

# Jury to decide cause of death

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Members of an inquest jury cannot make a legal finding or assign criminal fault. Instead, they must answer five basic questions and can make recommendations to prevent a similar death in future.

Answers to the first four questions — who died, when, where and how — are obvious in this case. It's the "by what means" query that has McLeod seeking a court review.

Working under the Vital Statistics Act, a coroner's jury must find the cause of death to be natural, homicide, suicide, accidental or undetermined.

Death by suicide or natural causes does not apply in the Suleman case, leaving the jury with three choices.

But McLeod explained there are three types of homicide — murder, manslaughter and self-defense. All three require a legal finding, two lay blame.

"Only one finding doesn't involve culpability and that's self-defense. But self-defense is a 'legal finding,'" McLeod said, explaining the definition of the word homicide is part of the problem.

McLeod will also ask the Divisional Court to allow the jury to consider Justice Timothy Whetung's reasons for dismissing a manslaughter charge against Wiche after a preliminary hearing in August 1997.

The jury is aware criminal charges were thrown out but has not been privy to specific reasons. Lucas ruled early on the inquest has heard different, more in-depth evidence than the criminal court, and that Whetung's decision could carry enough weight to influence the jury's decision.

## Last week at the Inquest

Police lawyer Rod McLeod flew University of Colorado kinesiologist Dr. Roger Enoka to testify Thursday at a cost of more than \$3,000 US.

Enoka said it's a 95 per cent scientific certainty that if Wiche had lost his balance, he would have involuntarily clenched his fist, causing the gun to go off. He based his opinion on facts given to him by McLeod.

Under cross-examination by Paul Copeland, representing Suleman's mother Shaheen Kamadia, Enoka agreed his opinion doesn't exclude the possibility the shot was fired deliberately.

## York boards keep pace with population growth

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to co-ordinate housing and school construction, would have had a bigger impact before the new funding formula was introduced.

"I'm not sure this represents a major gain. It would have been significant a few years ago when government had to approve all new school projects, but now school boards get money based on the number of students. It would be awfully hard for any school board to argue it can't put a school in a subdivision," said Crothers.

But Peel school board chairperson Janet McDougald said her community has such a backlog the funding formula can't keep pace.

"The money we will receive over the next five years will barely keep up. We grow by 2,500 students per year and that equals five elementary schools. Right now we are able to fund four schools a year so we can't keep up with our new growth."

York's public board also grows by between 2,500 and 3,000 students, but Crothers insists as long as the province keeps its promise to fund schools over 25 years, those students will be accommodated.

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