

We would not at this moment go so far as to say that there should be established an official board of experts, who should advise as to the strength or weakness of the medical and scientific evidence in connection with any suggested criminal charge brought against an individual, but we would urge that in future the Crown should nominate or seek the advice of two or three responsible professional men who should report upon the value of the evidence and its interpretation. Experts so nominated would be in a thoroughly impartial position, their duties would not be to lean either to the one side or the other, but to seek out the truth, to get to the bottom of the case, and to report their conclusions to the Crown, leaving it to the Crown to act upon their report. In short, to illustrate what we mean, the admirable and impartial evidence given by the crown experts, by Dr. Stewart, Dr. Douglass and Professor Ellis in examination and cross-examination ought to have been in the hands of the crown officials before ever there was a thought of drawing out an indictment against Hooper, and we may add that the Crown, with plenty of time before it, rather than the defence, should have initiated experiments to determine the conditions under which a poison, such as prussic acid, is discoverable or tends to disappear in the decomposing animal body.

If we feel bound to urge these matters, there is a further point in connection with medico-legal enquiries which this trial brings prominently forward and which we must insist upon even more strongly, and that is the inadequacy of the present coroner's system of this and the neighbouring province to deal with cases of sudden and suspicious death. Every case of sudden death ought to be the subject of immediate investigation, we will not say necessarily by the coroner and his jury, but by a medical man of good standing, who should advise as to the necessity of holding an inquest. Here it is not impossible that the contention of the prosecuting counsel was true, and that the eleven days which elapsed before anything was done were sufficient to destroy all traces of the poison. This very contention is an admission on the part of the crown that the