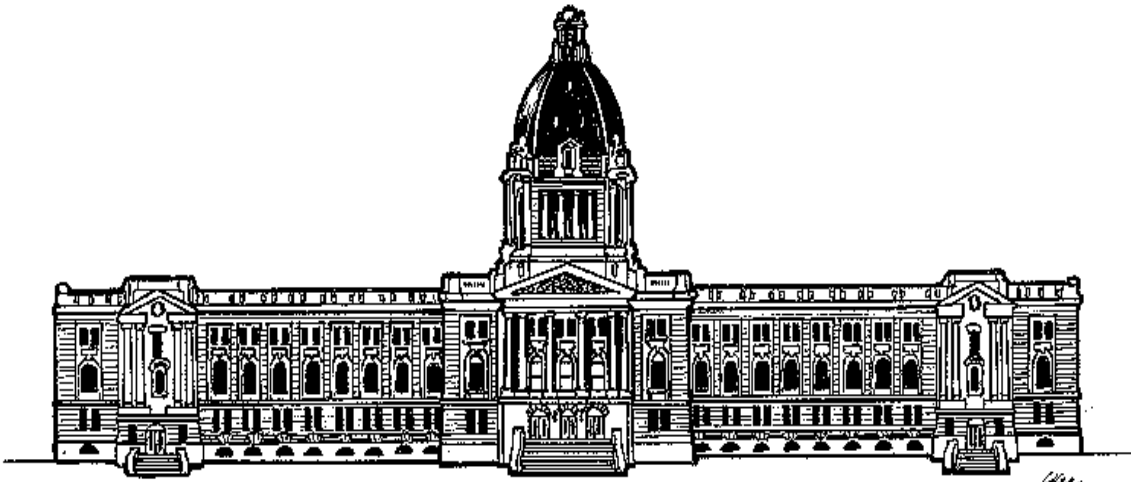




SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY

Mr. Darryl Hickie, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Ms. Danielle Chartier, Deputy Chair
Saskatoon Riversdale

Mr. Herb Cox
The Battlefords

Mr. Roger Parent
Saskatoon Meewasin

Mr. Warren Steinley
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Doyle Vermette
Cumberland

Ms. Nadine Wilson
Saskatchewan Rivers

[The committee met at 13:00.]

The Chair: — Well welcome, everybody. It's a great pleasure to be here in Estevan this afternoon. I will convene today the all-party Traffic Safety Committee. I'm Darryl Hickie, the Chair. I am an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Prince Albert Carlton.

I'll introduce the members of the committee to you as well. To my right, we have Warren Steinley, Nadine Wilson, and Herb Cox. They're from the government side. On the left I have Danielle Chartier, the Deputy Chair, and Doyle Vermette. They're from the NDP [New Democratic Party] opposition side.

So we had two meetings last week in Regina. Today is our third meeting. And I guess there's a couple of procedural things I'll do first. To begin with, we have to table some documentation for the committee members to be aware of: TSC 34/27, 35/27, 36/27, 37/27, and TSC 2/27 paragraph 24. Those will all be on the portal for the committee members to look at, and the public as well at a later date.

So for the witnesses here today, I'll go through the procedures. For the most part, when you get a chance to speak, we'd like you to introduce yourself please, for the record for Hansard. Please state your name and the position within the organization you hold. If you have a written submission today, please advise us that you want us to table that submission. And once this occurs, your submission will be available to the public.

We ask each presentation to be no more than 15 minutes, but we're giving latitude. We have an hour scheduled for this presentation, before the next one. So we will definitely have some questions and answers for you as well after, I'm sure. Once your presentation is completed, the committee members will have the time to ask questions of you. Committee members will not debate with you in any way, shape, or form, and you cannot ask members of the committee questions. But through the questions and answers I'm sure there'll be a good, fruitful exchange of ideas and information coming forward.

One thing our committee is looking for is recommendations, and we do definitely have an open table for that. We ask that your recommendations also be in consideration for your local issue is fine but, as a committee, we have to look at policy procedure recommendations going province-wide. So we ask that you also take that in consideration when you hear questions from us, that you might think a little larger than just your local issue, if you wouldn't mind. It helps us to get our minds focused on making recommendations.

So on that note, I'll open up the floor to the first member from the committee, from your organization.

Presenter: Time to Twin Committee

Ms. Ireland: — Hi. My name is Lauralie Ireland. I am a Co-Chairperson for the time to twin committee. Our group, the time to twin Highways no. 39 and 6, was started in October of 2009. At that time, our group began with five individuals who all realized that something had to be done to encourage the Saskatchewan government to see the problems in regards to

safety on our Highway No. 39 and 6. Our objective always has been safety. At present our membership is seven people with the backing from two more people in the community, and we are open to any new members.

The Chair: — When you see the red light on there, that means that they're on. The Hansard lady will be able to control the microphone for you so . . . [inaudible].

Ms. Velestuk: — Okay. My name is Abbie Velestuk, and I am a member of the time to twin committee. Our recommendations and conclusions: Highways No. 39 and No. 6 need to be twinned due to the large numbers of accidents and fatalities. There are so many semis that travel these two southeast Saskatchewan highways. Highways 39 and 6 traffic counts by the Ministry of Highways need to be revisited. Weather and road conditions play a huge role on our highways. We need our provincial and federal governments to work together to secure funding to build the infrastructure needed in southeast Saskatchewan.

