



CHAPTER xxxviii.

An Act to define the Jurisdiction and to regulate the Proceedings of the Coroner of the City of London with regard to Inquests upon Fires within the said City. A.D. 1888.

[28th June 1888.]

WHEREAS the origin of many fires taking place within the city of London is undiscovered :

And whereas it is desirable that better provision should be made for inquiry respecting the same :

May it therefore please Your Majesty that it may be enacted and be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in this present Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same as follows (that is to say) :—

1. This Act shall be cited as the City of London Fire Inquests Act 1888. Short title.

2. In case of loss or injury by fire within the city of London and the liberties thereof situate in the county of Middlesex it shall be the duty of the Coroner for the said city to consider any report which may be made to him as hereinafter provided by the Commissioner of City Police or the Chief Officer of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and a coroner's inquest shall be held respecting the same if either— Inquest to be held by Coroner.

The Lord Mayor for the time being
The Lord Chief Justice of England or
One of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State so order or
If the Coroner be of opinion that proper cause for such an inquiry exists.

3. In any case where loss or injury by fire within the city of London and the liberties thereof has been brought to the knowledge of the Commissioner of City Police or the Chief Officer of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade it shall be the duty of the said Commissioner of City Police, &c. to report to Coroner.

[Price 3d.]

A.D. 1888. Commissioner or the said Chief Officer forthwith to report the same to the Coroner of the city of London.

Coroner to exercise same jurisdiction as when holding an inquest upon view of a dead body.

4. For the purpose of holding such inquest the Coroner and his deputy shall respectively have and lawfully exercise the same jurisdictions authorities functions powers duties and obligations for compelling the attendance of jurymen witnesses and others of administering oaths taking recognizances taking evidence making payments and allowing expenses and of doing all and any judicial magisterial formal or necessary acts in all respects as they now have with regard to inquests upon view of a dead body.

All proceedings to assimilate as nearly as possible to proceedings at an inquest upon view of a dead body.

5. Such inquest shall be held in the same manner with regard to the number and constitution of the jury the qualifications of the jurymen the mode of examining witnesses and taking their depositions and in all other respects as nearly as may be as if it were an inquest held by the said Coroner or his deputy upon view of a dead body.

Jury may find verdict of arson.

6. Upon such inquest the Coroner or his deputy shall inquire into the cause and circumstances of such fire and all matters connected therewith and the means for preventing the same as to the said Coroner or his deputy holding such inquest shall seem fit and also whether there is ground for believing that such fire was caused by the wilful and unlawful act of any person or persons whether known or unknown under such circumstances as to render such person or persons guilty of arson and if such person or persons be known and the evidence shall warrant it the jury may find a verdict of arson against such person or persons in order that he or they may be placed on his or their trial for such offence and such verdict and inquisition shall have the force and effect of an indictment :

Provided that if any person with regard to whom such verdict shall have been found shall not have been present at the inquest he shall be taken before a magistrate sitting at the Mansion House or Guildhall justice rooms as an accused person to answer such charge.

Coroner to take and sign depositions.

7. The Coroner or his deputy holding such inquest shall take down in writing and sign the depositions of the witnesses.

Report on inquest and copy of depositions to be forwarded to Lord Mayor and Home Secretary and to be supplied upon payment for same.

8. Within seven days after the termination of such inquest the Coroner or his deputy whichever shall have held the inquest shall report in writing to the Lord Mayor and to the Home Secretary the result of the inquest and shall send a copy of the depositions and any remarks thereon as may be deemed necessary.

Copies of the report or depositions shall be supplied by the Coroner to any person demanding the same upon payment of two pence per folio of seventy-two words. A.D. 1888.

9. For the purpose of such inquest the Coroner or his deputy and the jury and such person or persons as the jury may require for their assistance may enter and view any premises or place within the said city of London and the liberties thereof situate in the county of Middlesex where the fire has happened or where it may be suspected to have originated and have all reasonable access through other premises within the aforesaid limits for that purpose. Power to enter and view premises.

10. The costs charges and expenses preliminary to and of and incidental to the preparing of and applying for and the obtaining and passing of this Act shall be paid by the mayor commonalty and citizens of the city of London. Costs of Act.

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