

## **RUSSIAN JOURNALIST.**

### **EXPERIENCES WITH THE A.I.F.**

#### **FORCED TO FIGHT WITH RUSSIANS.**

Few Australian or Allied soldiers have had the experiences of Corporal Fedorovich, of the 9th Battalion. When war broke out, he enlisted at Cairns, where he was employed as cane cutter, after spending several years as a journalist on Russian and Manchurian papers. He joined the 9th Battalion, and saw service with that unit until he was wounded at Gallipoli. Later he contracted enteric fever, and was invalided to London. Prior to his departure from the Peninsula, he obtained permission from his colonel to apply to the War Office for leave to visit his mother in Odessa, who was in a low state of health.

Late in 1915, when Fedorovich was convalescent, the War Office granted him a pass to proceed to Odessa, where he was born, and where he had lived for many years prior to coming to Australia. He reached Odessa in due course, and visited his mother, who was overjoyed to see him. In his Australian uniform, he was an object of much admiration in the grain city, and received a great number of convivial greetings from the chief men of the town. Arrived back in Petrograd, the interest he had created in the south grew more and more. Russia was then the most powerful of the Allies, and was driving the Germans back from the eastern frontier. He was followed about by crowds of people. When he entered cafes, people rose and greeted him warmly. Groups of people listened with amazement to his stories of the great Commonwealth beyond the seas, where the minimum wage for laborers was 8/- a day!

The Russian military authorities decided that Fedorovich would be a valuable asset in their army, in imbuing the soldiers with fighting qualities. The news of the Anzacs' brilliant charges at Gallipoli had given them a high opinion of the Australians as fighters, and Fedorovich found him-

self under orders to proceed to the eastern front. In vain he protested. He had an interview with the British Ambassador, who was unable to help him. He went to the eastern front, where he was given a commission. He soon discovered that, while the Russian soldiers were in the main willing to fight, the High Command was treasonable, and in league with the Germans. Ultimately, after three months fighting, he was granted leave, and was given a passage to London. He rejoined the battalion in the trenches in Flanders, and his exploits were eagerly listened to by his old comrades, who gave him a rousing reception. He had in all four years service with the A.I.F.

Corporal Fedorovitch has been given a selection at Stanthorpe, and leaves Cairns on Saturday.