There are many factors that affect our traffic counts and safety each day: (a) North Portal border crossing does 12 billion in trade annually; (b) Bakken oil boom in 2012 had 2,350 producing wells in southeast Saskatchewan; (c) the Global Transportation Hub in Regina sends traffic to this area. This will increase dramatically each year; (d) Northgate, which is approximately 70 kilometres east of Estevan, will have 93 million invested by the Saskatchewan government to develop this oil and grain hub; (e) Estevan traffic weigh scales are closed. No traffic officers are patrolling Highway 39.

Twinning Highways No. 39 and 6 will save lives and improve safety. People in southeast Saskatchewan are afraid to travel Highway No. 39.

Ms. Young: — Okay. My name is Margery Young, and I'm one of the two Co-Chairs of the time to twin committee. And I'd like to continue on with each of these points that Abbie has just mentioned.

Number one, Highways 39 and 6 need to be twinned due to the large number of accidents and fatalities. There are so many semis that travel these two highways in southeastern Saskatchewan. Now Lauralie has passed you out a sheet of statistics, and the one we're going to look at first is the one that looks like this with all of this data. Now this shows you, and this is from SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], these are statistics from 2002 to 2012. And to make it a little bit easier, we've circled some of the main things that you could look at.

Starting at the top, these are the head-on collisions, and this is on Highway 39 and 6. And then if you move over to the left-hand side of that, under where it says victims, and go down to the bottom, you will find there were 75 injuries, and that was due to the head-on collisions over this 10-year period. There were 19 fatalities and a total of 94 different accidents.

Okay. Then we go to the rollover collisions for the same time period, and these are again on Highway 39 and 6. And if you take a look, the first circle right in the middle, it shows you that

there was 1,099 collisions, and this is of rollover collisions. Injuries, we had 412 on our highways. We had 34 fatalities, and a total of 446.

And then the third chart going down to the bottom, these are all other types or reasons for collisions. There was a total of 301 collisions, with your victims: 155 with injuries, two with fatalities, for a total of 157.

Now the numbers down the side is what one of our members, whose name is Dustin Hockey, he took all of the information from there, and then he made the chart, that graph that was the one of the second papers that you have in front of you. And he charted all of the information, with the years across the bottom of course, and the collisions per year up the left-hand side. And as you can see, from about 2008 it was kind of parallel, but then there has been a steep rise in collisions from the year of 2010 and a huge increase in the number of collisions on our highways.

This would also coincide with the increase of traffic, particularly due to the Bakken oil field and some other factors. We have a lot more people commuting, and the Global Transportation Hub has gotten going. North Portal, the traffic from there is increasing every year as well. So we'll leave those for you to look at a little closer a little bit later.

Moving on to number two, traffic counts. Highways 39 and 6 traffic counts taken by the Ministry of Highways need to be revisited. Why don't we meet the target of 5 to 6,000 vehicles per day needed for twinning? Now you can look at your third piece of paper, and then I won't bother you further with that. And what I've done is the Ministry of Highways had provided us with these numbers a while ago, and I've put it in boxes so you can see the segments of highway. And we're going to concentrate on the first box at the top, the US [United States] border that's referred to as North Portal to Regina. We always include Regina because most people travelling from Estevan, if they're going up that highway, are generally headed to Regina — lots of doctors appointments or Rider games or entertainment and that type of thing.

So you can see the first one. This is the US border to Bienfait, the km [kilometre] length, so that's 26.91 kilometres, that's how you look at that; AADT [annual average daily traffic] 12, that is your annual average daily traffic. The first number is 1,430. The second number with the T in front of it is the truck traffic. And when they talk about truck traffic, my understanding is that it's anything that is two tonnes and larger. So that is the different grouping there.

So then we have Bienfait to Estevan. It's only 9.54 kilometres and our average daily traffic is 7,480 but our truck traffic is 1,200 per day. That's two tonnes and larger and that is part of the concern around here. It's the size of those trucks. You put them on the highway with your family vehicles, your SUVs [sport-utility vehicle], and that is the problem. That is what's causing the fear on our highways.

Now the number that I was given was actually higher than that. When I spoke to a member from the Ministry of Highways, he had actually, two months ago, given me the number of 1,500. But when this came just a week or so ago, that number has been

reduced. So whether they've seasonally averaged it, I'm not sure. I have no explanation. I wasn't given one for the difference in numbers. But if I refer to 1,500 vehicles a day in my report, that was the number I was personally given not that long ago.

Okay. If we look at the third city here, we have Estevan to Weyburn, that's 84.6 kilometres. We're looking at 3,800 vehicles a day, and 830 of those are the large trucks.

Then we have Weyburn to Highway 6, that would be what we refer to as the Corinne corner where Highway 39 and 6 intersect. You have 71.3 kilometres, and there's 3,680 vehicles a day with 950 getting back to a large number of trucks. Now some of the trucks do turn at the Corinne corner, head to Moose Jaw to hit the Highway No. 1, so sometimes the number from the Corinne corner into Regina — and you can see the one we're going to look at — is a little bit lower.

And then the last one that we're going to look at here, Highway 39 to Regina, it's just one step down there below the small box. It's 37 kilometres. It has 4,130 vehicles per day but only 640 trucks. So there's an occasion where you can see where the number of trucks has dropped off.

