

FREMANTLE POLICE COURT.

(Thursday.—Before Mr. Dowdy, R.M.)

Ship Deserters—Four seamen, Eugene Biron, Walter Weckman, Johan Holstrom, and Karl Kimunen, were charged with having been absent from their ship without lawful authority. Mr. F. G. Unmack appeared for Captain Manning, master of the ship, and Mr. J. C. Forman conducted the defence. The defence was that the men had sufficient cause to leave the vessel, in view of alleged cruel treatment by the captain, a condition of affairs which was denied by the prosecution. Called by the defence, Johan Holstrom, second officer of the ship, said that the treatment of the crew by the master was harsh and cruel. They were treated like dogs. To Mr. Unmack the witness admitted that, although the vessel arrived early in February he did not desert until February 20, and during that time no complaint was made to anyone in authority regarding the captain's conduct. The Bench came to the conclusion that there was not sufficient reason for the action of the men in leaving the ship. He ordered them to be kept in custody for six weeks, and to be placed on board the vessel prior to her departure—each to forfeit the sum of £7 6s. 10d. out of his wages, to meet the costs of the case. Mr. Forman made formal objection to the granting of costs other than counsels' and Court fees.