

1218

15th October 1934

PROCEEDINGS of INQUEST

held upon the body of

Ran Smith

at Coleraine.

Received at the Crown Law Offices,

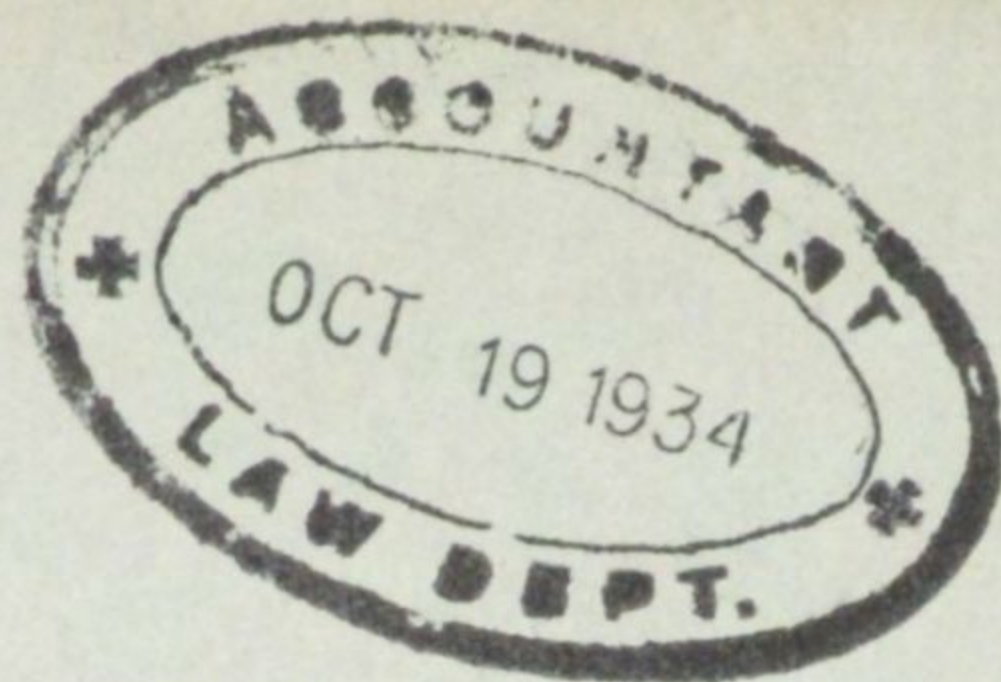
19 OCT 1934

19

H.

J. J. Fitzgerald J.P.

Coroner.



[56A.]

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE CORONERS.

VICTORIA,

DO WIT.

INQUISITION

(WITHOUT A JURY.)

AN Inquisition for our Sovereign Lord King George, taken at.....

Coleraine.....in

Victoria, the fifteenth.....day of October.....

A.D. 1934, in the.....year of the Reign

of our said Lord the King, before me Thomas Joseph Fitzgerald.....

Deputy
.....Gentleman, a Coroner of our Lord the King

for Victoria, upon the view of the body of Ran Singh.....

.....then and there lying dead.

Having duly inquired upon the part of our Lord the King when, where, how,
and by what means the said Ran Singh.....

.....came by his death, I say that the said

Ran Singh.....

died at Coleraine.....on the ninth.....

day of October.....1934, ~~from~~ presumably

from incineration and suffocation caused by
being trapped in a fire which broke out in his room in
which he slept. There is no evidence to show how the
fire originated or whether deceased met his death by
heart failure prior to the outbreak of the fire.

In witness whereof I the aforesaid Coroner have to this Inquisition put my
hand and seal on the day and year and at the place above mentioned.

5622

Thomas Joseph Fitzgerald
Deputy

CORONER.

L.S.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent *William Richards Tonkin

on his oath saith, I am a medical practitioner

* Christian and Surname
(in full)

residing at Coleraine.

At about 10 p.m. on the 9th of October 1934 I received a summons to go to McLeod Street, Coleraine. I saw a smouldering van in which I saw part of the body of deceased. Life was extinct. At about 10/30 p.m. deceased had been removed to the roadway. I there with the aid of a torch made a superficial examination of the body. Part of the clothing was missing. there was extensive scorching of the head, chest and arms. The appearance of the body suggested that death was due to Asphyxia and heart failure. The asphyxia & heart failure would be caused by the fire. There was no apparent evidence of much struggling. The arms were flexed in front of the body. The head was drawn forward. From this I would infer that there would be a possibility that heart failure might have occurred either before the fire or very shortly afterwards. It would not be very likely that the deceased would become suffocated without awakening if he was in a sound sleep unless sudden heart failure set in.

Taken and sworn before me the 15th day

of October 1934 at Coleraine

Thos J. Fitzgerald
Deputy - Coroner.

W. R. T.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent*

Lucca Singh

on his oath saith, I am a

hawker.

* Christian and Surname
(in full)

residing at

with no fixed place of abode.

I knew the deceased Ran Singh
I went to the Coleraine Police Station on 10th
October, 1934. I there saw the body of Ran
Singh. He was a hawker. He was born at
Punjab, India. He had been in Victoria
about 40 years. I have known him since he
came. He was nearly 80 years of age. I knew
the body at the police station to be the body
of Ran Singh.