The other information on this page is citing two other highways in Saskatchewan that would like to be twinned as well: Highway No. 7, which is Saskatoon to the Alberta border, and Highway No. 16, which is Yorkton to Saskatoon. And we'll just leave that for you to have a look at when you have a little bit more time.

Now getting back to my report, we had talked about why don't we have the 5 or 6,000 vehicles. We have so many people that talk to us continually about that highway is so dangerous. So many terrible things are happening out there, but we still don't meet the government's criteria of enough vehicles to twin it. Well basically it says, the reason we do not have those vehicles per day is because many — and as much as 43 per cent of the people that were polled in Estevan in a newspaper, Estevan newspaper poll this winter — said that they choose to not take Highway 39. It is too dangerous. So when they leave this city, they take Highway 47. They go to Stoughton and then take Highway 33 into Regina. And that is a huge significance of why our numbers are down and the same . . . And we'll visit this point again later.

All right. So I'm going to skip down to the bottom here, under comments. So I've already talked to you about the traffic counts. From the bottom of page 3, you can see that the truck traffic between Bienfait and Estevan on that was circled. The amount of 1,200 per day is a dramatic increase from last year, 2011, which was only 790 per day. That's 2 tonne and larger. This means this section of highway have over 10,000 trucks per week. Now that is huge considering the Global Transportation Hub in Regina, two weeks ago when they gave me statistics, Loblaws is only sending 3,600 trucks a week. And between Bienfait and Estevan, we have over 10,000 of these large trucks per week. And so this is huge for us here. And then I just made a note that I had been given 1,500 as a previous number.

[13:15]

Okay. Setting that aside, moving on to number three, weather and road conditions play a huge role on our untwinned highway. So I have just a copy of a fatal accident that unfortunately happened near Milestone this past winter, and it is talking about — I've just underlined a sentence for you there — “. . . the SUV was behind a snow plow and blowing snow with reduced visibility is suspected to be a factor in the collision.” And that is where the snowplow was throwing up snow, and unfortunately this SUV was in collision. And there was a woman from Alberta I believe, and she was killed.

This is one instance where, had our highway been twinned, that loss of life probably wouldn't have occurred. And this is unfortunately the case out on that highway where we have a lot of traffic. I know there were quite a few snowplow collisions and snowplow type of accidents this winter, which is very sad.

Okay. Page 5, and this would be three (b), my daughter, Jessica, was in a similar situation by Milestone. So it happened on March 17th of this year, and it was also just one week before the previous tragedy that's there. The vehicle that my daughter was in had slowed to 60 kilometres because the traffic ahead had slowed down for a snowplow. Because they were on a two-lane traffic, the semi they met blinded everybody. The vehicle in which my daughter was a passenger was rear-ended. Luckily it was by another half-ton truck.

Now if they had been in a small vehicle, the likelihood is perhaps that my daughter and the fellow she was riding with, her boyfriend, might have been killed. But I think the back end of their half-ton, being it was just a half-ton that hit them, was able to absorb a lot of the impact. They were seen at the last second. The other vehicle veered into the ditch.

My first question to her was, what were you hit by? You know, every mother, you worry about a semi because that is the mentality we have around here is everything . . . It seems as soon as you hear there's an accident, was a semi involved? And that has just got to be the way that people think.

So it was a half-ton that hit them. The collision caused 9,000 in damages. They were able to keep going. Shortly after however, they had, because they were in a bad snow situation, there were three semis that were on the wrong side of the highway and were coming directly at them. So not only had they been rear-ended, a little while later they have to practically drive in the ditch to get out of the semis' way. There were three of them, all of them coming in their lane of traffic at them. And further to this, when they slowed down to avoid the semis, they were told by the driver behind them he had almost rear-ended them for a second time.

So these, although it might seem strange to you, these are common occurrences on this highway because it is a highway with so many trucks and the fact that it is a two-lane highway. And my daughter and her boyfriend, they were actually so traumatized — and I mean, she's a chartered accountant that's 27 years old — they could not finish the trip to Estevan that day. They had to stay overnight from all of these things that are happening. Now this is just my story.

And then Lauralie's daughter, who I know some of you received the letter about it, it was a week before this. So all

three of these . . . The first was a tragedy of loss of life. My daughter's wasn't. Fortunately Lauralie's family wasn't either. But these were all within three weeks of each other, and they could have all been tragedies out there, you know, but for the grace of God.

Lauralie's daughter and her family . . . Do you want to talk about this one?

Ms. Ireland: — Well they were on their way to Regina for a fun weekend, and I got a call from her. And just into Midale there was a semi coming towards them. A truck pulled out, passed the semi, coming right for them. Luckily my son-in-law quickly took the ditch. It was seconds from being a head-on. So there they were, in the ditch with my two little grandsons. The semi didn't stop; neither did the driver of the half-ton truck. Now at this time I was sort of in the air about continuing on with time to twin because I didn't know where to go next. But that sort of lit another fire under me to even push more and harder so that this doesn't happen.

Ms. Young: — And these kind of incidents happen unfortunately day after day and week after week on this highway. And you have to kind of know people or live here or drive that highway to really understand the full extent of what people are going through on those highways. So I finished page 5 by just saying, the semis create chaos out on the Highway 39, and they create terror on Highway 39.

Point number four, we need our provincial and our federal governments to work together to secure funding to build the infrastructure, which is twinning these two highways needed in southeastern Saskatchewan. We did have a public meeting recently, in fact a week ago, May 21st. The Ministry of Highways representative said it would cost approximately 500 million for these highways to be twinned from North Portal border crossing to Regina.

