



BELIZE

**CORONERS ACT
CHAPTER 126**

REVISED EDITION 2011
SHOWING THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS AS AT 31ST
DECEMBER, 2011

This is a revised edition of the Substantive Laws, prepared by the Law Revision Commissioner under the authority of the Law Revision Act, Chapter 3 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011.

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CORONERS

Ch. 12,
 R.L., 1958.
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 1 of 1969.
 11 of 1970.
 13 of 1970.
 8 of 1982.
 22 of 1987.
 18 of 1998.
 42 of 1999.
 S.I. 17 of 1964.

[9th May, 1953]

PART I

Preliminary

1. This Act may be cited as the Coroners Act.

Short title.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

Interpretation.

“coroner” means a coroner appointed under this Act;

“district” means a judicial district established under the Inferior Courts Act, Cap. 94;

“inquest” means an investigation as to the cause of any death held by a coroner with a jury as hereinafter provided;

“inquiry” means an investigation held by a coroner without a jury;

“unnatural death” includes every case of death of a person,

- (a) which occurs in a sudden, violent or unnatural manner;
- (b) where a dead body is found; or
- (c) as to which any reasonable suspicion exists,

- (i) that it has not arisen from natural causes; or
- (ii) that any person is criminally responsible for it.

PART II

Coroners, Unnatural Death Reports and Order of Burial etc.

The coroners.

3.-(1) The Chief Justice shall, by virtue of his office, be the Supreme Coroner for Belize and shall have the superintendence of all other coroners in the performance of their duties.

(2) Every other judge of the Supreme Court shall, by virtue of his office, be a superior coroner.

(3) The magistrate of each district shall be a coroner in and for the district to which he is appointed under the Inferior Courts Act, Cap. 94.

13 of 1970.

(4) Where the appointment of any coroner has terminated during the hearing of any cause or matter and such coroner has not completed the hearing of the cause or matter it shall be lawful for the Governor-General within one year to reappoint such coroner to continue the hearing of the cause or matter and to determine the said cause or matter, and such reappointment shall operate as if the original appointment had never been terminated.

Magistrate principally responsible for exercising duties of coroner.

4.-(1) A magistrate in his capacity as a coroner shall be principally responsible for performing the duties of a coroner in his district.

(2) If the magistrate of the district is by reason of the distance he is at the time from the place where the dead body is lying, or for any other reason, unable to act immediately, then the justice of the peace nearest to that place, to whom credible information of any unnatural death is given, shall exercise the functions and perform the duties of a coroner under this Act with respect to that unnatural death.

- 5.-(1) Every person who becomes aware of an unnatural death shall notify it to the coroner or at the nearest police station.
- (2) Everyone who knowingly and wilfully fails to notify an unnatural death as required by subsection (1) of this section is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars.
6. Where an unnatural death is reported to, or comes to the knowledge of, any member of the police department, he shall forthwith cause a report thereof to be made to the coroner.
7. Where an unnatural death is reported to or comes to the knowledge of the coroner, he shall, subject to the other provisions of this Act, forthwith cause due investigation to be made as to the cause of that death and, if necessary, hold an inquest or, if the circumstances so require, he shall hold an inquiry.
8. Whenever it is expedient that the dead body of a person should be examined by a duly qualified medical practitioner, the coroner shall forthwith issue his order in Form 5 of the Schedule to this Act, to a Government Medical Officer or other duly qualified medical practitioner to make a *post mortem* examination of that body.
9. When from any cause the instructions of the coroner cannot be promptly obtained, and it is expedient that a person's dead body should be examined by a duly qualified medical practitioner without delay, the Commissioner of Police or an assistant superintendent of police or, if the instructions of any of those officers cannot be promptly obtained, the member of the police department in charge of the police station nearest to the place where the dead body is lying, may require a duly qualified medical practitioner to make a *post mortem* examination of the body.
- 10.-(1) The medical practitioner who is so ordered or required under section 8 or 9 of this Act to make the *post mortem* examination shall thereupon, unless he is unavoidably prevented, proceed to the place where the body is lying, and make such examination of it as may enable him to ascertain the cause of death.

Report of unnatural death.

Duty of police.
42 of 1999.

Duty of coroner.

Order for *post mortem* examination.

Emergency cases.
42 of 1999.

Post mortem examination.

42 of 1999.

