

Criminal Court

Alleged Assault at West End

At the criminal sittings of the Supreme Court this morning, before Mr. Justice Webb, Aken Petroff was charged with having unlawfully assaulted Stephen Orloff, thereby causing bodily harm, at West End, Brisbane, on August 5, 1927. He pleaded not guilty.

Mr. F. W. Dickson was the Crown Prosecutor, and Mr. D. J. R. Watson (instructed by Mr. A. L. Macnaughton) appeared for the accused.

Opening the Crown case, Mr. Dickson said that in a quarrel between the accused and Orloff, who were friends, the latter was stabbed in the chest with a knife, although the wound, fortunately, was not dangerous. Orloff was a labourer, and had been working on the Gayndah line when he came to Brisbane in July last. On the afternoon of August 5 he met the accused at Delaney's Hotel. They had drinks together, and later had tea. Afterwards, Orloff bought a dozen bottles of beer and a bottle of whisky, supplementing the liquid refreshments with a parcel of sausages and such-like eatables. He then invited Petroff to his room in South Brisbane. The food was spread out, and the two men prepared to have "a good time." They were having a fairly good time when they quarrelled. They were talking about their strength, and the conversation engendered a hostile feeling between them. The proprietor of the house, Lomina, came to the room, suggesting that the accused should go home, as the drink was affecting him. Orloff subsequently stated that the accused wanted to fight him, and shoved him away. While pouring out a glass of beer Orloff was struck in the chest with a knife held by the accused. He said to Petroff, "Are you going mad?"

Evidence was called for the Crown

Evidence was called for the Crown on the lines suggested by the prosecutor's opening address.

Constable S. G. Watson gave police evidence, and in reply to counsel for the accused admitted that Orloff was not anxious to go on with the case against Petroff, as they had been friends for ten years.

Stephen Orloff, giving evidence, said that he had no clear memory of what happened. He did not recall a quarrel; but remembered "a scratch on the chest."

To Mr. Watson, Orloff said that he was a friend of the accused, and wished to let "bygones be bygones."

Re-examined by Mr. Dickson, Orloff said he did not want to prosecute.

Giving evidence on his own behalf, Aken Petroff said that he had one wooden leg. His right leg was lost in France when he was on active service. Amongst other things, he recently won £1,000 prize in the Golden Casket. He said that on the night of August 5 they were all "nearly drunk." His impressions of the night were confused. He remembered being hit on the head. He remembered picking up a knife, but could not say what he did with it. He also recalled being on the ground. A lady was in the room with them, and she was trying to take a ring off his finger. He had no recollection of the arrival of the constable. He was taken to the hospital suffering from a broken rib.

Proceeding.