We were told when we started this group, and I'd spoken to Ministry of Highways people then, they had told us \$1 million a kilometre. I'm not sure why in four years that they've doubled the cost. But in any case, it is a substantial amount of money, yes. But with what people are going through and the amount of accidents and injuries that we have, and people continue to say, with the amount of money that's coming from the Bakken oil field and with everything else that is happening in southeastern Saskatchewan, we really seriously need people to look at this. So these two levels of government have worked together before to get projects completed, so we count on them to collaborate on this project soon.

Now we'd like you to remember that in southeastern Saskatchewan last winter there were at least seven fatalities that occurred on a variety of highways, but each of these vehicles were involved in an accident with a semi. Now we did have more deaths than that, but these are just the ones that involved a semi in our southeast.

So Highway 13, that's the highway leading from Weyburn to Carlyle. There were two fatalities when the young boys in — hockey boys — their truck was involved with a semi. Then Highway 39, we had a fatality when a car was struck by a semi. That was at Milestone as well, the older gentleman. Highway

18, this was out by Hirsch, a fatality. There was a collision with semis. Highway 47 — that's the highway from Estevan north to Stoughton — we had a fatality where there was a collision with a semi. Highway No. 9 — that's from Carlyle to Alameda — there were two fatalities, two ladies in the back of their car, and they were rear-ended by a semi. And these are all just this winter. But these accidents create an atmosphere of fear in our area.

Number five. There are many factors that affect our traffic counts and safety each day on the Highways 39 and 6: (a) the North Portal border crossing. This border crossing does 12 billion in trade annually. These semis all travel Highway 39. So you can imagine the amount of trucks that it takes to haul 12 billion in goods, and those are the trucks that all travel up Highway 39 right through Estevan on through Weyburn. And as I said, some of them turn at the Corinne corner, head to Moose Jaw, and then to No. 1. Some of them do go right into Regina.

But this is a huge amount of trade. And I have some quotes on the next page just to tell you about how important to the federal government and the provincial government this trade has become. And these quotes are all taken from the . . . I have listed the source partway down page 7. It's from the Regina *Leader-Post*, "Upgrades coming to North Portal border crossing . . ." April 3rd of this year. "The federal government hopes a \$10-million investment will improve the flow of commercial traffic at the North Portal Border Crossing (NPBC)." So you can see that this is important to the federal government as well. This border crossing operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and it is the main Canada-US border crossing in Saskatchewan.

"We want to make sure that we do everything we can to enhance the trade . . . We have found over the course of the last number of years that trade between the two countries at the North Portal has grown exponentially and we needed to make significant improvements to ensure commercial . . . [growth] got through the border quicker and more secure than ever . . ."

That's why the federal government is putting in the \$10 million. They want those trucks to get through North Portal more quickly and more securely. But what we say is, what about when they get through the border? They hit our highway. We have to live here and deal with all of this traffic, and so what about us? So they're putting all of these trucks — normally about 1,000 trucks a day, so about 500 going into the States and about 500 approximately coming this way — those trucks are all thrown onto our two-lane highway that we have here.

And Highway 6 and 39, they are part of the national highway system that is located all across Canada. Highway 1 and Highway 11 are part of it. They did add Highway 11 from Saskatoon to P.A. [Prince Albert] as kind of an added northern route. That was added, I think in 2004 they added that to the national highway system. But 39 and 6 should be twinned. Even the fact that it's this North American trade route, we have all of this traffic coming and it hits our highway. So the final point here on this one . . . Oh, I guess we've got a couple more here.

In 2012 we had 92,000 traveller vehicles as well pass through the crossing. That's in addition to the 1,000 trucks every day.

So that's people that are going back and forth to the States or to Minot to shop or for whatever reason.

The North Portal border crossing is earmarked to receive federal funding because it's the ninth busiest port of entry in Canada. And you know, here we are with, you know, adding money to improve again the buildings, but nothing is done to this highway that all these vehicles are thrown onto. The traffic flow is to increase further once the Global Transportation Hub is fully operational. Now we understand it is Loblaws that is sending trucks out every week, but Yanke and Fastfrate have bought land, and so at some point they'll be shipping trucks out as well.

The point at the bottom, I think I've made this already. So approximately 1,000 semis per day move back and forth across the Canada-US border at North Portal. So why is the government so concerned about border security and speed to get the trucks through but give no consideration to the two-lane Highway 39 that these semis are thrown onto with our family vehicles? That is the part that concerns us. Safety has always been our mandate, and pushing to twin this highway because of safety.

Okay. Page 8, five (b). The Bakken oil boom affects our safety each day on Highway 39. In 2012 the Bakken oil formation had 2,350 producing wells in southeastern Saskatchewan. These wells produce 69,000 barrels per day. Now the problem with that is that they don't have enough pipelines and they can't put the pipelines in fast enough. So then how do they move the oil? Well some of the oil is moving by rail cars. But how do they get it to the rail cars? Well they have to use tanker trucks. So our highways have become inundated with tanker trucks. We actually have six tanker cars in the middle of Estevan that are getting loaded every day. So tanker trucks are running into the middle of Estevan, day and night, to load six CP [Canadian Pacific] tanker cars each day. Now there is lots and lots of tanker trucks that are running on all of our area highways. Each of these wells — and we have 2,350 — need approximately . . . How many semi loads?

