

FISHING TRAGEDY.

Survivors' Story at Inquest.

In the Fremantle Courthouse yesterday an inquiry was held into the circumstances of the deaths of Yalmar Saarenpaa and Gustav Axell, fishermen, who were drowned on September 16 through a dinghy swamping in the open sea near Lancelin Island, about 66 miles north of Fremantle. Mr. G. Shepherd, J.P., presided, and Sergeant Tuohy examined the witnesses.

Frank Payton said that in company with Saarenpaa and Axell and William Klingberg he was returning from a fishing expedition at Jurien Bay. On the night of the tragedy the party took shelter about a quarter of a mile from Lancelin Island. Witness's companions decided to net a few small fish, and for that purpose they went ashore in a dinghy. He did not see any more of them until next morning, when Klingberg swam out to the boat, and said that the two other men had been lost as a result of the dinghy swamping. A search lasting for two days was unsuccessful.

Klingberg gave evidence that, having caught only a few fish, the three men attempted to regain the fishing boat in the dinghy in order to avoid a shower of rain which was threatening. Saarenpaa was working the oars and was making a fast pace when witness called to him to row more slowly on account of the danger of the heavy sea. When about half the distance from the shore to the boat had been covered a large wave swamped the dinghy and witness swam ashore. He did not see his companions again. He considered that the fast pace at which Saarenpaa rowed contributed in some degree to the swamping of the dinghy.

Evidence of having brought the bodies back to Fremantle in the Fisheries Department launch was given by Constable Wrigley. The bodies, he said, had been found and buried by Constable Clifford, of Gingin, and the search party had to exhume them and carry them three miles before it was possible to ship them on the launch.

The acting-Coroner returned a verdict of accidental death.