(2) If by reason of the distance between the place where the dead body is lying and the place where the medical practitioner is residing or for any other cause, it is inconvenient for him to proceed to the former place, the dead body may be removed by a member of the police department to a mortuary or any other convenient place in any part of Belize.

(3) The medical practitioner, if it is necessary in order to ascertain the cause of death, shall extend the examination to the dissection of the body and an analysis of any portion thereof, and may cause any portion thereof to be transmitted to any qualified government medical officer or other expert referred to in section 36 (1) of the Evidence Act, Cap. 95.

(4) Where a medical practitioner ordered or required to make a *post mortem* examination is unavoidably prevented from so doing, he shall forthwith give notice of the fact to the coroner or at the nearest police station.

Report of examination.

11.-(1) The medical practitioner who makes the examination shall after doing so draw up a report of the appearances of the body and of the conclusions which he draws therefrom and certify as to the cause of death so far as he can ascertain it, and he shall date and sign the report.

42 of 1999.

(2) The report may be delivered to a member of the police department or a rural constable for transmission to the coroner.

(3) The report so made shall be admissible as evidence at any inquest or inquiry, and shall be *prima facie* evidence of the facts stated therein.

No examination by any person charged with neglect.
42 of 1999.

12. Where any credible information is given to the coroner, or to any member of the police department authorised to require a *post mortem* examination to be made of the body of any person, that the death of that person was caused partly or entirely by the improper or negligent treatment of any medical practitioner or other person, that medical practitioner or other person shall not be allowed to perform or assist at the *post mortem* examination of the body.

Order on preliminary investigation.

13.-(1) Where the death of any person is reported to, or first comes to the knowledge of, the coroner as an unnatural death, he may make a

preliminary investigation, and if he considers after doing so that it is unnecessary to hold an inquest or an inquiry, he may issue an order in Form 8 of the Schedule to this Act, for the burial of the body.

(2) The order may be issued either before or after any examination of the body by a qualified medical practitioner.

(3) Whenever the coroner issues an order for the burial of the body without holding an inquest or inquiry, he shall report the facts to the Chief Justice and the grounds for the order and transmit all reports and documents in his possession connected with the matter.

14.-(1) When an inquest or inquiry is to be held, and the coroner considers that it is unnecessary to order a *post mortem* examination of the body, he may authorise the burial of the body without any examination.

Order when inquest or inquiry to be held.

(2) Where an inquest or inquiry is to be held and the coroner considers it expedient to order a *post mortem* examination of the body, he may authorise the burial of the body in Form 9 of the Schedule to this Act, after that examination has been duly made by a qualified medical practitioner.

(3) Where from any cause the instructions of the coroner cannot be promptly obtained, the Commissioner of Police or an assistant superintendent of police or, if the instructions of any of those officers cannot be promptly obtained, then the member of the police department in charge of the police station nearest to the place where the dead body is lying, may authorise the burial of the body after a *post mortem* examination thereof has been duly made under this Act by a duly qualified medical practitioner.

42 of 1999.

(4) The authorisation shall be immediately reported to the coroner by the person giving it.

(5) Except in case of necessity, the order for burial under this section shall not be made until the coroner's jury in the case of an inquest, or the coroner in the case of an inquiry, has had an opportunity of determining whether it is expedient to view the body, but where the condition of the body requires that it should be immediately buried, an

order or authorisation for burial under this section may be given before the commencement of any inquest or inquiry.

PART III

Inquests and Inquiries

Inquest or inquiry.

15. Where an unnatural death is reported to, or comes to the knowledge of, the coroner, he shall, subject to section 13 of this Act, hold an inquest, except when he is authorised or required under this or any other Act to hold an inquiry, and then he shall hold an inquiry.

Power to hold inquest without a jury in certain cases.

16.—(1) Subject to this section, a coroner within whose jurisdiction the dead body of a person is lying, may, *in lieu* of summoning a jury in the manner required by section 23 of this Act for the purpose of investigating the death of that person, hold an inquiry.

