

'THE LATE Mr. M. TOBIN.

Killed While in Search of Water.

His Brother Interviewed.

Mr. Joseph Tobin, who was with his brother Michael when he was fatally speared at Wadda Walla, W.A., returned to Burra on Saturday morning with a full account of the terrible tragedy. Naturally Mr. Tobin feels the loss of his brother, more so on account of the circumstances attending his death.

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The primary purpose of the party's mission was to open up a satisfactory stock route between the goldfields and the Far North, and after some 15 months' hardships their task was completed, and all along the hitherto unknown route there is a plentiful supply of water. During the up trip it was ascertained that water could be found in another direction, and on the return journey Mr. Tobin and his party, of which Mr. A. W. Canning was chief, endeavoured to locate the spot as it would be more convenient than that previously discovered. Mr. Tobin got away from his party to the extent of some 300 or 400 yards, and it was during this fatal moment that he received a spear, thrown by a native; the weapon passed through Mr Tobin's hat, took the skin from his forehead, travelled through his ear, and finally entered the fleshy part of the shoulder. This dazed Mr. Tobin, and the aboriginal lost no time in sending a second spear towards his victim. The latter, upon recovering himself, went on his knees, and took aim at the ferocious black. While the spear was in action, coming with a terrific force, Mr. Tobin fired his revolver at the native, and almost simultaneously both men fell, the black, however, not rising again as he was shot dead, the bullet passing right through his body.

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Assistance was at once given to Mr Tobin, but the whole thing happened so suddenly that it was impossible to save him, though he was implored to retreat after the first spear struck him. Mr Tobin was the first to speak when he met the blackfellow, and in the language of the blacks said "Nothing spear"—meaning no spear; the black replied similarly, but it was all deception, for he immediately attacked his victim at a distance of about 20 yards. "The blacks there," said Mr Tobin, when interviewed by a representative of the

Record, "are as deadly and as certain with their spears as the riflemen in South Australia are with their rifles." It is the very first thing "baby blacks" are taught to do after learning to toddle, and as they grow up they are given longer spears, and by practice become efficient.

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Mr. Tobin lingered for something like 17 hours after he was speared, but from the outset he recognised that "he was done for"—his way of expressing himself—being conscious up to the last. He was buried a short distance from where he had breathed his last, under a large tree whereon are cut the words "M Tobin died April 6, 1907, W.K.E.E. The party dug a grave 9ft deep, and after wrapping their comrade up in his Coolgardie stretcher and blankets solemnly lowered his remains to their last resting place. To perpetuate the memory of Mr Tobin the party named a fine lake, about 3 miles across "Tobin Lake."

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The party with which Mr Tobin was connected were the very first white men the natives ever saw, and they viewed them with much curiosity, but no trouble was experienced with natives until this eventful search for water. On one occasion one of the party shot some birds in view of the natives, and the latter were very much amused at this. They picked up the dead birds and examined them most critically, but could not make out how they were killed, not seeing anything emerge from the gun. The fatality happened some 500 miles from Wiluna, but as there was no means provided for the sending of messages the terrible affair was not known until about July 5—or three months after it happened, so it will be seen that the party must have been engaged in a very remote spot.