

WORKER'S NERVES.

A STRANGE HISTORY.

Compensation Claim Fails.

Holding that the applicant had not made out a case connecting the neurasthenia from which he was suffering with an accident which had befallen him while working for the respondent, Mr. J. F. McMillan, S.M., yesterday dismissed a claim for worker's compensation brought by Ivon Dofger against C. Tadman, without calling on the respondent to bring evidence. Mr. S. H. Good (assigned by the Minister under the Poor Persons' Legal Assistance Act) appeared for the applicant and Mr. T. Louch for the respondent.

On November 19, 1934, the applicant fell from a haystack while working for the respondent on a farm near Koorda. He was paid compensation until he was again organically sound, but he was then, in the opinion of doctors, suffering from neurasthenia for which he claimed the accident was responsible and for which he claimed compensation.

Dr. H. S. Lucraft said that he had examined the applicant twice and had issued a certificate dated August 14. He found no signs of organic disability, but concluded that he was suffering from a form of neurosis and was not malingering. He did not think that he was likely to recover until the compensation claim was decided, either for or against him.

Delusions Suggested.

To Mr. Louch: He would have expected the applicant to show some signs of trau-

the applicant to show some signs of traumatic neurasthenia (neurasthenia caused by injury), in the 11 weeks spent in hospital after the fall if he were now suffering from it. He did not know that after an operation in Waverley Hospital in 1928 he thought that the Germans were after him and jumped from a window and broke both ankles, nor did he know that on June 16, 1935, after the accident, he was wandering in Barrackstreet in his pyjamas at 3 a.m., and again said that the Germans were after him. These delusions, however, had no part in neurasthenia.

Mr. Louch: When arrested in Barrackstreet he was walking normally. Now he is walking with a stick. Would that affect your judgment or opinion in this case?

Witness: It's not what I would have expected. The disability usually remains, while neurasthenia persists.

In April 6, 1934, before the accident, he refused to accept farm work because he said he was sick. He was put off relief. In July, 1934, he again said he was not fit. Would that affect your opinion?—Obviously he is the sort of man who easily gets the idea that he is not well. That type suffers easily from traumatic neurasthenia.

Mr. Louch handed witness a doctor's report on a claim made to the Repatriation Department in 1931 on account of neurasthenia.

Is that much the same story as he told you?—He has obviously suffered from neurasthenia for a very long time. It is not necessarily attributable to the fall.

Dr. L. La Souef said that he first attended the applicant in December, 1934, when he was suffering from injuries compatible with a fall from a haystack. Witness considered that neurasthenia was then present. He was in witness's care

then present. He was in witness's care until June 11 when all organic injuries had disappeared. He was then, witness considered at the time, suffering from traumatic neurasthenia, but on further investigation, he withdrew the word "traumatic."

To Mr. Louch: Sympathy was sometimes sought by a display of pain in these neurasthenic conditions without any conscious effort. He had told witness that he was unconscious for 24 hours after the accident, but he had learnt that this was not so. After learning of the applicant's previous record, he did not think that his neurasthenia was worse now than before the accident except for the "compensation complex."

To Mr. Good: When he was found walking normally about the streets at 3 a.m., he might have been galvanised by one or two drinks. The applicant had gone to Dalwallinu to accept work after the payment of compensation stopped, but he had suffered such severe pains on arrival that he had been returned. This might have been due to neurasthenia or to a conscious effort to defeat justice.

The applicant said that he had been working for respondent for five and a half weeks when the accident happened. He did not regain consciousness until the following morning when he was at Wyalcatchem Hospital. He had formerly been working for the Coolgardie Road Board, but had left to come to Perth for an operation for hernia. He then worked at Kulja for five or six months and three weeks later went to work for the respondent. To Mr. Louch: He had been a normally strong man before the accident. In April, 1934, he had refused to take farm work and his unemployment relief had been stopped.

Mr. Louch (reading from records): You were sacked from the Coolgardie Road Board?

Road Board?

Witness: I do not remember everything.

Counsel's Memory.

Continuing his answers to Mr. Louch, the applicant said that his relief was stopped because he would not accept "scabby" jobs. He had served with the A.I.F. He had joined the 11th Battalion in Egypt in 1915. Later he joined the 51st Battalion.

Mr. Louch: I don't suppose you remember me?

Witness: No.

I remember you. I was the adjutant. It was not long before you were transferred to an ammunition column?—No.

Were you ever in battle?—No.

Witness said that he had received worker's compensation once before the accident. When his claim on account of neurasthenia was rejected by the Repatriation Department, it went from appeal to appeal.

To Mr. Good: After all the appeals the claim failed.