(2) If it appears to the coroner either before he proceeds to hold an inquest or in the course of an inquiry, that there is reason to suspect,

- (a) that the deceased came by his death by murder, manslaughter or infanticide;
- (b) that the death occurred in a prison or in such place or in such circumstances as to require an inquest under any other Act;
- (c) that the death was caused by an accident, poisoning or disease, notice of which is required to be given to a government department, or to any inspector or other officer of a government department, under or in pursuance of any Act;
- (d) that the death was caused by an accident arising out of the use of a vehicle in a street or public highway; or
- (e) that the death occurred in circumstances the continuance or possible recurrence of which is

prejudicial to the health or safety of the public or any section of the public,

he shall proceed to summon a jury in the manner required by section 23, and in any other case, if it appears to him, either before he proceeds to hold an inquest or in the course of an inquiry, that there is any reason for summoning a jury, he may proceed to summon a jury in the manner aforesaid.

(3) The provisions of this Act relating to the procedure in connection with an inquest shall, as respects an inquiry or any part of an inquiry, have effect subject to such modifications as are rendered necessary by the absence of a jury, and where an inquiry is held, the inquisition shall be under the hand of the coroner alone.

(4) Where an inquiry or any part of any inquiry is held, anything done at the inquiry, or at that part of the inquiry, by or before the coroner alone shall be as validly done as if it had been done by or before the coroner and a jury.

17.-(1) An inquest shall be held in every case of the death of any person confined in any prison, lock-up or place of confinement for persons accused or convicted of having committed any offence, except in cases where it is not practicable to obtain the services of a sufficient number of jurors.

Inquest on body of prisoner.

(2) No person connected with the prison service or with the Belize Police Department shall be summoned to serve as a juror on the inquest.

42 of 1999.

(3) Where the services of a sufficient number of jurors cannot be obtained, the magistrate of the district in which the prison, lock-up or place of confinement is situate shall forthwith hold an inquiry as to the cause of the death.

18. Whenever a person comes to his death, or is reasonably supposed to be dead, but his body cannot be found, a coroner may, and whenever required by the Chief Justice shall, hold an inquiry into the circumstances connected with the death or supposed death of that person.

Inquiry where body cannot be found.

Requisition by Chief Justice that inquest or inquiry be held.

19.—(1) The Chief Justice may require a coroner to hold an inquest or inquiry into the cause of, and the circumstances connected with, the death of any person, and may do so although an inquest or inquiry with respect to the same death has been already commenced or held or returned, and every coroner so required shall have full power to hold and shall hold that inquest or inquiry.

(2) Where the Chief Justice requires any coroner to hold an inquest or inquiry and an inquest or inquiry relating to the same death is being held, or has been held, by any other coroner, all proceedings at or founded on the last-mentioned inquest or inquiry shall be stayed.

(3) The Chief Justice may also direct whether the body shall or shall not be exhumed, and the coroner shall comply with the direction.

Where coroner unable to act.

20. Where under the provisions of this Act, the magistrate of the district is directed to hold an inquiry but is unable to hold it, it shall be held by some other magistrate or by a justice of the peace as herein before provided.

Direction by Chief Justice for further investigation.

21.—(1) Subject to subsection (2) of this section, where the coroner has closed the proceedings at an inquest or inquiry, and it appears to the Chief Justice that further investigation is necessary, he may require the coroner to re-open that inquest or inquiry and make further investigation, and thereupon the coroner shall have full power to re-open, and shall re-open it and make further investigation, and thereafter proceed in the same manner as if he had not closed those proceedings.

(2) Subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to any inquest or inquiry at which any verdict or finding of murder, manslaughter or infanticide has been returned against any person named therein.

Meaning of “the criminal proceedings”.

22.—(1) In this section “the criminal proceedings” means the proceedings before a magistrate holding a preliminary inquiry and before any court to which the accused person is committed for trial, or before which a question of law reserved for consideration at the trial by a Judge of the Supreme Court is heard.

(2) Where a coroner whose duty it is to hold an inquest touching a death is informed prior to the commencement of the inquest that some person has been charged before a magistrate with the murder or manslaughter of the deceased, or with infanticide, he shall, unless directed in writing to the contrary by the Chief Justice, abstain from holding an inquest.

(3) If on an inquest touching a death the coroner is informed before the jury has given its verdict that some person is charged before a magistrate with the murder or manslaughter of the deceased, or with infanticide, he shall adjourn the inquest until after the conclusion of the criminal proceedings and discharge the jury but he shall not resume the inquest unless he is so directed in writing by the Chief Justice.