Ms. Velestuk: — 1,200 to 1,500 semi loads just to get the well producing, so that's from the time they break ground until that well is producing. And then there's how many ever trucks for the life of that well to service it and maintain it and whatnot.

Ms. Young: — And to haul oil.

Ms. Velestuk: — And to haul oil.

Ms. Young: — The oil, because they have to haul the oil away. And as I said, the pipelines . . . So we are being inundated by tanker trucks.

In southeast Saskatchewan, the Bakken is one of the hottest oil plays in North America. It's said that 60 to 70 per cent of Saskatchewan's oil is coming from this area. And I've listed some statistics here for you: just back in 2011, the oil production, 157 million barrels with a value of \$12.7 billion; the oil and gas royalties from '11 to '12, \$1.7 billion; Crown land sales, 2012-2013 — this is in their fiscal year — for oil and gas rights, \$88.9 million; and also opportunities and exploration, extraction, processing, refining, and related

services, over \$4 billion. And this is from the Government of Saskatchewan, their fact sheets.

So there's huge amounts of money that is going into the government coffers. We know that it doesn't belong to us, but we have reached a point and people in this area have reached a point where it is time you have to reinvest some of that money in the highways. And the main highway . . . People need one safe highway to get to Regina. They take the other routes because of fear of Highway 39. But if we could somehow get Highway 39 twinned, people would feel that they have more of a safe route. They could share that highway with the semis and not feel so threatened.

[13:30]

Number five, we have the Global Transportation Hub in Regina. It has traffic that comes through southeastern Saskatchewan daily. Not only is it shipping goods out, but it also receives things from the States. It reshuffles them in Regina, then some of them come back this way or head north up 11 or east and west up No. 1. But they do come through our area, lots of it initially as well. So as I've mentioned before, Loblaws has 3,600 trucks a week, and a portion of these travel on our highway every day. This will increase every year as it grows. And according to their website, the Global Transportation Hub encourages North American trade, world distribution, transportation, and export. This means these products will travel up and down our highway to North Portal.

Number five (d). We just found this out two weeks ago today, that our Estevan traffic weigh scales are closed. It was found out by accident. We kind of wondered why you never saw them open and some calls were made to weigh scale numbers around the province, and we discovered that it's closed. I didn't ask when it was closed or for how long it's closed, but the really disturbing part for us is that that means that there are no highway traffic officers on Highway 39. Nobody is monitoring all of these thousands of semis that are going up and down our highway every day. That is the huge thing.

They said that the weigh scales are open if a truck wants to go and weigh himself. I asked when these trucks can get weighed and they said, well if they turn at Moose Jaw and head on to the No. 1, if Swift Current's weigh scales are open, they might get weighed there. If not, not until Medicine Hat.

But our fear . . . And we know that they're driving with oversize loads and overweight loads, but our fear is still the fact that we don't know if those drivers have qualifications, if they've driven more than the hours they should have. And it's the behaviour they have on the highway. They are doing lots of unsafe passing. They are doing lots of driving in convoys — and we hear this continually from people — and it's very stressful sharing the highway with these trucks.

Page 9. There is one reason why the public is so fearful of this highway and that is, as I said, there is no officers out on the highways. And there are six officers being trained in the province right now. None of them, we were told, are being scheduled for Estevan. We were told that they get tons of complaints about Highway 39 and the trucks that are driving it, coming from North Portal, going up our highway. Something

must be done immediately to put traffic officers on this highway every day. It's very dangerous with these aggressive, speeding semis. Now I was told, in all fairness, that occasionally a traffic officer will come down from Regina or from Moosomin and will go out on patrol, but that was occasionally, so who knows how often that happens? The people I was speaking to didn't know when it happened.

Now the fact that's even more disturbing again to us is that an individual RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] member we had a phone conversation with last week had just found out that Estevan's weigh scales were closed. They found out one day after we had a public meeting and we announced to Ron Gerbrandt that the weigh scales were closed and that there's no traffic officers. The next day an RCMP officer we were in conversation with announced that they did not know that there were no traffic officers out there. Now we know that Estevan, the RCMP officers here are stretched very thin. They have huge numbers of roads. There's lots dealing. Because we're so close to the border, there's lots of drug activity. There's lots of theft on farms and acreages. Because the fact that there's an oil boom brings in the negative elements as well as the positive elements to the area. So I don't know; you rarely hear anybody speaking about an RCMP officer on Highway 39. And the fact that maybe they assume that the traffic officers are out there, who knows? But in any case, no wonder our residents are scared on Highway 39. And I've referred to it many times as the wild west, and if you travel that in your family vehicle on that highway, you will see what we're referring to.

Okay, number five (e), the Northgate oil and grain hub. This is to be built 70 kilometres east, approximately, of Estevan. The government is investing \$94 million. There will be hundreds more tanker trucks every day hauling to that site. It's only a 35-minute drive from here. So they're going to be loading 70 000 litres of oil per day from this new oil and grain hub. They'll load it at Northgate, which is on the border of Canada-US, and this oil will be shipped to United States.

So where are these trucks going to be travelling? Well we know that they're going to hit the highways around here, which are 47 north and south, 9 north and south by Carlyle, 18 which is east and west, and probably some of them on 39 as well. But in any case, it's still a danger to the people around here. By our calculations anyway, there'd be probably maybe as many as 3 to 400 tanker trucks per day hauling oil in this area, and approximately 73 to 75 grain trucks hauling grain to this area as well.

