

Mr O. C. Graham (coroner) held an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr George Thomas Race, which took place at the Hospital on Tuesday.

Dr Stewart, house surgeon at the Hospital, gave evidence to the effect that deceased was admitted to the Hospital on September 8, and was then in a state of complete unconsciousness and paralysed on the right side of the body, showing signs of compression of the brain, but no external laceration. An operation was performed immediately, and it was found that a large blood clot was present within the membrane of the brain, and compressing it. This blood had come from a rupture of one of the blood sinuses at the base of the brain. He never regained consciousness after the operation, and died at 1.30 a.m. on September 10, as the result of fracture of the base of the skull.

Hannah Race, wife of the deceased, gave evidence of identification, and also stated that her late husband was the licensee of the Farmers' Arms Hotel. He was 42 years of age. On September 7 deceased went out from the hotel on horseback. The horse was a very nervous animal, and had only just been brought in off the grass, and consequently was very fresh. Deceased was not an experienced horseman, and seldom went out riding. As deceased set out along the street a motor car passed him. The horse "jibbed" and sided to the opposite side of the street on which the car was travelling. Deceased continued to ride along the street, and witness called to him to come back, which he did. He said he was only going round the block for a ride, and that he would be back in a minute or two. He then turned the horse round and went on, and as he did so he touched the horse with a whip. The animal then reared up and threw him. Deceased fell on his right side, and his head fell back, striking the street. Witness ran to his assistance, and held his head up, while two men from the house, who had followed her, helped to lift him up, and assisted deceased to walk into the hotel. Witness said.

"Are you hurt, George?" and he replied, "Oh! my head." He was laid on a couch in the sitting room, and witness went back to the bar. She saw him a little later, and he appeared quite sick. Witness told him to lie down for a while and he would be all right in a few minutes, and he replied "Yes." The accident occurred about 5.15 p.m. Deceased was helped upstairs to bed about 7 p.m., and he said he would be all right in a while. Mr Jones remained with him. When witness went up to see him a little later deceased appeared to be sleeping. He was the same at 10 o'clock, and Dr Evans was summoned. The doctor said deceased was unconscious and paralysed on one side. Dr Evans called later that night, and also again on Sunday. After the latter visit he recommended the removal of the deceased to the Hospital. The motor car had nothing to do with the accident.

John William Jones, blacksmith, stated that he knew deceased well, and was at the Farmers' Arms on Saturday. He saw deceased ride along the right-of-way into the street from the hotel yard. He heard Mrs Race scream, and, running out, saw deceased lying on the ground and the horse walking away down the street. He assisted to help the deceased into the hotel. He did not see the accident.

To Senior Sergeant King: Witness saw deceased about a quarter of an hour before he got on the horse. He was sober and well, and there was nothing unusual about him.

After hearing the evidence, the coroner's verdict was that the cause of death was a fracture of the base of the skull, caused through deceased being accidentally thrown from a horse.