(4) Where by direction of the Chief Justice a coroner holds or resumes an inquest if on the criminal proceedings any person has been charged on indictment, then upon the inquest no inquisition shall charge that person with an offence of which he could have been convicted on an indictment or contain any finding which is inconsistent with the determination of any matter by the result of those proceedings.

(5) Where a coroner resumes an inquest under this section he shall proceed in all respects as if the inquest had not been previously begun, and the provisions of this Act shall apply as if the resumed inquest was a fresh inquest.

(6) If the inquest is not resumed, the coroner shall furnish to the Registrar General a certificate stating the result of the criminal proceedings and the particulars necessary for the registration of the death so far as they have been ascertained at the inquest, and the Registrar General shall enter the death and particulars in the form and manner prescribed by the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, Cap. 157 and any regulations made thereunder.

(7) The magistrate before whom a person is charged with murder, manslaughter or infanticide shall inform the coroner responsible for holding an inquest upon the body of the making of the charge and of the committal for trial or discharge, as the case may be, of the person

charged, and where a person charged with murder, manslaughter or infanticide is committed for trial, it shall be the duty of the Registrar to inform the coroner of the result of the proceedings.

Summoning jurors.

23.—(1) Where an inquest is to be held, the coroner shall with all convenient speed summon in Form 1 of the Schedule to this Act, not less than three or more than five good and lawful men residing in the neighbourhood, of full age, to appear before him as jurors at the time and place he directs.

42 of 1999.

(2) The summons may be served either personally or by leaving it with some person at his abode, or may be communicated by a member of the police department in any manner authorised by this Act.

(3) Where it is practicable to do so, the place so appointed shall be the place where the body then is, unless it has been already buried.

Juror's oath.

24. So soon as the coroner and jurors at an inquest have assembled, the coroner shall administer to each of the jurors the following oath:

“You shall diligently inquire and true presentment make, on behalf of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, when, where, how, and after what manner (here name the deceased, if known, or if unknown, state a person unknown) now dead, came to his death, and of such other matters relating to that death as shall be lawfully inquired of by you. So help you God.”

View of body.

25. The coroner or any jury may view the body, but it shall not be necessary at any inquest or inquiry for the coroner or the jury to do so,

Provided that where at any inquest it appears to the coroner or to the greater number of the jury attending at the inquest to be expedient to view the body, the jury shall thereupon proceed to do so, and if the body has been buried, the coroner shall order its exhumation for the purpose, unless he certifies that, in this opinion, exhumation would be useless for the purposes of the inquest or dangerous to the public health.

Nature of investigation.

26. The jurors at every inquest, and the coroner at every inquiry, shall inquire when, where, how, and after what manner the deceased person

came by his death, and also whether any person is criminally concerned in the cause of the death.

27.—(1) The coroner shall summon in Form 2 of the Schedule to this Act, the witnesses he thinks necessary and examine them upon oath touching the matter of the inquest or inquiry.

Summoning and examining witnesses.

(2) The evidence of a witness shall be taken down in writing by the coroner and distinctly read over to and subscribed by the witness in the presence of the coroner and jurors in the case of an inquest, and the presence of the coroner in the case of an inquiry,

8 of 1982.

Provided that where any witness being examined has made a written statement, such statement may be read over to the witness and the witness further examined by the coroner and the jurors and any evidence that he shall thereupon give shall be taken down and shall, together with the written statement, be subscribed in the manner herein prescribed.

28. Where any person summoned as a witness at any inquest or inquiry refuses or neglects to appear at the time and place appointed by the summons and otherwise to comply therewith, and no sufficient excuse is offered for his refusal or neglect, then, after proof upon oath that the summons has been served upon him, either personally or by leaving it for him with some person at his place of abode, or has been communicated to him in any manner authorised by this Act, the coroner may issue a warrant in Form 3 of the Schedule to this Act, to bring and have him at a time and place therein mentioned, before the coroner to testify as aforesaid.

Witness not attending.

29. Where on the appearance of the person so summoned, either in obedience to the summons or on being brought by virtue of a warrant, or where any person present is called on by the coroner to give evidence, then if that person,

Committal of recalcitrant witness.

(a) refuses to be examined upon oath concerning the premises;

- (b) refuses to be sworn or having been sworn refuses to answer the questions concerning the premises then put to him;
- (c) refuses to produce any document which he is summoned to produce; or
- (d) refuses to subscribe his deposition,

the coroner may, by warrant in Form 4 of the Schedule to this Act, commit the person so refusing to any prison of Belize for any time not exceeding seven days, unless he in the meantime consents to be examined and to answer concerning the premises, or to produce the documents, if any, or to subscribe his deposition, as the case may be.

