

**"DREADFULLY SAD CASE"
SAYS CORONER
Woman's Death From "Starvation In Medical Sense"**

"I think this is really a dreadfully sad case," was a comment of the Island Coroner (Mr. R. E. A. WEBSTER) whilst directing the jury at the inquest at Ryde Town Hall on Tuesday on Miss **Kathleen Martha CARTER**, aged 49, of East Upton, Haylands, Ryde, youngest daughter of the late Mr. Edward CARTER, J.P., barrister-at-law and sheriff of the County of Southampton. The jury returned a verdict of "Death according to the medical evidence," and the foreman (Mr. A. T. HODGES) said they felt there was no evidence of neglect on the part of the deceased's sisters.

Miss CARTER died on Thursday at the Royal I.W. County Hospital, to which she had been removed the previous day.

The Coroner opened the inquest at the hospital on Friday.

Dr. S. C. DOBSON, pathologist, said that on the Coroner's instructions he made a post mortem examination on Thursday. He found cachexia and suppurating ulcers of the legs, and came to the conclusion that Miss CARTER was suffering from starvation. Her stomach was completely empty and the small intestine almost completely empty, and there was not a shred of fat in the abdominal cavity. She had used up her reserves for some little time, he should say for at least some months.

The state of the suppurated leg ulcers would most certainly be a contributory cause of her emaciated condition, for this condition upset the proper functioning of the body, and with the severe state in which the legs were ulcerated, it was not possible to say that the condition of the body was entirely due to starvation.

Sister's Statement

The probable sequel of events would be that the ulcers formed because the patient was not getting quite sufficient of the right kind of nutrition over a considerable period. Otherwise, there was nothing abnormal or any disease of the body to cause death or even illness.

Replying to Miss Gertrude Edith CARTER, of East Upton, a sister of the deceased, Dr. DOBSON said there was no evidence of consumption and Miss CARTER had had no stroke. Incoherence in speech would be due to general debility. He accepted that her sister had had patent invalid jellies, but they had not very much food value. Extreme worry over a period might be a contributory cause to her not getting sufficient nourishment from her food.

Miss G. E. CARTER: I fail to understand how she died of starvation. She had the food.

The Coroner advised Miss CARTER to reserve her observations until the inquest was resumed.

At the resumed inquiry on Tuesday at the Town Hall, Mr. C. MERRILL appeared for the deceased's sisters, and Mr. P. H. ROLF for the Lloyds Bank Trustee Department.

Doctor Summoned

Dr. T. SIM said the first he knew of the affair was on September 8th when he was at the County Hospital. He then had a note asking him to go to East Upton. The note was from Miss Dorothy CARTER to say that her sister was dangerously ill and she felt she might die. He arrived at about 6.15 in the evening. The deceased was in a chair in the drawing room. She was unconscious and dangerously ill. He suggested she should be removed to hospital forthwith and arranged for that to be done. Within half an hour at about 6.45, he had had her removed. He arranged for the house surgeon to admit her and to find out by tests why she was unconscious. He rang up the hospital later on and was told she had been admitted and had died. Witness was not the medical practitioner for the household and thought it was the first time he had been there. He had not seen the official report. Handed the report by the Coroner, Dr. SIM said he did not think it his duty to make any comment.

By Mr. MERRILL: When he arrived at East Upton he believed Miss CARTER had an overcoat or dark dressing gown on. She had bandages on her legs.

By the jury: She was reclining in a big chair, slumped rather over on one side.

Miss Gertrude Edith CARTER, of East Upton, Ryde, said that from February of this year the deceased had suffered from foot trouble, but had had varicose veins for a considerable time before that, during the war. She was always walking and doing things, but rather "dragged about". Her appetite was good. About a fortnight before her death she appeared to lose her appetite a little. A weekly joint came into the house. They had fish three times a week, bread, cakes, etc., which her sister liked ordinarily very much indeed, but which later she seemed she could not eat.

