

CORONERS.

13 OF 1894.

TO MAKE PROVISION FOR THE HOLDING OF INQUIRIES INTO THE CAUSE
OF DEATH IN CERTAIN CASES.

WALTER J. SENDALL.]

[May 30, 1894.]

Definitions.

1. In this Law, unless there is something inconsistent in the context:—

“ Inquest ” means an inquiry into the cause of death;

“ Coroner ” includes Deputy Coroner;

“ Jurisdiction ” means the area within which a Coroner or Deputy Coroner is empowered to hold inquests.

Appointment
of Coroners
and Deputy
Coroners.

2. The High Commissioner may, from time to time, by writing under his hand and official seal, appoint fit and proper persons to be Coroners for the purpose of holding inquests, and also fit and proper persons to be Deputy Coroners, to hold inquests during the absence, illness or incapacity of Coroners.

Every such appointment shall define the area within which the Coroner or Deputy Coroner thereby appointed shall be empowered to hold inquests.

Notice of
death to be
given to
police and to
Coroner.

3. When any person has reason to believe that a person has died from other than natural causes, it shall be his duty to give immediate information of the death to the Police at the nearest Police Station; and it shall be the duty of the Police at such Station to give immediate information of the death to the Coroner, or, in case of his absence or incapacity, to the Deputy Coroner within whose jurisdiction the death has occurred. Any person who fails to perform the duty imposed upon him by this section shall be liable to a fine not exceeding two pounds.

Coroner to
hold inquest
in certain
cases.

4. When it comes to the knowledge of a Coroner that a dead body of a person is lying within his jurisdiction, and there is reasonable cause to suspect that such person has died either a violent or an unnatural death, or has died a sudden death of which the cause is unknown, or has died under such circumstances as to render an inquest desirable, the Coroner shall, as soon as possible, take all necessary steps to hold an inquest into the cause of the death:

Provided that it shall not be necessary for a Coroner to hold an inquest into the cause of the death of any convict who has suffered death under the judgment of a competent Court.

5. In the event of the body having been buried before the Coroner has been enabled to view it, he may order the body to be disinterred and examined, or he may proceed to hold the inquest without having viewed the body, if he is satisfied that no good would result from the viewing or examination of the body.

Coroner may order disinterment, or hold inquest without viewing the body.

6. The Coroner shall take all such evidence as it is possible for him to procure, as to the identity of the deceased, and as to the cause of death, and, for that purpose, may examine all such persons as witnesses as he may think it necessary or desirable to examine.

Coroner to take evidence.

7. Every witness, before being examined, shall be required to take an oath in the form prescribed in Schedule A. or, if he objects to take an oath, to make a promise and declaration in the form prescribed in Schedule B.

Evidence to be taken on oath.

8. A Coroner shall not be bound by any rules of evidence which may pertain to civil or criminal proceedings.

Not bound by rules of evidence.

9. The Coroner shall take down in writing, in the form of a narrative all oral evidence given before him at the inquest, and shall, on the termination of the evidence of each witness, read over the notes of the evidence given by the witness, and the witness shall sign, or make his mark at the foot or end of the notes of the evidence so given by him.

Notes of evidence to be taken and signed.

10. The Coroner may, at any time, adjourn an inquest, at any stage to any future day to be fixed by him, or to any place within his jurisdiction which he may deem to be desirable.

Powers to adjourn inquest.

11. After having taken all the evidence which is desirable or necessary to be taken, the Coroner shall draw up and sign a note, stating his finding as to the cause of death, and whether any and what person has caused it.

Coroner to draw up and sign a note of finding.

12. Should the evidence, in the opinion of the Coroner, warrant a charge of homicide being brought against any person, the Coroner may issue warrants of arrest of any such person or persons, ordering him or them to be brought before a Magisterial Court.

Power to issue warrants of arrest.

Such warrants shall be directed to any Peace Officer, and shall have the same force and effect as warrants of arrest issued by a Magisterial Court.

13. Where the Coroner finds that some person is criminally responsible for having caused the death, he shall forward with all despatch to the Local Commandant of Police of the District his finding, together with the notes of the evidence, unless the Local Commandant of Police shall have held the inquest himself.

Finding to be sent to Local Commandant of Police in cases of homicide.