

Brave Rescue Attempt

Castleconnell Drowning Fatality

Inquest Evidence

A dramatic story of the vain efforts of his two comrades to rescue a soldier from drowning was told at an inquest held by Dr J P Cleary, coroner, at the Co Courthouse, Limerick, on Saturday afternoon, on Vol. John Meehan, of Ennis, who was drowned at Castleconnell on Sunday, 28th Jun.

Supt Dunning, S.S., conducted the inquest.

Volunteer John Doyle stated that on Sunday he went swimming near Castleconnell with Vols. John Wise and C Walsh, and they were joined by Vol J Meehan. Witness started to swim across the river and was followed by deceased and Walsh. The three reached the opposite bank and rested there for about five minutes. They started to swim back and witness with the deceased were swimming abreast behind Walsh, and when they were about thirty yards from the bank deceased shouted for help. He realised at once that Meehan was in difficulties and swam towards him, and caught the deceased by the arm and neck. Meehan was shouting and his hands were moving, but his feet appeared to be crippled. Witness endeavoured to calm the deceased and was then joined by Walsh. They brought him along for some distance and then the deceased brought witness under the water. He rose again and caught the deceased by the hair. Walsh also tried to help again and in a few moments Meehan dragged Walsh under the water. Witness dived down after both of them and struck one of them with his feet. Following that all three came to the surface again and then they succeeded in bringing Meehan in some distance. Walsh eventually became exhausted and they lost their grip of Meehan who disappeared. Walsh went to the bank and witness made no more effort to find the deceased; he then got exhausted.

Supt Dunning—You certainly appear to have done your best to save this man's life.

(Replying to further questions witness said that the deceased was a fairly strong swimmer. He was 30 years and unmarried. The body was found half an hour later.

Vol. Walsh gave corroborative evidence.

Capt R Ryan, Army Medical Corps, said death was due to asphyxia following immersion in the water.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony, and sympathy was extended to the relatives of the deceased.

The foreman of the jury (Mr P Standon) said Vol. Doyle did noble work in trying to rescue his friend. Both men were to be highly commended.

The coroner concurred and said that he considered the bravery of Doyle deserved special recognition from his authorities.