

Canada. Having carefully perused the Bill, we consider it faulty in several particulars, and in the matter of fees especially so. By the Bill, the Coroner is empowered to summon any medical witness whom he pleases, and the medical witness is bound to obey the order, or pay a penalty of ———, unless "he can show good and sufficient reason for not having obeyed it." To this compulsory power on the part of the Coroner we see no good ground for objecting, were the witness afterwards to be remunerated according to a proper scale; but this, we think disproportionate to the services rendered, and bearing no relation to the fine for disobedience likely to be imposed, which will not be, we apprehend, less than £5, "to be levied by distress and sale of the offender's goods."

The third clause of the Bill, contains the scale of remuneration for professional services, which it is proposed shall be £1 5s. for an opinion without a *post mortem* examination; £2 10s. for an opinion and *post mortem* examination; and £5 for an opinion, *post mortem* examination, and chemical analysis of the stomach and intestines if required. Now, we conceive that the fee for the *post mortem* examination should not be less than £3 15s., the sum allowed in this section of the Province; and the fee of £5 for the chemical investigation, is quite disproportionate to the service demanded. The detection of poisons is one of the most delicate operations which the medical jurist has to perform. It requires dexterity in manipulating, the result of practice, intimate chemical knowledge, which is not to be acquired without study, and, above all, time, which might extend over several days. These circumstances, super-added to which is involved in an eminent degree the professional character of the operator, demand that for the performance of such work, the remuneration should be at least adequate to its nature. In Dublin, we are informed that the lowest fees obtained for such services, is £12 10s. sterling, over and above the fee for the *post mortem* examination, and it should certainly not be less here. The lawyer is remunerated for an opinion, involving contingencies of much less moment than life, at a far higher rate, and the Profession should demand (now that legislation is being attempted for it) a scale of remuneration for its services proportionate to their value.

The third clause, moreover, contains the scale of remuneration, in going to and returning from the inquest, which is fixed at one shilling per mile, for each mile of travel to and from it. In this respect the medical witness is worse off than the Coroner himself, who, besides the shilling per mile, is allowed his necessary expenses while absent from home. It must be

borne in mind, that in the compulsory fulfilment of this duty, the practitioner is called upon to throw aside all his other professional engagements; and how far his time would be compensated, and his services remunerated, by the foregoing payment, with the possibility of his attendance being further compensated by a \$5 bill, is a question about which, we think, there can be no difference of opinion.

The Act again expressly limits the power of the Coroner to the summoning of *medical* witnesses, by whom it is expected that the services are to be wholly performed. If the medical witness be unable to examine chemically the stomach or its contents for a poisonous agent, and we maintain that this is an operation which all medical men are not able to perform satisfactorily, however well they may be acquainted with the procedure theoretically, the Coroner is precluded from calling in to his assistance a *non-medical* witness, or should he do so, a legal doubt may arise as to his ability, from the wording of the Act, to fee him. Now, we have ourselves received, on one occasion, the contents of a stomach from Upper Canada, for examination, and we are aware, that the Professor of Chemistry at King's College, who is not a medical man, has had a similar duty to perform on more than one occasion. The provisions for the remuneration of services under such circumstances, should not be restricted to the medical Profession. The intention is, for the ends of justice, to get the operation performed, and that well; and no matter who he is who performs it, the means of remuneration ought to be beyond a question.

The Bill has exclusive reference to Upper Canada, but we do not see why the provisions of such an Act might not be made to extend to the Lower Province which requires legislation also on this matter. We notice this Bill as a matter of duty to the Profession in Upper Canada, and have expressed our own opinion upon it: and in inviting the attention of the Profession to the subject, we should desire to see some expression of their ideas in our columns.

FRONTIER MEDICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editor of the *British American Journal*.

Odetown, March 26, 1848.

Dear Sir:—Knowing, from your noble and disinterested advocacy of the cause of the profession, the deep interest you feel in its weal, and the pleasure that any movement tending to its advancement will give you, I beg to enclose for publication (if you deem them worthy) the minutes of the proceedings of two meetings that we have had on the frontier. These are but merely preliminary, it being our intention, after we have become