

## THE DANNEVIRKE FATALITY.

**The Inquest.**

**Quite Accidental.**

(From the Advocate.)

At the inquest held at Dannevirke on the death of Albert Neilson, James Edward Omundsen deposed that he was about ten years of age, and resided with his parents. He knew Albert Neilson, and went home from school with him on Tuesday. They picked up his brother Bert near the swing bridge, and all three went up to Neilson's house together to feed the fowls. George Wilkins joined them there, and afterwards they went into the kitchen. Albert got a parcel down and was unrolling it on the table. Bert and George were close by. Witness asked Albert where the gun was, but got no reply, and he (witness) went into the bedroom, where he thought it was. It was lying on the sofa, and just as he picked it up it went off. The hammer was up, and he did not pull the trigger. When he picked it up it was pointing through the door. He did not know the gun was loaded, and he could not say what made it go off, unless it was the way he picked it up. It went off immediately he picked it up. He saw Albert fall, and then he called to his brother to "come on," and left the house.

To the Coroner: He saw Albert when he picked the gun up, but he did not point the gun at him.

To Sergt. Cruickshank: He was very frightened and ran away. George Wilkins came after him and asked him to

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go back. He told Wilkins he could not go as he had a lot of wood to chop. He did not say to Wilkins that he (Wilkins) shot deceased. If anyone said that it must have been his younger brother. His brother was shot in the side of the head, but witness did not know it until some time afterwards. He was chums with Albert, and he had been at Neilson's house previously, but he had never done any shooting.

To the Coroner: He thought the gun was in the room because he saw it there before. He had never previously handled it, but he had seen Albert using the pea rifle.

Charles Neilson, farmer, at Tepapakuku, deposed that deceased was his only son. He would have been 12 years old on the 19th inst. His house at Tepapakuku was not occupied, and Albert lived with the Clausens at Dannevirke. Witness and deceased stayed at the house together on Saturday night and Sunday. Witness had the gun out looking for rabbits. It was loaded with No. 3 shot. On returning to the house he put the gun on the sofa in the room next to the kitchen. He did not remember taking the cartridge out of the gun, as he was in a hurry to get away. He knew the lads and he was satisfied that the death of his son was the result of a pure accident.

The jury, without retiring, brought in a verdict that deceased met his death through being accidentally shot by James Edward Omundsen.

The sad sequel to the recent shooting accident at Tepapakuku was told yesterday when news reached town from Waipukurau that the boy, Bertie Omundsen, who was wounded by a stray shot, had died at the Hospital there yesterday morning.

It will be remembered that immediately after the fatality the little fellow, in company with his elder brother, left the house and ran away. On the way it was discovered that he had received an injury to his hand and head, a shot having penetrated the skull near one of the temples. That evening he was attended by Dr. Dawson, who did not deem it expedient to attempt to extract the shot at that time, but ordered his removal to the Waipukurau Hospital, where there were better facilities for performing the operation. Yesterday morning, when the lad left per train, he was apparently in the best of spirits. Considerable surprise was therefore felt yesterday when it was known that his wounds had proved fatal.

No information has yet been received as to the circumstances under which death took place—whether he died while undergoing an operation or not—but we feel sure that the sincere sympathy of the community will go out to the two fathers, who have thus each lost a son through what can only be regarded as a most unfortunate accident.

The funeral of the first victim took place yesterday and was largely attended, the school cadets forming a guard of honour.