

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**PUBLIC DOCUMENTS**

OF THE

**STATE OF MAINE**

BEING THE

**REPORTS**

OF THE VARIOUS

**PUBLIC OFFICERS  
DEPARTMENTS AND  
INSTITUTIONS**

FOR THE TWO YEARS

**JULY 1, 1928 - JUNE 30, 1930**

STATE OF MAINE

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REPORT

OF THE

ATTORNEY GENERAL

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for the calendar years

1929-1930

November 20, 1929

## TO THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS:

In going over the reports from Medical Examiners received in this department since I have come into office I have been impressed with the efficiency of the Medical Examiners and their careful attention to their primary duty of reporting promptly on the cause of death when dead bodies have been brought to their attention.

Prosecutors, however, need something further. They need to know of suspicious circumstances pointing to a criminal cause of death, calling for investigation and perhaps for prosecution.

It is not, of course, the duty of the Medical Examiner to hold an inquest except under the circumstances specified in the statute but it is apparently contemplated that he should make some inquiry and report the results. The statute requires him to determine:

“Any and all facts that may be deemed important in determining the cause of death,”  
and to report his

“Opinion that the death of the person was caused by violence criminal or otherwise,”  
formed

“Upon such view with personal inquiry or autopsy.”

The late Dr. Whittier of Bowdoin College interpreted this very broadly. In his reports as Medical Examiner he set forth the names of witnesses with whom he talked and his conclusion as to criminality. This was of great assistance to the prosecutors.

I should appreciate it, and I know the local prosecutors would, if the Medical Examiners, in making their reports, will have it in mind to give some such indication, if they readily can, of the criminal possibilities presented. In most cases this can be done with the expenditure of little, if any, extra time.

The mere statement of the Medical Examiner negating criminality, as far as his inquiry shows, will be of help; and even more a list of the witnesses with whom he has talked, and a memorandum of the facts elicited.

I hope you will find it practicable to help us out in this way.

Very truly yours,

CLEMENT F. ROBINSON

Attorney General