So this is going to put a huge burden on our already overburdened highways, and that's our concern. We're very concerned for the general public who have to share these highways with these hundreds of tanker trucks. And there will be collisions and it will be tragic. I mean it's . . . We're already having collisions with semis that are deadly. When you're colliding with a tanker truck then it's going to be even worse.

Okay, getting back to point number six, twinning Highway 39 and 6 will save lives. This will save lives. Transport Canada's told us that twinning or building divided highways improves safety by 60 per cent. We've already lost, from 2002 up to present day, today, we've lost 58 lives on Highway 39 and 6. Many of these would have been saved had these highways been

twinned.

Our group would have quit long ago except for the people of Estevan and area who urge us to continue to push for this twinning project because it is so necessary for our safety. Passing lanes are not appropriate for this highway because of the large number of semis who make it very dangerous to share the road with them. We feel that our reasoning for saying no to passing lanes is that at some point when you're on a passing lane, you have to merge with traffic and if that traffic is a semi and they're speeding or they're aggressive, which most . . . not most, many of these semis are driving in convoys, what's going to happen to grandma and grandpa or mom or dad that have to merge in their family vehicle with these semis? It's just not a good concept for this highway. And because the traffic is not being monitored, the average speed out on Highway 39 roughly is 120 kilometres an hour, and this is a well-known fact.

Number seven, people are fearful to travel Highway 39. And we've brought Don Kindopp with us. He's a teacher that I've known for many, many years, and he would like to say a few words about the fact that people are afraid to travel Highway 39.

Mr. Kindopp: — Chairman Darryl and members of the committee, my name is Don Kindopp, and I am here to testify as a witness. My testimony, if that's the proper term, is mostly personal and to some degree the experience of others that I have spoken with. And I guess that's hearsay in a court of law, but anyhow, you'll get it anyhow.

My testimony will be my need to travel to Regina because that's basically, when I head that direction, it's to Regina there. And so we perhaps could call this the fear factor. Probably a better characterization of that would be, what are the factors I take into mind to determine what would allow me the maximum safety in getting myself and my family and my passengers to Regina?

So when I leave Estevan here, when I think of an egress from Estevan, one of the things of course would be where I'm located in the city because I am in a position where I'm located just a short block and a half off the Souris Avenue North, which adjoins right to Highway 47, and I can go north towards Stoughton. The other egress would be to go down to 39 and get on 39 and head through Regina and Corinne and up that way. So that was one factor is how do you egress the city sort of thing.

The other factor that I would take into mind is the number of vehicles that I would encounter on the highway because that certainly has a bearing on safety, but not only the number of vehicles, but also the types of the vehicles because the types of vehicles would indicate the use of those vehicles. So when you get into the SUVs and cars, they're probably other people of your same nature. They're people that are travelling to some place for some entertainment or grocery shopping or whatever it may be. But if you encounter grain trucks, you're into farmers, and if you encounter the large tankers, you're probably into oil field there. And the bigger the vehicle, the more danger they pose to me as a fellow passenger on the highway. Their braking is not as good as mine. They're not as dextrous in terms of the highway and that. So that has to be taken into consideration.

The other consideration I take into effect is local traffic. What is going to be using that road when I go up there? So when I go through Stoughton, it's now starting to add more and more oil into it. Five years ago it was mainly agriculture and farmers moving their implements and moving their grain trucks across the highway, but now we're gaining more and more of the industry type of vehicles other than agriculture there.

Passing through Weyburn, we go through the Midale oil fields and the Weyburn oil fields, and we've had traffic that pertains to that particular industry there. We've had that for a large number of years, but now it becomes a more dense type of traffic.

The other thing to consider would be intersections. What do I have to cross through? Because they also pose a danger every time you come to an intersection when you get there.

For some people, and I've talked to some, they say, I go Highway 39 because of the services provided on there. I'm a little old lady and if I have a flat tire or I run out of fuel or whatever, I have places like Midale. I have places like Weyburn that I have access to. If I go through Highway 47 north, beyond Stoughton your services are pretty limited there.

For myself personally, I have by and large now used Highway 47 to go to Regina. Therefore it brings to question in my mind the accuracy of the . . . when we look at the highway use of 39 because if Highway 39 were a safer route — if it were twinned, for example — without a doubt more people would be using Highway 39.

The other factor I should mention in terms of my choice of travel is also highway conditions. Up until the last five years, Highway 47 and particularly Highway 33 were not the kind of highway surface that you'd choose to travel on because it's not the same class of highway in terms of structure and that. Highway 39 is a higher class highway, and you would choose that because of the better construction, better shoulders, and that sort of thing. So those are all factors there.

But despite that, like I mentioned, my choice is Highway 47 because it is in my mind a smaller amount of traffic. It has a smaller number of the larger type of vehicles. I find that the traffic on Highway 47, 33 generally travels slower than the traffic on Highway 39. There seems to be less immediacy about the travellers using that highway, so therefore I would choose Highway 47.