Taken and sworn before me the 15th day

of

October

1934

at

Coleraine

LUCCA SINGH

Thos. J. Fitzgerald
Deputy

Coroner.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent * John Brens

on his oath saith, I am a shop assistant

* Christian and Surname
(in full)

residing at Coleraine

On the 9th of October, 1934 at about 4/30 p.m. the deceased came into Trangmar's grocery shop where I am employed. He bought a quart bottle of brandy and a packet of Uneeda biscuits. He paid for these articles with a one pound note which he extracted from a number of notes which he had in a cheap purse tied with string. I would say that there would be anything up to £50/- in notes in the purse. He pinned the purse containing the notes with a safety pin into his shirt pocket. Over his shirt deceased was wearing a vest, a woollen cardigan and a coat. At the time deceased was apparently not in good health but was very feeble and had to be assisted down the steps of the front door of the shop. I have served deceased with brandy for the past 12 years. I have never seen or known of him to be under the influence of liquor.

Taken and sworn before me the 15th day
of October 1934 at Coleraine
Thos. Fitzgerald
Deputy-Coroner.

John Brens

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent * Henry Hutchins

on his oath saith, I am a labourer

* Christian and Surname
(in full)

residing at Coleraine

On the 9/10/34 I saw deceased whom I have known for the past thirty years as Ran Singh. Deceased was an Indian hawker and for as long as I have known him has been in the habit of camping in McLeod Street in front of my home. The time I first saw him on the 9th/10/34 would be about 5 p.m. I then spoke to him and shortly after he came into my home, boiled a billy of water, made some tea and then left. He returned to my home about 7 p.m. and left to go to his van about 8 p.m. Before leaving he said that he was going to bed. At about 10 p.m. in response to a call I went into McLeod Street. I there saw deceased's van burning fiercely. All the front of the van was on fire and the flames were coming through the roof. With the assistance of others I endeavoured to quell the fire by throwing buckets of water over it. I know that in front of the place where deceased was ^{in the habit of} sleeping there were two small doors. These were closed but I could not say that they were locked. The deceased before going to bed always had a curtain of bags in front of the doors of his sleeping place. There were no signs of these bags when I went to the fire and the doors were practically burnt away. I have often given deceased a candle to go to bed with but on the 9th/10/34 he did not ask for one and I could not say whether or not he had used a candle. Deceased appeared to be in very ill health and was very feeble and weak. I have known him to be in bad health for the past two years. I have never known him to be under the influence of liquor.

Taken and sworn before me the 15th day

of October 1934 at Coleraine

Thos J. Spence
Deputy-Coroner.

H. Hutchins

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent* John Heronon h oath saith, I am a motor driver* Christian and Surname
(in full)residing at Coleraine.

On the 9th/10/34 at about 9.45 p.m. I was in my back yard. I saw the reflection of what appeared to be a fire in McLeod Street near my home. I ran to the front of my home and saw that a van which I knew to the deceased. Ran Singh an Indian hawker was on fire. I saw that two small doors on the front of the van ~~were~~ from behind which I later saw deceased removed were on fire. I as soon as possible obtained a piece of wire and after some trouble managed to open the doors but owing to the heat of the fire I was unable to get to where I now know deceased was lying. I could not see deceased owing to the smoke from the fire. I then communicated with 1st Constable Duffy of Coleraine. At about 7 p.m. I saw deceased apparently arranging some bags that I generally noticed were allowed to hang like a curtain in front of the place where deceased was found. For the last two years I have seen deceased at irregular intervals. He on each occasion that I saw him appeared to be very feeble and in illhealth. When I first went to the van I heard no appeal for help or any noise whatsoever inside the van where deceased was found. and the bags hanging in front of the doors were completely burnt away. I was the first person at the scene of the fire.

Taken and sworn before me the 15th day
of October 1934 at Coleraine
Thos. J. Fitzgerald
Deputy - Coroner.

John Heron

CORONER'S INQUEST.

VICTORIA. TO WIT.

This Deponent* John Duffyon his oath saith, I am a 1st Constable of Police* Christian and Surname
(in full)residing at stationed at Coleraine

On the 9th/10/34 at about 9/50 p.m. from something I was told I went to McLeod Street, Coleraine. I there saw a van which I knew to belong to the deceased, Ran Singh an Indian hawker who when he came to Coleraine invariably camped in this place. The van was on fire and burning fiercely. Whilst awaiting the arrival of the Coleraine Fire Brigade which arrived very shortly, after, buckets of water were thrown over that portion of the van in which I knew the deceased slept in a small place in front of the van in which had an entrance of two small doors. As soon as possible I removed the ~~which I knew deceased slept~~ burning and smouldering debris from the place where I knew deceased slept. I saw deceased. He was lying on his back. He did not appear to have made much attempt if any to escape. He was examined by Doctor Tonkin who pronounced life extinct. I removed deceased from the van to the roadway where he was again examined by Doctor Tonkin. When I arrived at the fire all the front portion of the van was burning and flames were going through the roof. The two small doors on deceased's sleeping place were completely burnt away. The bedding comprised mainly of bags was practically all reduced to ashes. The clothing from the waist upwards was completely burnt off the body and all that remained on deceased was a pair of underpants which were scorched. From the charred state of the van in that portion in which deceased was found it appears that the fire started somewhere very near the body of deceased. I have known deceased for the past two years. During that time he was always very weak and feeble and apparently suffered from heart attacks. On two occasions I requested him to go to hospital or receive medical attention but he refused. From the state of the body and the fact that I know deceased invariably slept in all his clothes I am satisfied that any money deceased had on the upper portion of the body would be completely destroyed by the fire. The only money found amongst the ashes by me was 12/- in silver. I have made a thorough search of deceased's property and also of the van but failed to find the money referred to by previous witness John Brens. I have made full inquiries into this case. there are no suspicious circumstances. The body was removed to the Coleraine Police Station.

Taken and sworn before me the 15th day

of

October1924

at

Coleraine

Thos. J. Fitzgerald
Deputy - Coroner.

John Duffy
1st Const 2413