

An investigation into the action of Mr. Gordon was ordered by the general superintendent, and was held at Salida at 10:30 a.m. October 3rd.

The following is a verbatim transcript of the proceedings of the investigating board which consisted of R. M. Ridgway, division superintendent, chairman; A. W. Jones, division master mechanic; J. E. Barnes, traveling engineer; G. H. Barnes, trainmaster; I. G. Baker, locomotive engineer (selected by Mr. Gordon):

Mr. Ridgway—Gentlemen, this meeting is called for the purpose of investigating the case of Engineer William Gordon refusing to leave Minturn until Bulletin No. 23 was recalled.

The following letter from Trainmaster Barnes was read, as well as Bulletin No. 23, copy of which will be found above:

SALIDA, Colo., September 8th, 1892.

Mr. R. M. Ridgway, Supr., Salida, Colo.

Dear Sir—On August 24, as train 61 was getting ready to leave the yard at Minturn, Engineer William Gordon called me up on his engine and informed me that the bulletin in regard to eating on trains 61 and 64 at Glenwood and Malta must be recalled before he would leave the yard. He said that no fireman could fire a hog from Grand Junction to Minturn for him without having something to eat on the road, as they couldn't stand it. He also said that he didn't care a damn if he never worked another minute; he would not go until it was recalled, and for me to go in office and tell them so, which I immediately done.

Engineer George Gordon was present and expressed his displeasure, but not in such a positive and violent manner as William Gordon.

I only said to them that if they had used a reasonable length of time at these points to eat in, the bulletin would never have appeared. Afterwards in conversation with George Gordon I said that engineers, in fact the whole train crew, were eating too long, and that these trains were important and all should take an interest in making good time with them, and on account of our inability to do so we were losing freight.

G. H. BARNES, Trainmaster.

Mr. Ridgway—Please give us the dead time of these trains.

Answer—Sixty-one has twenty minutes at Malta and fifteen minutes at Glenwood. Sixty-four has seventeen minutes at Glenwood and eighteen minutes at Malta.

G. H. Barnes—This letter is correct, is it not, Mr. Gordon?

Mr. Gordon—It is correct.

Mr. Ridgway—Then Mr. Barnes' report of the case is correct, is it, Mr. Gordon?

Mr. Gordon—As near as I can remember.

Mr. Ridgway—I think you should remember whether or not you said you did not care a damn whether you worked for the company or not, you would not go out until the bulletin was recalled.

Mr. Gordon—I was pretty warm under the collar and thought the bulletin was unjust, and probably I said it.

Mr. Ridgway—I do not think it unjust. We do not want to deprive the men of a chance to get something to eat, but we want to get our trains through on time.

Mr. Gordon—I would like to ask for a little information. I would like to know if when I come out of Grand Junction late and get to Glenwood I

am allowed the 17 minutes if I am behind time.

Mr. Ridgway—Certainly.

Mr. Gordon—I have got to oil around the engine myself, and take water, and that takes considerable time.

Mr. Ridgway—Your fireman can oil one side.

Mr. Gordon—I have been in the habit of carrying a lunch with me. I have a family in Minturn. Sometimes I do not carry one out of Grand Junction as I have to have to put up at a restaurant. I will tell you my reasons. If we come out of Grand Junction with a lunch, when we can get to Minturn there is no restaurant open where we can get anything to eat, and the fireman is in no condition to fire an engine on an empty stomach, as he is compelled to do when we come out of Grand Junction and catch the run to Aspen, and he cannot get anything to eat without losing a lot of sleep.

Mr. Ridgway—You will admit that it is not very hard work to fire from Minturn to Glenwood.

Mr. Gordon—Yes, sir; but the hard work is from Glenwood to Aspen, on train 65.

Mr. Ridgway—I do not know why our employes should not carry a lunch.

Mr. Baker—Of course, a man has time enough to eat on the dead time shown on card. I do not think that Mr. Gordon took the right means to have his bulletin cancelled. If he thought it was obnoxious, he should have had one of the men come over and see Mr. Ridgway. I think Mr. Gordon used rather unbecoming language in regard to having the bulletin recalled.

