

CHARGE OF MURDER.

THE DAKABIN TRAGEDY.

RUSSIAN BEFORE THE COURT.

Nicholas Tropicoff appeared, on remand, before Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Moore, P.M., in the Central Police Court yesterday, charged with the wilful murder of Teodor Makovetsky, at Dakabin, on August 25. Detective Inspector O'Sullivan prosecuted.

John Fleming, an engine-driver, gave evidence that on August 25 he was driving the Yandina train, proceeding to Roma-street. When about 200 yards on the Brisbane side of Dakabin witness saw a body lying in a new railway cutting. Shortly afterwards he reported the matter to a lengthsman, and later had the police communicated with.

Dr. Epie Dods (Government Medical Officer) said that on August 26 he proceeded to a railway cutting near Dakabin, where he saw the body of a man lying near the line. About 100 yards nearer Dakabin witness saw a swag and a hat with a big patch of blood near by. Later he saw two shovels and an iron bar on the other side of the line. There were blood stains on the handle of one of the shovels, and also on the iron bar, which had some hair adhering to it. Subsequently witness made a post-mortem examination of the body. There was a wound 2in. long and 1 1/2in wide above the left ear and 1in. behind it. There was also a wound 3in long near the left ear, and a smaller one near it. The hair about the big wound appeared to be broken, and the top of the left ear was bruised. The throat was cut, the wound commencing 1in. in front of the left ear and extending for about 7in, ending an inch behind the right ear. The cut was horizontal, and had severed the guller, nearly fracturing the spine. The skull was fractured under the big wound, the fracture extending right across the top of the skull and down to the base on both sides. The causes of death were fracture of the skull, laceration of the brain, and cut throat. The injuries to the head were alone sufficient to cause death.

Detective Acting Sergeant Smith, of the C.I. Branch, stated that on August 25 he visited the scene of the tragedy and photographed the body of Teodor Makovetsky. On September 2 he again went to Dakabin, and took some photographs of the locality wherein the body was found. (Photographs tendered.)

Constable Greer said he saw boot tracks and other marks as if the body had been dragged. About 144 yards from where the body was found witness saw a hat, swag, and pocket-knife, and pools of fresh blood. Witness covered some of the tracks before communicating with the Brisbane police. Later he saw two Russians identify the body as that of Teodor Makovetsky.

Colin Campbell also gave evidence.

Detective Senior Sergeant Power stated that on Wednesday, August 26, he went to Dakabin, and saw the body of a man whom he afterwards learned was Teodor Makovetsky. Witness made an examination of the body, and took possession of two shovels and an iron bar. Witness noticed blood on the handle of one shovel, and some blood and hair on the bar. Later witness handed these articles

shovel, and some blood and hair on the bar. Later witness handed these articles to Dr. Harris. The defendant was afterwards taken to the morgue and shown Makovetsky's body. The defendant said: "I am sorry. How did it happen?" Later witness handed to Dr. Harris several articles of clothing which the defendant was wearing when arrested.

Dr. J. Harris said that on August 28 he received from Detective Senior Sergeant Power a shovel, iron bar, and a tuft of hair. Witness examined the bar, and could find no bloodstains thereon, but he found some hair, which was indistinguishable from the tuft given him. There were bloodstains on the shovel, and they answered the test for human blood. Witness was of the opinion that the hair taken from the bar, and the tuft, had belonged to one person. Witness also examined some clothing which had been handed to him by Detective Power, but could find no bloodstains on them.

Asked by the magistrate if he wished to question the witness, the defendant intimated, through the interpreter, that he would like to know from Dr. Dods how long Makovetsky had been dead before his body was found.

The Magistrate said he would recall the doctor later.

Detective Sergeant O'Hara said that on August 27 he saw the defendant in Wharf-street, and asked him if he was out of Brisbane on Tuesday. He replied, "Yes, I was at Petrie looking for work." "Was there any one with you?" asked witness, and received the reply, "Yes, a countryman of mine." The defendant told witness that he first met this man at a registry office, and they subsequently went together to Dakabin, where they were told that they would be given work if they called the next day. They then walked to Petrie, and saw other Russians. They caught the train at Petrie, and returned to Brisbane. "Which way did you walk from Dakabin to Petrie?" witness asked, and the defendant said they walked along the railway line. "Did you leave the line at all?" witness inquired, and the defendant replied, "No, we walked along the line all the way." Defendant told witness he arrived in Brisbane before 6 o'clock. "What happened then?" asked witness, and the defendant said "We said good-bye to each other and went to our places." The defendant said that his friend wished to go back to Petrie the same night, but they ultimately resolved to leave on the following morning, as there was no need to start work until after dinner. "Did you go back next morning?" questioned witness, and the defendant said, "No, I did not go back at all." "Did you go in the mail train which left Brisbane at 10.30 that Tuesday night?" continued witness. "No," answered the defendant. "I did not go back at all." "How is that?" said witness, and the defendant replied, "I no like railway work. I like farm work better." The

defendant told witness that he did not know if his friend went back to Petrie. In answer to further questions by witness the defendant said he went home to tea when he left his friend. He went out at about 7.30, and walked up Spring Hill. Returning to town he went down near the Gardens, where he spoke to a woman and stayed with her for some time, afterwards going home. Later witness found a razor (produced) in the defendant's room. In answer to a question by witness the defendant said he owned a scalping knife, but had lost

question by witness the defendant said he owned a scalping knife, but had lost it recently. Subsequently witness again saw the defendant at the watchhouse, and said to him: "I am now going to bring a man to you who travelled in the Northern mail train on Tuesday night, August 25, and he says he travelled in the same carriage as two men who spoke in a foreign language. He has also identified the photograph of Makovetsky as one of those men, and he says he can identify the other man also. If you like I will place you amongst a number of other men for the purpose of identification, or if you prefer it he can see you alone." Defendant said, "Where he say he see me?" Witness said "He tells me that he saw the two men on the mail train between Brisbane and Petrie on the Tuesday night." Defendant replied, "Is that all he see?" and witness answered in the affirmative. The defendant said he preferred to be placed amongst some other men, and this was done. Witness sent for a man named Ernest Hunt, who was at the watchhouse, and Hunt placed his hand on the defendant, saying, "I know th's man." He added: "He is one of the two men who travelled in the same compartment as I did from Brisbane to Petrie on Tuesday night last." On Saturday, 5th inst., witness again saw the defendant at the watchhouse, and said: "I am going to bring in another man who says he travelled in the mail train on Tuesday night, August 25, and he says that two foreign men travelled in the same compartment as he did. He thinks he would know them again." Subsequently a man named Campling identified the defendant as one of two foreigners who had travelled in the same compartment as he did on Tuesday night, August 25.

At this stage the hearing was adjourned until Friday next.