

MISSING GRATUITY BOND.

A plea of not guilty was entered by Mary Sweeney (35) to a charge of having stolen a war gratuity bond, valued at £51 1s, the property of Alexander Stuhrit, at Newcastle, on September 13. Mr. N. M'Ghie appeared for the defence.

Alexander Stuhrit, a steel worker, said he was a returned soldier, and lost his war gratuity bond about six weeks ago. He had not given it to anyone for safe-keeping. To Mr. M'Ghie: It was a fact that he was in Donald-street, at Hamilton, in April last. Constable W. S. Brady, Hamilton, said he arrested defendant on September 29, and in her purse he found a war gratuity bond for £51 1s. When questioned about it, she said, "I got it from a man named Alexander Stuhrit three or four months ago. He was working on the Tarcoola." To Mr. M'Ghie: The bond was reported to the police as lost or stolen. Constable Jefferson, Honeysuckle Point, said a complaint was made by Stuhrit on September 13.

Accused gave evidence that she was a cook. Three or four months ago she went into a hotel to look for a situation. Stuhrit came to her in a parlour, and asked her to have a drink. She declined, and in the course of a conversation she told Stuhrit of her situation, and he said he would "stick to her" if she wished. Accused said she did not believe those tales, and defendant produced a war bond. He said, "Take this as a security until I come back again to make sure I will stick to you." Stuhrit saw her home to Hamilton, and they met again next night. That was the last occasion on which she saw him. Marie Cochrane, a married woman, said when living at Hamilton accused had a room at her house for about a week. She remembered one occasion on which Stuhrit called for the accused. To Mr. Ralston: The first she knew of accused as Mary Sweeney was when she received the notice to attend the Court. Accused had given the name of Mrs. Thomas. Alexander Stuhrit, recalled, said he left the Tarcoola in May. He had written to accused in the name of Mrs. Thomas.

"If the jury had any doubt previously they should have none after hearing the answers to the two last questions," said Mr. M'Ghie, in commencing his address to the jury.

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The jury, after a short deliberation, returned a verdict of not guilty, and accused was discharged.