

proceeds as though no previous enquiry had been held. The coroner's depositions are not employed as evidence. In fact, the magistrate treats the case as though he were proceeding under an ordinary warrant.

If the magistrate confirms the charge, the case is sent up to the Grand Jury, and here again all the witnesses are once more summoned and the evidence is repeated, and the Grand Jury finding a true bill, the case goes before the Petit Jury, and again the evidence is repeated.

It appears to your Committee that this procedure is singularly cumbrous, and that, besides harassing the witnesses, it allows an unduly large number of loopholes of escape for those really guilty, upon some legal technicality or faulty observance of legal procedure. Your Committee, considering that the problem of how this procedure may be simplified is a purely legal one, does not offer any suggestions on the matter.

Taking all these disadvantages into consideration, and being especially impressed by the fact that the earliest stages in the investigation of suspicious death must of necessity be of a medical nature, and by the further fact that where the legal proceedings of the coroner lead to a definite charge against an individual or individuals those legal proceedings are practically passed over unnoticed by the higher courts, your Committee have come to the conclusion that a drastic change in the mode of investigation of suspicious deaths is advisable in this Province.

There are two questions which naturally suggest themselves prominently in connection with questions of coroners' reform. The first is, Should the coroner be a physician or a lawyer? and the second, Should the office of coroner be abolished?

With regard to the qualifications necessary for coroners, your Committee does not think it necessary to dwell upon the relative advantages of having medical or legal coroners, although this is a subject of dispute which has now been fruitlessly discussed for more than a century, and will in all likelihood continue to be so as long as the coroner system lasts. We wish simply to state the fact of the existence of diversity of opinion on this matter. That there should be any question as