The other thing that, while I have the opportunity, I would mention is that in most cases and in my experience that we are largely reactive to things. And in this case here I think that we've heard about the hub at Northgate, we've heard about the increase to Bakken, that here's a chance to become proactive to look at what we can do so we don't have to say that we have X number of deaths or X number of accidents on the highway to prove that we have to twin those things; that the process now can start by being proactive and start building from today on into the future there as a chance to reduce those kinds of accidents and reduce those possibility of fatalities and that. So I thank you for your time.

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Don. Just winding things up

quickly, at the bottom of page 10 then, so if these 43 per cent of Estevan residents were brave enough to travel Highway No. 39, we would have, we feel, much more than the 5 to 6,000 number of vehicles needed to twin — per day — to twin that highway.

I've added just a couple of extra pages of information. Quickly it's basically just talking . . . We know what your committee is looking at. We know that you're dealing with distracted drivers, drinking and driving, people that are speeding, and that type of thing, people not wearing seat belts. And it's caused a huge number of deaths last year. And looking over some material that comes mainly from Transport Canada, they talk about looking at . . . And the number one suggestion is divided highways. That can make things much safer for people.

We know that you can't do that to all highways in Saskatchewan. We know that Highway 7 and Highway 16 feel that they need it as much as we do. We find that, for those people, they have one route. If you're driving Delisle to Saskatoon, you've got one route. Now we can go other routes. That's right. But that's what's taking some of our numbers away to say that really we have a huge, a huge number of vehicles out here. And the other thing we have to deal with is the things that we've mentioned — the Bakken and the North Portal border crossing and the Global Transportation Hub, the fact that we have so many semis out there.

[13:45]

I have some pictures of my family car parked beside a tanker truck, and you people can visualize — you're welcome to look at them after if you like — but you can visualize the difference in size, and that's what ever so many people talk about is that size.

If we had a divided highway, we feel that it would be much safer out there. We need some intersections, left- and right-turn lanes. If you turn into Hitchcock, for instance, where Abbie lives — and she's part of our group because of her 10-minute drive every day is like a death trap almost — there is no turn lanes into Hitchcock. There's no turn lanes into Macoun or merge lanes. I think at Midale there are some lanes, but then on the other side of Midale, you look at some of those towns, they don't have them as well. If you look at the size of our shoulders out here in southern Saskatchewan and you go measure our shoulders versus the size of the shoulders up by Milestone, ours are significantly smaller. If you take a look at the surface of our highway, the traffic surface from Estevan to Macoun, it's terrible. It's really very rough and uneven, and it just is not a good surface as well.

Passing lanes, as we've mentioned, they are good. It's a good option I think. I'm glad to hear that government is using them on Highway 10 in through the hills of Qu'Appelle. I think that's a good place to use them. They have slower moving vacation traffic, you know, campers and boats and things. It's a good choice.

The last page, I'll quickly finish page 12. Some things that are needed is number one, enforcement. You need to look at education and you need to look at engineering initiatives. We do not have enforcement on our highways around here. That's one of the reason, that's one of the main reasons why people are

afraid out there. If we have no traffic officers out there and our RCMP are too busy to be on Highway 39, what's happening out there? If you take a ride, especially during rush hour, you will see what's happening out there. So those are the things that need to be used, and I've just made a few notes about that. And our recommendation would be, number one, twin this highway, but number two, we need to have enforcement. And all of our roads in the southeast need enforcement.

You know, we have the oil boom, and it's wonderful to have the money, but we need some services in return. And I think enforcement is something immediately that could be done. So I'll close with that. Do you want to go ahead and talk about that, please?

Ms. Velestuk: — I also wanted to mention that six days ago, we began circulating an online petition on change.org. Right now on average, we're getting about 100 signatures a day. At quarter after eight this morning, we were already at 643 signatures. There is an option on there if the people signing wish to leave a comment. It is, like I said, optional, and a lot of people are choosing to do so. And I have made a copy of some of the comments we had, and I will provide you with them if you like. And it just will tell you their testimonials — what they see on a day-to-day basis, what their fears are, and probably 98 per cent of it's safety. And a lot of concerns are the semis.

But it's not just the semis, it's what the semis are carrying. Because you have to remember that carbon capture, there's some really large equipment moving on these highways for that project. Parts for the draglines for the coal industry we have down here, there's some really large parts hauled in for that, regular oil field.

We have a lot of farming, there's farm machinery moving on the highway. Mobile home place, they're transporting mobile homes down the highway too. So it's not just convoys of semis. There's some very large semis to get around. And there's some fears, and you can see that in some of the testimonials I'll provide you with.

The Chair: — Well thank you very much for your time. Is that the conclusion of your presentation then? Okay. Well thank you for that. If you'd like to have those documents given to us, one of the staff will come by and pick them up. And we'll table those for a later date. Any questions from members? Ms. Chartier.

Ms. Chartier: — First of all, thank you so much for your very thorough presentation. Very good information that you have in here and very well documented. I'm just curious about the piece, Highway 47, the Stoughton piece. I know you've said that it's the feeling that people are taking that highway instead of 39, but have you asked the ministry for traffic counts on that one? It would be interesting to compare what that looks like.

Ms. Young: — We have some. We actually did our own counts in 2011 on Highway 47, as well as on 39. And at that time, we found that they were almost equal. The numbers on 39 and 47 were very close to being the same. The only thing we found on Highway 47, there were less family vehicles. It was more . . . Half of them were half-tons, a third of them were semis, and a third of them were family vehicles, whereas out on 39, it was

about a third, a third, a third — a third family vehicles, a third half-tons, and a third semis.