Mr. Gordon—I would like to say further that I did not think that the bulletin was just. I wanted to live up to instructions, but I did not see how we could with this bulletin. I do not like to have a fireman fire an engine for me on an empty stomach. I told the trainmen that we did not want to run this thing into the ground. I know that there has been lots of unnecessary delays at Glenwood, but I claim that I have not caused them.

Mr. Baker—You say that you were not making a personal complaint, but that it was made for the fireman. I think that the fireman should be able to fight his own battles.

Mr. Gordon—If the fireman cleans his ash pan and takes coal at Glenwood, it takes about all the time allowed there. I have often cleaned the ash pan myself for the fireman. I think the bulletin was an imposition on the fireman more than on me. If the fireman cleaned the ash pan and took his own coal, he would not have time to eat. If we could eat at Minturn, it would be a whole lot different; and they can not get sleep.

Mr. Jones—Even if it was so, it does not justify you in disobeying orders.

J. E. Barnes—I think Mr. Gordon did exceedingly wrong in refusing to go out until the bulletin was recalled, even if it was obnoxious to him. I was in Minturn, but did not hear the conversation. The trainmaster told me that Gordon refused to go out until the bulletin was recalled.

Mr. Jones—This appears to be a clear case of insubordination.

Mr. Gordon—Supposing I took a lunch with me; do you suppose I would be attending to my business

while I eat it? I know that the fireman could not do it.

Mr. Ridgway—I think a man can eat on an engine as well as he can take out a cigar and light it and smoke.

Mr. Baker—Could not the head brakeman relieve the fireman for a few minutes while he ate his lunch?

Mr. Gordon—I would not like to eat while going through Glenwood canyon. I usually hang out of the window while going through there. I have never struck any rocks there perhaps it is because I am lucky.

Mr. Ridgway—Well, Mr. Gordon acknowledges he refused to go out and that he said what the trainmaster states in his letter.

G. H. Barnes—There were no messages in regard to the matter. I was at the key myself talking with the dispatcher and told him that Gordon refused to go out until the bulletin was recalled.

Mr. Baker—I think you should have had some representative man come to see Mr. Ridgway about the matter. Mr. Ridgway is a pretty reasonable man about letting men eat.

Mr. Gordon—I scarcely ever go over the road but what there is from two and a half to four hours delayed time. I never get any letters in regard to it.

Mr. Baker—Perhaps the engine does a little fast running and covers some of it up.

Mr. Ridgway—I presume that these delays are doing local work and meeting trains, and are so reported by the conductors.

Mr. Gordon—Well, so far as I am concerned, I do not want to answer for the shortcomings of other men on the road, but I am willing to suffer for my own. I have always tried to work for the interests of the company, and do not think that anybody can say that I have not. Of course, I did wrong in acting as I did about this business, but at the time I thought I did right, as I did not think a man capable of doing his work on an empty stomach.

Mr. Ridgway—I believe this is all, gentlemen, unless you have something more to say on the subject.

Findings—Engineer Gordon acknowledges having used the language in his conversation with Mr. Barnes at Minturn, as reported, and that he refused to obey the bulletin order or go out until it was recalled.

A copy of the proceedings of the board of investigation was forwarded to the General Superintendent on October 4th, with the following letter of transmission, signed by Mr. R. M. Ridgway, superintendent of division, and Mr. A. W. Jones, master mechanic:

SALIDA, Colo., October 4th, 1892.

Mr. N. W. Sample, General Superintendent, Denver:

Dear Sir—Herewith we return all papers in case of William Gordon, engineer, with report of the investigation attached.

You will note that Engineer Gordon acknowledges having used the language as reported by Trainmaster Barnes, also that he refused to obey the bulletin order or go out on train 61 of August 24th until it was recalled.

This is a case that merits dismissal from the service, and we would recommend that it be done. Truly yours,

(Signed) R. M. RIDGWAY,
Superintendent.

(Signed) A. W. JONES,
Master Mechanic.