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Date: November 25, 2002 Time: 3:20 p.m.

Message: - Please contact our office for further information. Cheers, Julie

Comments by Linda Reid in 1996 on suicide rates of WCB claimants (during Labour ministry estimates) taken from the electronic Hansard document below (for more information on that sitting see debates at this url)

http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/1996/1st_sess/hansard/ha0608p1.htm

** I have included some debate before and after her comments for context.*

1996 Legislative Session: 1st Session, 36th Parliament
HANSARD

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Official Report of

DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 1996

Afternoon

Volume 2, Number 17, Part 1

Lots of concern comes forward about the number of appeal levels at the board, and there is a lot of concern about duplication of services. Again, one of the better examples is the medical review panel. It is an absolute duplication of services when those reports are available from the claimant's own physician and the claimant's own specialist. So again, we are asking employers in this province to pay a vast amount of money for duplication of service, because we're not prepared to channel that information appropriately. I think the minister would have some difficulty disagreeing with that, because I do believe that how the Workers Compensation Board handles information leaves a great deal to be desired.

One of the specific questions I need to pose to the minister this afternoon is the death rate for workers in the province.

[E. Walsh in the chair.]

Hon. M. Sihota: It is 0.1 percent.

L. Reid: I appreciate the response. I wonder if the board has ever done anything around tracking the number of suicides of individuals who are WCB claimants. The number that I have before me is 191. I would be appreciative if the minister could respond.

Hon. M. Sihota: We don't have that number.

L. Reid: In terms of data that might be useful, could the minister ask the Workers Compensation Board to go through files and find out how many claimants have taken their lives? I think that would be a very telling statement in terms of self-esteem, self-confidence and absolute disintegration of their lives, when they're not prepared to go on. I think the number is incredibly high. I would appreciate any clarification around the process, and I hope that each and every one of those deaths receives considerable attention from the Workers Compensation Board.

Again I will reference *Occupational Safety and Health in British Columbia: An Administrative Inventory*. I asked about deaths that have occurred in the workplace in British Columbia, and the minister did respond to that question. I want to know if any of those deaths have found their way into the coroner's office for a review. On page 61 of this report it says:

"The coroner is vested with the power to investigate fatalities, hold public inquests into the circumstances surrounding a death and make recommendations that might prevent similar fatalities in the future. WCB field officers and engineers are often involved in coroners' inquiries through accident investigation and the provision of information."

My question is specifically whether or not any of the deaths that have occurred in workplaces in British Columbia have ever been referred to the coroner's office.

Hon. M. Sihota: Yes.

L. Reid: Perhaps the minister would be so kind as to indicate how many and in what time line.

[3:45]