

Mr. Sweeney. Is he an Irishman?
Burke: No, thank God he isn't. I have heard him say he is not naturalised, and will not fight for Britain.

What impression did this leave on your mind?—It made me feel that if I had two legs I would have stood up and hit him. He says he comes from Holland.

Louis Van der Roost, a Dutchman, was next interviewed. When asked whether he considered Rodman to be a German, he replied, "Well, he never came from Hamburg or Berlin." In his opinion Rodman had a good knowledge of Holland.

Harold Morter, gardener at the asylum, stated that he had "pumped" Rodman often, but had not heard him say anything about the war or against the Allies. "He seems to me," said Morter, "to be playing a game, and a very deep game. I personally believe that he is a German. I believe he has said to one or two persons that he is not naturalised, and will not be naturalised."

This comprised the whole of the evidence taken.

Thomas Rodman was then called before the committee, and acquainted with the complaints which had been made concerning his conduct.

When questioned by Mr. Birch as to whether he was a German, Rodman replied, "I am not."

Mr. Birch: What country do you belong to?

Rodman: Holland. I was there until I was 13 years of age. Then I went to sea. I sailed to America, Russia, France and Dutch East Indies.

Mr. Birch: Were you never in Germany?
—Rodman: Yes, I was there twice, but only for three weeks at the most, and then on board ship. I certainly side with the Allies. It would be a poor lookout for me if I didn't.

Are you naturalised?—No, I am not naturalised. I tried to get naturalised some years ago in Tasmania, but I was refused because I would not forswear my fatherland. I have been out here 29 years, and have been in Victoria about 14 or 15 years. I am 51 years of age, and a married man. I have lived in Bendigo and Melbourne, and have been in the Bendigo district for about 11 years. My sympathy is certainly with Great Britain and the Allies, and if called to arms I would fight for the Allies. I did not say that I would not fight for Britain.

Mr. Birch: Did you say that you could not be forced to fight for Britain?—I might have said that, but it was in a jocular manner. Since I have been connected with the British people I have always thrown in my lot with them.

Why don't you apply for naturalisation papers now?—I still have the idea that I will have to forswear my fatherland, and that is dead against my desires.

The chairman pointed out to Rodman the necessity of being very careful regarding any statements he made concerning the war, and he was then allowed to retire.

After a short discussion the committee came to the conclusion that the evidence in support of the charge of disloyalty was not strong enough to warrant the dis-

It was decided, however,

2400 358
GERMAN OR DUTCH?

WARDSMAN'S NATIONALITY.

ASYLUM INMATES' COMPLAINT.

ALLEGED DISLOYAL SENTIMENTS.

For over an hour yesterday afternoon the house committee of the Bendigo Benevolent Asylum, comprising Messrs. L. B. Birch (president), E. Saunders and G. J. Sweeney, was occupied investigating a charge of uttering disloyal sentiments preferred against one of the wardsmen named Thomas Rodman. The information against Rodman, who has only been employed at the asylum for about six weeks, was communicated to the full committee of the asylum yesterday, and was referred to the house committee for investigation.

John Keenan was called before the committee to give evidence in support of his complaint. He said on one occasion recently he overheard a conversation between a wardman named Thomas Rodman and another inmate. Whilst the two were conversing on the subject of the sinking of the Persia, Rodman said it served them (meaning the passengers) right. Some weeks later witness was in the reading-room. This was at the time when the Federal recruiting cards were being issued. Someone said to Rodman, "You will have to go to the war now," to which he replied, "No, I am not naturalised, and I would not fight for Great Britain." On a subsequent occasion Rodman said he wanted to find a magazine which had been lying on the library table, showing the positions of the British and German fleets in the North Sea, as he said he would like to make a copy of it. He never gained possession of the magazine. Rodman claimed to be a Dutchman, but there was a Dutchman in the institution with whom he was unable to converse in his native tongue. He gave as his excuse that he had only been a short time on a Dutch boat. To look at him, continued the witness, Rodman seemed to have all the characteristics of a Prussian. The acts of the man indicated that he was a German sympathiser. Every man in the place thoroughly believed that he was a German. There was a good deal of feeling among the inmates in regard to the matter.

The committee then interviewed J. Burke, a crippled inmate of the institution, who occupies the position of tailor. Burke answered the questions of the committee-men in a very guarded manner. In reply to a question by Mr. Sweeney as to Rodman's nationality, Burke said, "I don't know what he is, but he is some sort of a kriegsmann."

1400 358
BENDIGO BENEVOLENT ASYLUM.

The committee met yesterday. Present:—Messrs. G. J. Sweeney (in the chair), E. W. Kirby, J. S. Stewart, W. Bruce and H. Birch (hon. sec.). Apologies were received from Major C. H. Davis and Messrs. E. O. Henneson and J. Beckett. Fifty-two applicants were granted aid. Reports were received from the medical officer (Dr. J. D. Boyd), superintendent (Mr. J. S. M'Inroy) and collector (Mr. C. Reed). Ninety-two distributions were made outdoor during the week to families consisting of 108 adults and 127 children, and there are in the institution 126 males, 53 females, 1 lying-in patient, 1 infant; total, 191.