Right of accused person to be present.

30. Every person charged with having caused the death of the deceased, or with having been accessory thereto, shall be at liberty to attend and cross-examine each witness produced against him, as well as to produce witnesses in his defence, and every witness produced for the defence shall be sworn, and his examination shall be taken down by the coroner in the manner and form mentioned in section 27 (2) of this Act.

Right of accused person to examine medical practitioner who makes report.

31. Where, at any inquest or inquiry, the report of any medical practitioner who has made a *post mortem* examination of the body of a person is received in evidence, and anyone charged with having caused the death of that person, or with having been accessory thereto, desires to examine the medical practitioner, he may require the coroner to summon the practitioner, and the coroner, when so required, shall thereupon summon the practitioner as a witness for the Government.

Requisition by majority of jurors for further *post mortem* examination.

32. Where it appears to the greater number of the jurors sitting at any coroner's inquest that the cause of death has not been satisfactorily explained by the evidence of the medical practitioner or other witness or witnesses examined in the first instance, that number of the jurors are hereby empowered to name to the coroner, in writing, any other legally qualified medical practitioner or practitioners, and to require the coroner to issue his order for the attendance of the last-mentioned medical practitioner or practitioners as a witness or witnesses, and for

the performance of a *post mortem* examination, with or without an analysis of the contents of the stomach or intestines, and whether or not that examination has already been performed or not, and if the coroner, having been thereunto required, refuses to issue the order, he shall be deemed guilty of an offence.

33. Where, at any inquest or inquiry, it appears to the coroner that the cause of death has not been satisfactorily explained, he may require any qualified medical practitioner to make a *post mortem* examination, with or without an analysis of any portion of the body, and whether or not that examination has already been performed.

Unsatisfactory explanation of cause of death.

34.—(1) After the whole of the evidence is closed and the statement of the accused person, if any, has been taken down, the coroner at an inquest shall sum up the evidence and then proceed to take the verdict of the jury, the finding of the majority being for that purpose sufficient, and the verdict shall thereupon be reduced into writing in Form 6 of the Schedule to this Act, and authenticated by the signature or mark of the jurors finding it and countersigned by the coroner.

Verdict or finding of jury.

(2) The coroner at an inquiry shall record in writing his finding on the evidence, and that finding shall have the same effect as if it were the verdict of a jury.

35. Where a verdict or finding of murder or manslaughter or infanticide is returned against anyone, the coroner shall forthwith make out a warrant in Form 7 of the Schedule to this Act, for his or her committal to any prison in Belize to be brought before the magistrate of the district wherein the offence was committed, and thereupon he or she, if then present, shall forthwith be taken and conveyed to the prison or, if absent, may be apprehended under the warrant and so conveyed.

Committal of accused.

36. Where a verdict or finding of manslaughter or infanticide is returned against any person, the coroner before or by whom the inquest or inquiry is taken may accept bail, if he thinks fit, with good and sufficient sureties for the appearance of the person so charged with the offence of manslaughter or infanticide before the magistrate of the district in which the offence was committed, and thereupon the person, if in custody, shall be discharged therefrom.

Bail in case of manslaughter or infanticide.

Copies of depositions.

37. Every person committed to prison or held to bail under and by virtue of any verdict of a coroner's jury or any finding of a coroner, may require, and shall be entitled to receive, copies of the depositions and of the statement of the accused person, if any, on payment of the like fees as are by law payable for copies of other depositions.

Adjournments.

38. Any inquest or inquiry may be adjourned by the coroner, if he sees fit, from place to place and from time to time until the whole of the evidence touching and concerning the death and the cause thereof has been obtained.

Transmission of proceedings to Chief Justice.

39. All inquisitions and records and minutes of proceedings at any inquiry shall be transmitted to the Chief Justice within seven days at the latest after the inquest or inquiry is closed.

Exhumation of dead body.

40. Where the body of any person is buried without any examination or without sufficient examination, a coroner about to hold or holding an inquest or inquiry as to the death of that person may order in Form 10 of the Schedule to this Act, the body to be exhumed.

PART IV

Offences and Fees

Neglect of duty by coroner.

