

POISONING TRAGEDY

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MISS JOHNCOCK CHARGED

DECLARED INSANE

Eileen Maud Johncock, 25 years of age, single, of Port Lincoln, appeared before Mr. Justice Richards, in the Criminal Court, Adelaide, on August 9, charged with having murdered Lorna Fay Tyrrell, aged one year and 11 months, at Port Lincoln, on Thursday, May 31, 1928.

Mr. R. R. Chamberlain (of the Crown Law Department) appeared for the Crown, and Mr. C. A. Sandery (Public Solicitor) represented accused.

Mr. Chamberlain said he had reason to believe that Miss Johncock was not of a mental condition to understand the nature of the charge or of the evidence.

Mr. Sandery called Dr. Michael Henry Downey (superintendent of the Parkside Mental Hospital), who stated that he had questioned accused whether she was able to understand the charge of murder and if she were able to make a proper defence. He was of opinion that accused was not able to do either. He also found that she would not be able to understand the details of evidence and instruct counsel respecting her defence.

Dr. Downey stated that the mother of accused had been admitted to Parkside Mental Hospital at the age of 20. She was then a single woman. She had been discharged from the institution in 1901, but had been readmitted in 1907. During the intervening period the mother of accused had been married and accused was a child of the marriage. The mother was still in the institution and was chronically insane. It was a predisposing cause to insanity in accused and to her state of nerves. The mother of accused had a sister who was also insane and was a patient

mother of accused had a sister who was also insane and was a patient at the Mental Hospital.

Accused was adjudged to be insane by the jury, and was ordered to be kept in custody during the pleasure of the Governor.