

## PRISONER WHO ESCAPED

### RUSSIAN ANZAC A LINGUIST

Private Alexander Sast, a soldier of Russian birth in the 10th Battalion (South Australia), of the Australian Infantry Force, whose arrival in London after an amazing escape from Turkey was recently notified in a cable message, was in every way a worthy representative of Australia, his adopted country.

Returned men of the First Australian Division, with whom he shared the glory of the landing on Gallipoli, were delighted to learn of his escape. One of these, Private C. E. Walker, of the 9th Battalion, referred to Sast as a good comrade.

"I went in the same troopship with him from Egypt to Gallipoli," he said. "The cable message mentioned his escape as being amazing, and I cannot think how an Australian could escape from Turkey; but Sast was a talented man, and his knowledge of the Greek language no doubt was the

key to his escape. He spoke also French, Italian, and other languages. Sast was taken prisoner in Gallipoli, and sent to dig trenches on the Bulgarian front. His people live in Odessa, and he came to Australia two years before the war broke out. At Odessa he was employed in the Government workshops as a fitter. He was a single man, 27 years of age. When the first call for men was sounded he was driving a stationary engine on railway works in South Australia; but, although satisfied with Australia and his work, he could not resist the chance of striking a blow on Russia's side.

"On Gallipoli he was wounded in the foot in the first week after the landing. He was sent to Mena House Hospital, in Egypt, but in two months he was back again in Gallipoli, even though, besides the leg wound, he had been treated in Egypt for a growth behind

treated in Egypt for a growth behind the ear, not caused by war. It was in the middle of August that he was made prisoner. I was very sorry to hear of it, but, remembering that he was a man who had travelled all over the world, I thought that if anyone could make himself at home in Turkey he could. It did not occur to me that he might escape. I was in hospital with him at Mena House, and found him not only a good Russian, but a good Australian."

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Mr W. G. Higga, the Federal Treasurer, who has not been in robust health during the last few months, was compelled to remain at home today. His colleagues think that he has been working too hard at details of matters with which his Department has had to deal. They hope to see him back in a day or two at his office, completely restored to health.