

DISTURBANCE DURING DANCE.

Taxi-drivers Assaulted.

At the Coburg Court on Friday, before Mr. J. Macnamara, P.M., and Messrs. A. G. Campbell, W. E. Cash, and J. J. Anderson, J.P.'s, James McGrath, aged 20 years, painter, was charged with having assaulted Constable P. Lalor, Hauley Newbould, and John O'Dwyer. Alister McAskill, aged 21 years, carrier, Mayfield street, Coburg, was charged with having assaulted John O'Dwyer and Emerick Shimkovitch.

Sergeant T. McCaffrey prosecuted, and Mr. W. S. Doria appeared for the accused. All the cases were heard together.

John O'Dwyer said:—I am a Yellow taxi driver. At half-past 2 o'clock on the morning of November 2 I was plying for hire at the Coburg Town Hall, where a bachelors' ball was being held. Other drivers were also plying for hire. McAskill stepped forward and said, "Shift these cars away from here." One of my mates said, "They are all right here." Then McGrath struck me in the face.

Hauley Newbould said:—I am a foreman in the employ of the Yellow Cab Company. On the date named I was at the Coburg Town Hall organising the work. McAskill walked up and said to Shimkovitch, "I am a plain-clothes constable," and ordered Shimkovitch to move his cab. Then McGrath struck Shimkovitch on the side of the neck. Another driver named O'Dwyer was assaulted by McAskill and McGrath. A mob outside the town hall attacked taxi drivers who were waiting for fares. McGrath hit me on the neck.

Constable P. Lalor said:—McGrath struck at me twice. I warded the blows off, and as he still came at me I struck him.

Emerick Shimkovitch, Yellow taxi driver, said:—McGrath struck me on the cheek and knocked my hat off. The blow stunned me.

James McGrath said:—There was "a wrastle" outside the bachelors' ball at Coburg, a few blows were struck, and I got the worst of it. I was not at the ball, but just "hung about."

Alister McAskill said:—I was not at the dance at the Coburg Town Hall, but was "looking on" from outside at half-past 2 o'clock in the morning. It was a very "lively turnout," and I was standing outside the hall from 11 o'clock until half-past 2 o'clock.

To Mr. Macnamara, P.M.—Drinks were brought out to us from the town hall.

Sergeant McCaffrey.—Did you represent yourself

out to us from the town hall.

Sergeant McCaffrey.—Did you represent yourself as a constable to the taxi drivers?

McAskill.—No.

Mr. Macnamara, P.M. (to the accused).—You were "sponging" about for beer outside the Coburg Town Hall, and the beer made you pugilistic. It is not a good thing for you to be roaming around the streets at all hours of the night and morning.

The Bench dismissed the charge against McGrath of having assaulted Constable Lalor.

On each of the other charges of assault McGrath and McAskill were fined £5, in default a month's imprisonment, with £1 costs.
