

TRAGEDY AT TUAPEKA WEST FARMER AND HIS WIFE SHOT

LAWRENCE, August 4:

The residents of Tuapeka West were thrown into a state of commotion and excitement on Thursday night, when it was reported that a domestic tragedy had occurred in their midst, and that Mr and Mrs Colchan had been found lying dead on the kitchen floor by an employee who had just returned from his work on the farm.

The Colchans were comparatively recent settlers in the district, having about a year ago, just after their marriage, taken up the

ago, just after their marriage, taken up the farm previously occupied by Messrs Goldsmith Bros. So far as those acquainted with the young couple could judge, they lived happily together, and the reason that led to so sad an ending of their lives will, it is to be feared, remain a mystery.

It is known, however, that Mr Colehan had been drinking heavily of late, and that is thought to be the cause of the action.

The particulars so far as can at present be ascertained are meagre. It is known, however, that the deed must have happened shortly after 5 o'clock, for a Mrs Johnston, housekeeper for Mr Stanton, a neighbouring farmer, had been with Mrs Colehan, and had seen her, and had left

Colehan during the afternoon, and only left for home about 5 p.m. During her presence in the house Mr Colehan was in the front room, reading a newspaper, while she and Mrs Colehan were in the kitchen.

At about 5.30 John Cowie and Patrick Fahey returned from their work on the farm, and the former entered the kitchen for the purpose of getting a towel to have a wash.

Immediately on opening the door he saw the two bodies lying on the floor, and, seeing a considerable quantity of blood, he concluded that something serious had occurred, and called his companion.

An examination showed that both were dead. Mrs Colehan had a wound in the right temple, and her husband a wound in the left temple. The body of Colehan was overlying that of his wife, whose head was resting upon the sofa, and it is conjectured that after shooting his wife Colehan had stood over her body and then turned the pea rifle on himself.

The late Mr Colehan, who was 30 years of age, was a son of Mrs Colehan, recently hotelkeeper at Waitati, and his wife, who was 25 years of age, was originally a Miss Ritchie, of Invercargill.

The coroner's jury returned a verdict in

THE coroner's jury returned a verdict in the case of Agnes Colohan that she met her death from a rifle shot inflicted by her husband when he was apparently in a state of unsound mind; and in the case of Thomas Colchan that he met his death by a rifle shot self-inflicted when he was apparently in a state of unsound mind.

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