Decided in her Opinions

Before becoming ill, her sister did things for others but witness was afraid she put herself second. She never complained of being hungry. Normally she was thin. Her arms were thin and they got thinner. In July her ankle bled low down in the heel and she lost a considerable quantity of blood. Her sister was always thinking of going to the doctor about her leg but never got round to seeing him.

Witness tried to urge her to seek medical attention, but her sister felt too tired to go. She said to witness often, "Don't drive me, I feel tired," and so she let it alone.

On September 7th she seemed unwell and sleepy and tried to shut the shutter by closing the bar, but could not get her hand up to do so. They did not bother her and let her sleep. They wanted to get her to a nursing home

The deceased began with the jellies about ten days or a week before she died. She had cups of tea.

She had not been attended by a doctor for the last 20 years. The last occasion was when she had a wasp sting on her tongue.

By Mr. ROLF: They had not entertained anyone for years. Her sister was not short of money. She had enough money of her own.

By Mr. MERRILL: Her sister was a woman who was quite decided in her opinions.

Good Appetite

By the jury: Sometimes they had meals together and sometimes separately. They had no servants in the house. Witness did not agree she could have called the doctor. On September 7th when she found her sister ill it was in the evening. The next morning when they found her so ill they sent for the doctor as soon as possible.

Miss Dorothy CARTER, another sister, living at East Upton, said that in or about January her sister developed foot trouble. Her legs became ulcerated ("she really had the same thing as I have" said witness), and she also had varicose veins. From January until ten days before her death she was able to get about, but not comfortably. Witness used to help her dress her leg. Her sister disliked the weekly joint, but otherwise ate far more than the witness, who had herself a good appetite. Latterly she tried to eat toast, but said it was too dry. In the end her appetite did go.

Witness never realised she was so ill until the day before she died. Her sister was always saying she was going to see the doctor, but said she was too tired.

The Coroner: Don't you feel you ought to have got the doctor.

Witness: She would have felt we were putting things on her. She was very determined. We very strongly feel, each one of us, that we should be left to do things for ourselves.

By Mr. ROLF: There was never a time when her sister had had no money- not since she started a banking account. Her sister last went out on December 30th. They had three meals a day.

Aversion to Calling Doctors

By Mr. MERRILL: As a family of sisters they of late years had not gone out. But they at one time used to go out a lot and had a lot of visitors. They had rather an aversion of calling in a doctor which was shared by Miss Kathleen CARTER, although she was not averse to having medical treatment for her leg. They were not wealthy, they had lost their money, but were able to pay their way by care.

By the foreman: They had cooking appliances at the house.

By the Coroner: On the Tuesday night they were up all night with their sister and were therefore late starting in the morning. They kept watching her but did not do very much.

Dr. S. C. DOBSON, again giving evidence, said Miss CARTER had died from starvation "in the medical sense."

In reply to Mr. ROLF, Dr. DOBSON said that if the leg condition had been taken in hand something might have been done.

In reply to Mr. MERRILL, Dr. DOBSON said there were several factors strongly in favour of the dietary deficiency being that of lack of quality rather than quantity.

Edward Ernest SCOVELL, of 45 Upton Road, Ryde, said he had been employed as gardener at East Upton House for about 32 years. Since the death of their parents the ladies had lived a rather secluded existence. He did the shopping. He did not go into the house very much. He bought the bulk of the foodstuffs, which consisted of cakes, pastries etc., which he considered sufficient for them. Cooked meat went into the house. He supplied vegetables from the garden. He last saw Miss Kathleen CARTER about two months ago.

Miss Enid DEATH, baker and grocer, of Suffolk House, Elmfield, said her family had supplied the CARTER family for about 60 years. She took the bread to the house. Three times a week she took cooked fish, and the cooked joint once a week. She cooked the vegetables for the family.

The funeral took place privately yesterday (Wednesday) at Ryde Cemetery.
