

Sudden Death of Mr. W. D. Drummond at Lockhart.

An inquiry was conducted at Lockhart on Saturday evening by Mr. G. Stevenson, District Coroner, into the circumstances attending the death of William Douglas Drummond, aged 42 years, a partner in the well-known firm of Drummond and Co., auctioneers and commission agents, Lockhart, who died subsequent to having a fight with a man named Charles Henry Cornell, also a well-known resident of the town. Mr. Napier watched the proceedings in the interests of the relatives of deceased, and Mr. M. Comans in the interests of Cornell.

Constable Richard Valentine Griffin of Lockhart, stated that he had viewed the body of deceased at Dr. Davies private hospital. He found a slight abrasion below and on the side of the left eye. There was also a slight bruise on the front of each shoulder. He knew deceased intimately during the last five years and saw him almost daily. He bore an excellent character and was of distinctly temperate habits. Witness also knew Charles Cornell for the past 15 years. He bore an excellent character and was a sober man. He was married with his wife alive and three children.

Sydney Elliott Napier, solicitor, said he knew deceased as a personal friend and acted as his solicitor. On Friday about 12 o'clock he saw deceased, who was apparently in the best of health. He again saw him at 2 a.m. on Saturday morning. Deceased was sinking fast but was perfectly conscious. Witness also knew Charles Cornell, who bore an excellent character for sobriety and industry, and was a peaceful man.

William Bramwell Davies stated that he was a clerk in the employ of the firm of Drummond and Co. On Friday between 9 and 10 a.m., he went to the railway yards to attend the weighing of wheat coming in, and the trucking and consigning of wheat going out. He had occasion to remove a truck belonging to the railway department. Charles Cornell came to him and said, "What are you doing with that truck?" Witness replied, "We are going to

Witness replied, "We are going to load it." Cornell said, "You can't have things all your own way." They went to the station master to see who was to get the truck. The stationmaster said, "Drummond and Co., gave an order for the trucks yesterday," and produced the order. Cornell said "That settles it." About 11.30 witness went back to the office and told deceased what had happened. He said "Why didn't you send down for me; I would have settled the argument, and if there is any difficulty let me know." Witness said, "Let it go, we have got what we wanted." About 2 p.m. witness went to the railway yard. Shortly afterwards deceased came. After some business talk he said, "I'm going up to get an explanation," and pointed towards Cornell. Deceased and witness went together and deceased was about ten yards ahead when he reached Cornell. He apparently said something to Cornell which witness did not hear, and Cornell said, "Yes." Deceased then took off his coat, collar and tie, and he and Cornell commenced to fight. They fought four or five rounds. Witness was attending to deceased and Harry Ferrier to Cornell. Deceased turned to Cornell and said, "I find I am out of condition, I'll have to give you best I suppose." They then shook hands. After they shook hands deceased appeared exhausted and sat down. Witness took him in a sulky to Doctor Davies' private hospital.

In reply to Mr. Napier, witness said the fight was fair.

Leslie Martin also gave evidence.

Charles Henry Cornell commission agent gave evidence that he was a labourer working for his brother and for the shire council up to September last. His brother John George and he then entered into partnership. The evidence given by Mr. Davies was true. On Friday about 2 p.m. witness was standing on the rails at

the goods shed when deceased came up and witness said "Good evening." Deceased walked up to the platform and said, "Are you the man that took possession of the yard this morning?" Witness said, "If you say so I suppose I am." Deceased

say so I suppose I am." Deceased said, "If you are as good as what you were this morning come and take me." Deceased then jumped off the platform alongside and witness said, "If it has got to be it will be." The fight then took place as described by previous witnesses. After the fourth or fifth round deceased said, "You are too good for me in the condition I am in." Deceased then put out his hand and witness shook hands saying, "Dudley old boy you have only yourself to blame." There had never been any bad feeling between deceased and witness. Up to that day they were the best of friends. He never once followed up any blow he gave deceased.

Henry Talbot Hamilton, a duly qualified medical practitioner, residing at Lockhart gave evidence that at about 8.30 p.m. on Friday in company with Dr. Davies, he assisted to perform an operation on deceased. They concluded he was suffering from an internal hemorrhage, and that an operation was absolutely necessary. The abdomen was found to be full of blood, hydatid fluid and cysts, evident due to a rupture of a hydatid cyst. Deceased rallied, and appeared better, due to the removal of the pressure of the fluid on the heart, but got weak and died about 7 a.m. on Saturday. Witness held a post mortem on the body of the deceased. The immediate cause of death was the rupture of the hydatid cyst in the abdomen. It was an extraordinary thing that deceased lived so long in view of the condition of the spleen and liver, through the hydatid cyst.

Annie Susan Robertson, a duly qualified medical practitioner, residing at Lockhart, corroborated the evidence of the previous witness.

The coroner found that deceased died from natural causes, to wit, the rupture of a hydatid cyst in the abdomen.