

maybe Grand Island where a man is supposed to have tied himself to a bicycle and dropped himself into a stone quarry. That was the way he committed suicide. In Lincoln not too long ago one tied his hands behind his back before managing to hang himself. In Omaha I touched on an incident involving an infant and the official cause of death was listed as a fractured skull due to bed springs having fallen on the child. No autopsy had been performed, but when one was performed after that body was exhumed it was found that there were no fractures and really no identifiable or determinable cause of death. In these types of situations, a coroner as we have it in Nebraska now is really a nonentity when it comes to determining the actual cause of death. In some instances the sheriff is coroner. No medical capability whatsoever. In Douglas County a deputy county attorney has been assigned the duty of acting coroner, but he is not a medical person. The autopsies generally are performed at the medical center, sometimes at the county morgue, but in many instances, the cause of death is not definitively determined and this is especially the case in the western parts of the state. We were told about "hunting" accidents which happen in a very unlikely way and many of them involve people one of whom was carrying a grudge against the other, but because of the embarrassment and the cost involved...

PRESIDENT: One minute, Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...it was easier to rule it a suicide. I think the amendments that are being adopted may need some additional work but I see the bill and what it attempts to do as being so important that I will support addition of this group of amendments, then between now and Select File I want to do some additional work but the bill I think does merit our consideration and we should move it right along.

PRESIDENT: Chair recognizes Senator Fowler.

SENATOR FOWLER: Well, I won't provide any more death stories. I think that maybe there have been examples to Senator Maresh's questions. I think what is important is that with these amendments the county attorneys of this state have agreed that there needs to be a change. The system that is currently in law is over a hundred years old for the State of Nebraska, actually centuries old as far as American-English legal tradition and I think in that time a lot of changes has happened as far as technical expertise and ability to investigate deaths. Now in Lancaster County two or three years ago we had some shootings by police that there was questions about circumstances under which they happened and there were deaths involved. The county attorney used the old and existing system where he summoned a coroner's jury of six, and it says six lawful men. He could select those six men and