

ALLEGED FORGERY

Case at Woolgoolga

MANY PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS

At Coffs Harbour Police Court on Wednesday last Albert Vincent Duerden (34) was charged on remand with having forged an order for a cheque book and a cheque for £10, and with stealing a quantity of clothing.

Constable Marsh, Woolgoolga, stated that about 9 a.m. on Sunday, 4th inst., William Richards told him something and handed him a cheque for £10 (produced). He also produced a similar cheque for £1. Witness interviewed A. Puho and showed him the £10 cheque. He produced his cheque books and then came to Coffs Harbour with witness. Inquiries were made with Coffs Harbour Police, which resulted in Puho later taking action. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Donald Cameron, by which name the defendant was known. On 6th inst defendant was arrested at Yamba.

William Richards, storekeeper, Woolgoolga, stated that on December 2 defendant came into his shop and purchased some goods tendering a cheque for £1 in payment. On December 3 he again came into the store, about 1.15 p.m. and purchased goods to the value of £2 12s 6d, tendering the cheque produced for £10. Witness gave him change. Included in the change was a cheque drawn by Albert Johnson.

Alexander Puho, banana grower and banana box cutter, Woolgoolga, stated that on December 1 defendant called at his home about 7.30 p.m.

called at his home about 7.30 p.m. and asked if he could have something to eat. He remained from Thursday till Saturday. On December 2 he gave defendant a cheque for £1. He did not leave, as he said he felt sick. He left on December 3, but did not say where he was going. He went with witness in to Woolgoolga, but prior to that, on the same day, went by mail car to Coffs Harbour and back. He went on to Woolgoolga in the mail car and returned the same day. He did not write or sign cheque for £10 produced, and did not authorise anyone to write or sign it. He had seen an order for delivery of a cheque book from the Commercial Bank, but had not written or signed it or given anyone authority to do so.

Constable Buchanan stated he saw defendant at the police office, Coffs Harbour, about 4 p.m. on December 12 and showed him an order (produced) signed "A. Puho," for delivery of a cheque book from the Commercial Bank. Defendant said he signed "A. Puho" on the order and had no authority to do so. A cheque book found in possession of the defendant was produced by witness.

How Deed Was Done

In a statement produced defendant stated that his name is Albert Duerden and his age 34 years. When he committed the offence charged, the statement added, he had walked all the way from Brisbane. He was fed up and weary. At one house he was refused a drink of water. He was desperate and forged the name of A. Puho to a cheque for £10 and cashed it at Richards' store, Woolgoolga, obtaining goods and about £6 in change. This enabled him to get a railway ticket from Coffs Harbour to South Coasters, where he travelled by

railway ticket from Coffs Harbour to South Grafton, where he travelled by bus to Yamba, and was arrested. The statement added that he was suffering from T.B. and was unable to get work that he could do. He was not strong enough to do farm work. He had been ordered out of Brisbane by the detectives. To commit the offence now charged, he went to the bank in Coffs Harbour and presented an order for a cheque book, supposed to have come from Mr. Puhio. He filled in one of the cheques for £10, went back to Woolgoolga and cashed it at Richards' store. He gave the goods to Mr. Puhio's children and spent the money received in change from the store.

Defendant told the court that he had nothing to say. He elected to be dealt with summarily and pleaded guilty.

Previous Convictions

A list read by Sergeant Blanchard showed that defendant had many previous convictions and had served many sentences for false pretences, stealing, signing a telegram without authority, obtaining a motor car by means of a valueless cheque, unlawful possession of a motor car and forging and uttering. One sentence was imposed at Grafton on July 7, 1928, and others at Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Mount Gambier (South Australia). From July 21, 1930 to February 15, 1935, sentences imposed upon him aggregated 9 years.

Defendant was also charged with forging the order for a cheque book, and with stealing a singlet, pair of pyjamas, 2 shirts, pair of bathing trunks and a pullover, valued at 7 6, the property of Reginald Hanley.

In the latter case Reginald Timothy Hanley, laborer, Coffs Harbour, stated he met defendant only once, last Sunday week, when he picked him up

Sunday week, when he picked him up and gave him a lift down to the beach. They remained at the beach for some time and then returned to witness' hut. Next morning witness went to work at 6 o'clock, leaving defendant at the hut. When he returned in the evening defendant was not there. He noticed that the key was gone, and that some clothing was missing. He identified the clothing produced as his property.

Defendant elected to be summarily dealt with and pleaded guilty to all three charges. He was sentenced to 12 months' hand labor (concurrent) on each of the two charges of forging (order to Bank and cheque), and to three months (cumulative) for stealing the clothing. This means that he will have to serve 15 months in gaol.
