

ASSAULT AND ROBBERY ALLEGED

Russian Seaman's Story.

On a charge of having in company robbed John Koblikin of a sum of £47, Peter Evanoff, of Cecil street, South Melbourne, and Harry Walter Bickoff, a seaman, were committed for trial in the South Melbourne Police Court on Monday. Messrs. Dunbar, Esmonds, and Matthews, J.P.'s, adjudicated.

Koblikin, a Russian stoker employed on the s.s. Canberra, deposed that at about 5 o'clock on the night of June 24 he went to Evanoff's house, and while talking to Evanoff produced a wallet in which were four £10 notes, one £5 note, and two £1 notes. Later Bickoff and several other Russians came to the house, and went with Koblikin to a neighbouring hotel. Each man had several drinks, and then left to return to Evanoff's house. In the street Bickoff began to quarrel with Koblikin, and struck him. Koblikin took off his coat, in the pocket of which was the wallet containing the money, and threw it on the ground. He then began to fight with Bickoff. During the struggle Koblikin saw Evanoff kick at the coat and remove the wallet from the pocket. As soon as he could free himself from Bickoff's grip he ran up to Evanoff and snatched away the wallet, examined it, and found that the money was gone. Evanoff ran into his house and shut the door. Koblikin reported his loss to the police, and with several constables returned to the house. There Mrs. Evanoff, the wife of the accused, took him inside, and told him that if he told the police that he had made a mistake and had lost the money it would be returned to him. He refused to do this. Cross-examined by Bickoff, he said that part of the money had been wages, part overtime, and part the result of visits to a two-up school which was run on board the ship.

Evanoff and Bickoff denied having stolen the money, and said that they knew that Koblikin was penniless when he came to the house, as he borrowed 7/ from Evanoff to pay for the drinks. Several witnesses who were called gave evidence that Evanoff had not touched the coat while it was on the ground.