41. Any coroner who refuses or neglects without reasonable excuse to hold any inquest or inquiry which it is his duty to hold, or to perform any duty which he is required to perform under the provisions of this Act is liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, recoverable before the Supreme Court in its criminal jurisdiction on the motion of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Refusal or neglect of juror to perform duty.

42. Every person who,

- (a) being summoned as a juror at any inquest, refuses or neglects to attend;

- (b) being in attendance on an inquest, refuses to be sworn or to serve as a juror; or
- (c) being called to complete the number of jurors, refuses to be sworn or to serve as a juror,

shall, unless he proves to the satisfaction of the magistrate that he had good and sufficient cause for his refusal or neglect, on conviction thereof, be liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars.

43. Where any medical practitioner is ordered or required to make any *post mortem* examination of a body, and the order or requirement has been personally served on, or left at the residence of the practitioner, or has been communicated to him in any manner authorised by this Act in sufficient time to enable him to comply therewith and he fails to comply therewith he shall on conviction thereof be liable to a fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars, unless he proves to the satisfaction of the magistrate that he had good and sufficient cause for the non-compliance and that he forthwith gave notice to the coroner, or at the nearest police station, that he was so unable to comply with the order or requirement.

Non-compliance by medical practitioner with order to make *post mortem* examination.

44.-(1) Any person who without lawful excuse buries or otherwise disposes of, or causes to be buried, or to be disposed of, the dead body of a person who died an unnatural death without an authorisation given under the provisions of this Act is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine not exceeding three thousand dollars.

Burial of body without authority.

18 of 1998.

(2) Where any person is charged with having committed an offence under this section, the onus of proving that he had lawful excuse, or that he received the order of the coroner, or that he was so empowered as aforesaid, shall be on him.

45. Any person who obstructs or molests any officer or person acting under this Act is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.

Obstruction of person acting under the Act.

Fee for *post mortem* examination.
11 of 1970.

46. Where any qualified medical practitioner, including a Government Medical Officer, has made an examination of the dead body of any person in obedience to any order or requirement under this Act, he shall, subject to the other provisions of the Act, be entitled to receive the prescribed fee, and the coroner, when the service as been performed, shall certify for payment the account of the medical practitioner.

Fees to be determined by the Minister.
S.I. 17 of 1964.

47. There shall be paid from and out of the vote for the contingent expenses of justice, in respect of coroners' inquests and other matters and things connected therewith, the fees from time to time determined by Order of the Minister.

PART V

Miscellaneous

Trial on coroner's inquisition abolished.

48. After the commencement of this Act no person suspected or accused of unlawfully causing the death of the deceased shall be committed for trial before the Supreme Court by the coroner and no person shall hereafter be tried upon any coroner's inquisition.

Admissibility of deposition on trial.

49. If, on the trial of any person against whom a verdict or finding of murder, manslaughter or infanticide has been returned at any inquest or inquiry, it is proved by the oath of any credible witness that any person whose deposition has been taken at the inquest or inquiry is dead, or absent from Belize, or so ill as not to be able to travel, then, if the deposition purports to be signed by the coroner before whom it purports to have been taken, the deposition may be read as evidence without any further proof thereof, unless it is proved that it was not in fact signed by the coroner purporting to sign it.

Admissibility of medical report in certain cases.

50.—(1) Where, on the trial of any person on an indictment for murder, manslaughter or infanticide it is proved that the medical practitioner who made a *post mortem* examination of the body is dead or absent from Belize, any report of that practitioner made under the provisions of this Act may be received as evidence with respect to the appearances of the body when examined by him and as regards the cause of death.

(2) The evidence received by virtue of subsection (1) of this section shall be subject to any deduction from its weight the court or jury thinks proper by reason of the report not having been made upon oath and the accused not having had any opportunity of cross-examination.

51. Any order, authorisation or summons under this Act may be communicated verbally or by telegraph, telephone or any electrical apparatus.

Intimation of order or summons.

52.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the common law of England relating to coroners shall have effect in Belize.

Law and practice not provided for.

(2) In all questions of form and practice which may arise on any coroner's inquest or inquiry not herein provided for, the coroner shall follow, as nearly as possible, the forms and practice adopted in England in similar circumstances.

