



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Justice
BC Coroners Service

Lakeland inquest adjourned to consider new evidence

PRINCE GEORGE – As a result of evidence uncovered during the coroner's inquest into the fatal explosion at the Lakeland sawmill in Prince George, the inquest has been adjourned until next week.

Presiding coroner Lisa Lapointe has ruled that the evidence – the results of a post-blast investigation undertaken by a forensic engineering firm on behalf of lawyers for Lakeland – is relevant to the inquiry.

However, she also ruled that it is protected by privilege recognized under the Coroners Act. Because of the importance of the evidence to the inquest process, she has asked counsel for Lakeland Mills to waive their privilege and allow the evidence to be admitted.

She has requested that Lakeland counsel Gavin Marshall provide a decision when the inquest reconvenes Monday morning.

Inquest counsel John M. Orr, QC, noted that the overarching goal of an inquest is to ensure that all relevant evidence is explored to ensure the jury has the opportunity to make the best possible recommendations. He noted that the discovery of this evidence demonstrates the unique strength of the inquest system. Through careful, thorough questioning of witnesses under oath at the inquest, it became evident that this new information, previously not disclosed to the BC Coroners Service, existed and would be essential to the process.

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