

ADJOURNED INQUEST ON A RYDE UNDERTAKER.

The adjourned inquest on Mr. **Frank Ernest PERKIS**, an undertaker, who died suddenly on November 12th at 30 Hill-street, Ryde, was held in the High-street Methodist School on Tuesday by the Deputy Coroner (R. E. A. WEBSTER, Esq.).

When the inquest opened on November 11th the widow stated that her husband had for six months complained of pains in the upper part of the stomach, which they thought were due to indigestion. A post-mortem examination had not disclosed the cause of death, and the proceedings were adjourned so that deceased's organs which might be submitted for analysis. P.S. TURNBULL was the police officer present.

Mrs. Nellie Edith LEAL, deceased's sister, of 26 Hill-street, said the severe pains in the stomach started after a blitz at Swanmore. They did not affect his appetite until about a week before his death; he had eaten quite well. He took stomach powder, but not in increasing doses, as he was rather afraid of taking that sort of thing. Sometimes he did not take it for weeks. She prepared the meals as deceased and his wife went to work.

The Coroner named the organs of the deceased which had been submitted for analysis. The report stated that careful examination for irritant poisons had proved negative, but the organs were strongly alkaline, and bismuth, calculated as a carbon, was found to the extent of a quarter of a grain in the stomach, and three-quarters of a grain in the pancreas and kidney. Bismuth salts were usually regarded as non toxic when taken by mouth but they might produce toxic symptoms when introduced into the blood stream by injection, or even when applied externally if the skin were broken.

Dr. Thomas SIM said that when he arrived deceased was already dead. the family said he had been suffering from indigestion, and had pains in the stomach for some time. he had been taking Maclean's Stomach Powder, some tablets, of which he took charge. The tablets were the same powder in that form, and contained bismuth, magnesium, and bicarbonate. He held a post-mortem and there was no sign of any heart or brain trouble to account for the sudden death. The stomach and upper part of the intestines were very red, a condition of acute gastritis, and having found that and nothing else he thought it his duty to inform the Coroner, who ordered an analysis.

The Coroner: from the report have you drawn any particular conclusion?

Dr. SIM said the only reason the stomach was without acid was that he might have vomited. If in addition to that he had taken alkaline powder or tablets the stomach would become alkalisied, a dangerous thing, which caused uremia, which usually occurred in people with damaged kidneys. There were no ulcers. he did not think deceased could have died from the absorption of bismuth, but probably from uremia, the result of chronic gastritis and over-alkalisation of the stomach. Such cases were not common. Most people went to a doctor when they found this stomach trouble continued; it was the easiest thing to do, because a doctor could trace it quite easily and counteract it.

The Coroner: To get this condition would it be necessary for a great deal of bismuth to be taken? - if he had not been taking his food very well, which I believe was the case, it would not take very much.

The Coroner stated that the widow said that when subject to these attacks he had sickness and took doses of the stomach powder.

Mrs. LEAL, recalled, said that during the last week of his life deceased was only able to eat very little bread and butter and slops.

P.C. FLOYD said he removed several bottles from deceased's home, one containing Maclean's Stomach Powder and another tablets; there were also aspirin and cough tablets, and a tin of slippery bark, used for digestive trouble.

The Coroner returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence that death was due to natural causes.