53. All correspondence, papers and documents transmitted by or to the Chief Justice, or by or to a coroner, relating to any matter to be dealt with under this Act may be transmitted through the post free of charge.

Postage of correspondence.

54.—(1) The Chief Justice may deposit in the Supreme Court Registry all inquisitions and records of proceedings at an inquiry.

Record of proceedings.

(2) The Registrar shall cause a register to be kept of all documents so deposited and an alphabetical index of them to be made.

55.—(1) The Chief Justice may direct what other forms shall be used in any proceedings under this Act, and those forms, when published in the *Gazette*, shall be used for and in respect of the several matters therein mentioned.

Forms.

(2) Until otherwise ordered, the several forms in the Schedule to this Act shall be used for and in respect of the several matters therein mentioned.

SCHEDULE¹

FORM 1

CORONERS' ACT
Coroner Form
*Written Summons
for a Juror*
[Sections 55 and 23]

BELIZE.

District.

TO

of

These are, in the name of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, to require you to be and appear before me, the undersigned, one of Her Majesty's coroners in and for Belize, at _____ on the _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock, _____ .m., then and there to serve as a juror at a coroner's inquest to be holden before me touching the cause of death (*here state the name of the deceased person or, if unknown, state "a person unknown"*) there lying dead.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20____
(Signed)

Coroner.

¹This Schedule was amended by Act No. 42 of 1999.

FORM 2

CORONERS' ACT
Coroner Form
*Written Summons
for a Witness*
[Sections 55 and 23]

BELIZE.

TO _____ of _____ District.

These are, in the name of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, to require you to be and appear before me, the undersigned, one of Her Majesty's coroners in and for Belize, at _____ on the _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock, _____ .m., then and there to give evidence touching the cause of death of _____.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20____.

(Signed)

Coroner.

FORM 3

CORONERS' ACT
Coroner Form
Warrant of Commitment of a
Witness for refusing to attend
[Sections 55 and 28]

BELIZE.

District.

TO all Members of the Belize Police Department.

WHEREAS I, the undersigned, one of Her Majesty's coroners in and for Belize, did duly issue my summons to requiring him to be and appear before me at _____ on the day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock, _____ m., then and there to give evidence touching the cause of death of

AND WHEREAS proof has this day been made before me upon oath of that summons having been duly intimated to the said _____; And whereas the said _____ has neglected to appear at the time and place appointed by the summons, and no just excuse has been offered for the neglect:- This is, therefore, by virtue of my office, in Her Majesty's name, to command you and each of you to bring and have the said _____ before me at _____ on the _____ day of 20____, at _____ o'clock, _____ m., to give evidence as aforesaid.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20____.

(Signed)

Coroner.

FORM 4

CORONERS' ACT
Coroner Form
Warrant of Commitment of a Witness
for refusing to give Evidence
[Sections 55 and 29]

BELIZE.

District.

TO all Members of the Belize Police Department and to the Superintendent of Prisons.

WHEREAS I, the undersigned, one of Her Majesty's coroners in and for Belize, did duly issue my summons to _____ requiring him to be and appear before me at _____ on the day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock, _____ .m., then and there to give evidence touching the cause of death of _____

AND WHEREAS the said _____ now appearing before me (or being brought before me by virtue of a warrant in that behalf to testify as aforesaid) and being required to make oath as a witness in that behalf, has now refused to do so (or being duly sworn as a witness, now refuses to answer certain questions concerning the premises which are here put to him, or now refuses to subscribe his deposition as a witness) without any just excuse for that refusal:- This is, therefore, by virtue of my office, in Her Majesty's name to command you and each of you, the said members of the Belize Police Department, to take the said _____ and him safely to convey to that prison at _____ in Belize aforesaid, and there deliver him to the Superintendent thereof, with this precept; and I do hereby, by virtue of my office, in Her Majesty's name, require you, the said Superintendent, to receive the said _____ into your custody in the said prison, and him there safely keep for the space of _____ days for his said contempt, unless in the meantime he consents to be examined, and to answer concerning the premises (or

duly subscribe his deposition as a witness); and for so doing, this shall be your warrant.

DATED this day of , 20 .
(Signed)

Coroner.

FORM 5

CORONERS' ACT
Coroner Forms
Order to Medical Practitioner
[Sections 55 and 8]

BELIZE.

District.

