

Timol inquest finding will be given today

STAFF REPORTER

THE FINDING in the Timol inquest — possibly the longest and most detailed inquest in South African legal history — will be given today.

The inquest on Mr. Ahmed Essop Timol, 30-year-old Roodepoort schoolteacher who fell to his death from the 10th floor of John Vorster Square on October 26, last year, started originally on December 1, after his death had received extensive publicity here and overseas.

Immediately after the opening of the proceedings by the magistrate, Mr. J. J. L. de Villiers, in December, Mr. I. A. Maiseis, Q.C., who appeared for the Timol family, applied for statements by witnesses to be made available to him. The magistrate refused and Mr. Maiseis appealed.

The Supreme Court ordered the magistrate to study the documents. He then made the documents available to the representatives for the Timol family and the police.

The hearing resumed on April 24.

It took 15 days to lead all the evidence.

POLICE

Evidence was given by members of the Security Police who had held Mr. Timol in detention. Members of the Timol family then gave evidence.

Proceedings came to an abrupt halt when the investigation officer in the case, Major-General C. A. Buys, collapsed in the witness stand while being cross-examined by Mr. Maiseis.

More than a month later the court was told he would not be fit enough to endure the strain of giving evidence for at least two more months. The inquest evidence was concluded without him.

The hearing was marked by highly technical evidence by three of South Africa's top pathologists — Mr. N. J. Scheepers, Dr. J. J. Gluckman and Professor H. van P. Koch.

Although the pathologists had agreed that Mr. Timol had been injured before his death, evidence was mainly to establish if these injuries could have been incurred during the four days, 17½ hours he was held in police custody.

On this evidence, Mr. De Villiers, assisted by Professor I. W. Simson, professor of pathology at the University of Pretoria, will give what he described as "a motivated judgment and a reasonably detailed verdict" starting at 8.30 this morning — a half-hour before the normal starting time of the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court.

END OF AN

INQUEST

16/6
By CHRIS DAY

THE EVIDENCE in the Timol inquest is over. Now all that's left is the verdict.

The hearing had moved to Court 11 yesterday in a bid to get a bit of sunlight and warmth. But the cold highveld air could not be kept out.

There was only a handful of spectators and Colonel Piet Greyling, head of the Johannesburg Security Police, sat shivering in a heavy overcoat next to the prosecutor.

"I'm going on holiday soon," he said in his gravel voice at the tea interval. "I'm not taking any chances on catching a cold."

The day — as with the past few days — belonged to the pathologists.

TANNED

Dr. J. Gluckman, florid, pin-stripe suit, silk pocket handkerchief, Prof. H. Shapiro, tanned face, shock of white hair — looking like Spencer Tracy — Prof. Heironymos van Praag Koch, RAF handlebar moustache and Pretoria accent. The assessor, Professor Simson, his young face in complete control as he asked his searching questions.

And then there was counsel. The big, hulking figure of Mr. Issy Maiseis — doyen of the Bar, former Rhodesian judge. For the police, there was Mr. S. A. Cilliers — young, intelligent, aggressive. Mr. George Bizos — plump, the master of the soft-sell. The prosecutor, Mr. A. Beukes, dwarfed by his huge prosecutor's chair, stroking his goatee.

The magistrate, Mr. J. J. L. de Villiers, facing no less than eight people at counsel's table — listening to the pathologists as they dissected Timol's bruises, layer by layer of skin. The dock was empty. Nobody was on trial. Timol was dead.