held by Mr J B McNeice, solicitor, Deputy Coroner, and a jury, at Barrington's Hospital, Limerick, on Monday.

Inspector T Griffin conducted the inquiry.

Dr Frank Crowe, Honorary Surgeon, Barrington's Hospital, stated that deceased was admitted to the hospital at 11.30 on Saturday night and died without regaining consciousness on Monday morning; death was due to cardiac failure and fracture of the base of the skull.

Mrs Rebecca Alta, Windmill street, Limerick, stated that she was standing outside her door on Saturday night when she saw a man cycling down Windmill street towards the Dock Road; he was going at a moderate pace; the street lamps were lighting at the time, but witness could not say if the cyclist had a light; when the cyclist came to a part of the street where there was a very steep gradient he put his leg on the ground as a brake; the man obviously did not know that there was a flight of steps down to the Dock Road with a wall at either side of them; when he came near to the steps he suddenly swerved to the right and struck the wall, which is about two feet high; he was pitched over the wall and hung on to the Dock Road, which was some six feet below the level of Windmill street.

Witness rushed down the steps to where the man was lying. His head was against the wall and he was unconscious.

Inspector—This man was a stranger to you?—Yes.

Do you think he was familiar with the locality?—No.

Coroner—The impression you formed was that he was going at a reasonable pace?—Yes. If he was going fast we would have known that he did not know where he was going and we would have shouted at him.

Decl Pendergast, 16 Windmill street, stated he was leaving his home on Saturday night but when he heard a scream, he ran in the direction and went down the steps at the end of Windmill street, where he saw a man lying on the footpath unconscious; he was bleeding from the nose; witness rendered what aid he could until a policeman and the city watchman arrived; the deceased was in a critical condition.

Inspector—How is the street lighted?—There is no light at all on the Windmill street side, but there is a lamp on the Dock Road which throws light on the right hand side.

Coroner—Would you say the lighting is defective?—Yes, very defective; witness said that since there was a wall across the street there was no traffic; there had been several accidents at the spot; a horse and cart went over the wall and on several occasions had fallen over it on to the Dock Road beneath.

The Coroner said the place appeared to be a very dangerous one particularly to a stranger, and it was obvious the deceased had no idea of the locality.

Serge T Murphy, Faliaskehony, said the deceased was stationed with witness in Faliaskehony until last April; he was single and aged about 44 years; he was on leave from the barracks on Saturday as he had come into Limerick to get some repairs done to his bicycle.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death and added a recommendation that the steps to Windmill street be removed and the wall raised to six feet. They expressed sympathy with the relatives of the deceased, in which the Coroner and Inspector Griffin joined.