TO _____ of _____
(or or as the case may be.) Medical Officer

BY virtue of this my order, as one of Her Majesty's coroners in and for Belize you are required to make (or assist in making) a *post mortem* examination of the body _____ and report thereon to me as required by law.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20__ .

(Signed)

Coroner.

FORM 6

CORONERS' ACT

Coroner Forms

Inquisition

[Sections 55 and 34]

BELIZE.

District.

An inquisition taken at _____ in the district of _____ in
Belize, on the _____ day of _____ 20____, in the year of our Lord
two thousand and _____ before me, one of the
coroners of our Lady the Queen in and for Belize, upon the oaths of

(here name the jurors sworn), good and lawful men, who, being then and
there duly sworn and charged to inquire for our said Lady the Queen,
when, where, how, and after what manner _____ came to
h _____ death, do, upon their oaths, say that *(here state fully the
finding of the jury)*.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, as well the said coroner as the jurors
aforesaid have hereto set their hands the day and year first above written.

A.C., Coroner

A.B.
C.D.
E.F.
etc.



*N.B.- Where a juror puts a mark instead of signing his name, the
coroner shall certify that the mark was made in his presence.*

FORM 7

CORONERS' ACT
 Coroner Forms
*Warrant of Commitment
 of Accused*
[Sections 55 and 35]

BELIZE.

District.

TO all Members of the Belize Police Department and to the Superintendent of Prisons in Belize.

WHEREAS at proceedings duly taken before me, one of Her Majesty's coroners in and for Belize, under the provisions of the Coroners Act, Cap. 126, with respect to the death of _____ and duly taken and held this _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ in the district of _____, of _____ stands charged with the wilful murder (or manslaughter or infanticide, as the case may be) of the said _____ :- This is, therefore, by virtue of my office, in Her Majesty's name to charge and command you and each of you, the said members of the Belize Police Department, that you or one of you forthwith take and safely convey the body of the said _____ to the _____ prison at _____ and safely deliver the same to the Superintendent of the said prison; and I do hereby, by virtue of my office, in Her Majesty's name, require you, the said Superintendent, to receive the body of the said _____ into your custody and him safely to keep in the said prison until he shall be brought before the magistrate for the _____ District at _____ on the _____ day of _____, 20____, or on such other day, not being more than seven days thereafter, as may be directed by the said magistrate, or until he is earlier thence discharged by due course of law; and for so doing, this shall be your warrant.

DATED this day of , 20 .
(Signed)

Coroner.

FORM 8

CORONERS' ACT
Coroner Forms
*Warrant to bury a Body
without Inquest or Inquiry*
[Sections 55 and 13]

BELIZE.

District.

TO _____ and to all whom it may concern.

WHEREAS I am credibly informed that on the _____ day of _____ 20____, came to his death at _____ in the said district; And whereas, after making preliminary investigation, it has been made to appear to me that the said death was not an unnatural death within the meaning of the Coroners Act - This is, therefore, to certify that you may lawfully permit the body of the said _____ to be buried; and for so doing, this shall be your warrant.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20____.

(Signed)

Coroner.

FORM 9

CORONERS' ACT

Coroner Forms
*Warrant to bury a Body
 after Examination*
[Sections 55 and 14]

BELIZE.

District.

TO

and to all whom it may concern.

WHEREAS due examination by a duly qualified medical practitioner has been made of the body of
 who now lies dead at in the district of :-

This is, therefore, to certify that you may lawfully permit the body of the said

to be buried; and for so doing, this shall be your warrant.

DATED this day of , 20 .

(Signed)

Coroner.

FORM 10

CORONERS' ACT
 Coroner Forms
Warrant to exhume a Body
[Sections 55 and 40]

BELIZE.

District.

TO _____ and to all members of the Belize Police
 Department.

WHEREAS body of one _____ was buried on the
 day of _____, 20____, at _____ in the
 said _____ district; And whereas it is necessary that the said body
 should be exhumed, and full investigation made as to the cause of the
 death of the said _____ in the manner required by law:- This is,
 therefore, by virtue of my office, in Her Majesty's name, to charge and
 command you, and each of you, that you forthwith cause the body of the
 said _____ to be taken up and safely conveyed to _____ in
 the said district, in order that due investigations may be made as to the
 cause of death, and that I may proceed therein according to law: Hereof
 fail not, as you will answer the contrary at your peril.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 20____.

(Signed)

Coroner.