So we always feel that anything bigger than a family vehicle poses a risk to us as a family. So we actually felt Highway 47, because of a lot of the traffic heading in to the heart of the Bakken, as I call it, was actually even more dangerous in some ways. But as Mr. Kindopp said, generally when you're driving to Regina often for, like I say, a Rider game or for some entertainment, the oil field on weekends, a lot of it is shut down, you know. In some ways, the traffic is much less because fellows go home for the weekend. You know, there isn't nearly as much — there is some, but there isn't nearly as much — hauling on the highway going north on the weekends kind of thing. But at that time when we did the counts, the Ministry of Highways fellow that we spoke with, he compared our counts to his and he said they were within 5 per cent of them. So right now I would think that they're probably pretty much equal.

The thing that's going to make it worse on Highway 47 is that they're building what they call a man camp because we're so short of places for people to live here. A 1,000-man man camp is being built there to help people from SaskPower who can't get rooms in Estevan or people in the oil field. And if you put a 1,000-room man camp out there, you're going to have 1,000 vehicles going with that. So that's going to make vehicle traffic even worse out there.

Ms. Chartier: — For sure. I was just thinking it would be good to have, just in terms of your tools in making a case, that having that same period, actually even the numbers of fatalities and injuries, that both pieces of data that you have here on that, I think would be probably very useful in helping to further make your case for sure.

And I just want to flag . . . I see that there'll be other people with questions too, but I don't know if your . . . Last week we had a presentation from the Workers' Compensation Board's, I think it was called the WorkSafe committee, part of the Mission: Zero focus. And I don't know if your organization has a member on that committee, but it might be worthwhile to connect with them, and maybe afterwards we can talk a little bit about that. But they're very focused on your neck of the woods here, and it might be very good to have someone from your committee on that particular committee. So thank you.

Ms. Young: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Vermette.

Mr. Vermette: — Yes. And again, thank you for presenting. And you talk about your group and twinning as a committee or whatever, and you have support of the municipalities, the rural areas. Do you got letters of support? Are they part of the committee? I'm just trying to see who's working with you as like a group to raise your concerns. I'm just clarifying who . . . Is it just individuals, residents? And I mean you've expressed yourself well, but I'm just trying to see that side of it.

Ms. Young: — We have been invited, in about three weeks we're going to Carlyle, to the southeast area transportation planning committee meeting for June. And we're going to do a presentation there with them. Then a few days before that, on

June the 20th, we are going to Midale, to the south central transportation planning committee to do a presentation there. We do want to get them on side and, as you said, be in agreement with us. We had a couple of years ago reached out to the RMs [rural municipality].

Ms. Ireland: — Originally back in probably 2010 we did write all the RMs. And at that time we got one reply and that was Bienfait, the mayor's.

Ms. Young: — One of the things and one of the reasons why we continue to do this is I'm a retired teacher. Lauralie is a retired nurse. Abbie is a working mom. Mr. Kindopp is a retired teacher. But we have more time. We find one of the things in Estevan that you have is people are either busy raising families, busy working for companies, or busy owning a company. And as much as people say, keep going, keep going, a lot of them are leaving it in our hands to keep, you know, fighting the fight for them. And so how many . . . Well we have these signatures.

One of the projects that we did and we presented to Minister Reiter in 2011 is we made up a book of about 250, we called them safety surveys, where people could write about things that happened to them on the highway. We put them beautifully into a binder and took them to Mr. Reiter so he could read about it. So people were kind of on side that way.

We also did what we called mini-petitions. A lot of the oil companies said, we don't have time; just give us a petition to sign. So their company would make up just a title page, and they would all sign it. So you know, we have the support, but we don't have groups like that behind us, no.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay. No, and it's good to see what you're doing, bringing the awareness, and it's about safety. And I think clearly that's what we're here to hear, ways we can improve fatalities in the province, and that's the mandate of the committee. Like the Chair will make sure we follow that.

You opened some comments, and I'm just seeing here, you talk about revenue and about the growth plan. And I'm glad you said that. With that sometimes come other challenges, and you've expressed that really well. And you've given us some numbers as far as projections of, I guess, dollars coming in, and you're getting those from the facts of the current government's fact sheet. And you're providing that, and that's good to see. And I know that you're not just alone when you come to looking at areas where there's growth.

I know northern Saskatchewan, and I just use that as an example. The mining industry over there is really working hard and people are expanding. Everyone's, you know, that's good for the economy and good for growth, and everyone agrees with that. But there's also frustrations when you see some of the growth challenges that come with that, and I guess there's the problem. And those residents have to deal with that. In northern Saskatchewan they feel the same way on some of the issues.

So when you talk about growth, it's a challenge to balance it out. But I'm glad you bring your concerns because don't feel like you're isolated and alone because there are issues in northern Saskatchewan that feel the same way on certain issues. So I just want to say to you from that side of it, yes when

there's growth, we have to manage it as best we can. And I just want to say thank you for bringing the concerns and, you know, your personal stories is helpful and sometimes the challenges that go on. So I just want to say, it's not a question to you, but I just want to just . . . any information you've shared as part of your presentation, to say, don't feel alone. There are a lot of areas that are feeling the same impact.

The Chair: — Well thank you, members. I see no more questions. I guess I want to thank the committee from . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . From the floor you mean, sir? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Can you come to the mike? Because it's hard to hear and you should be on *Hansard* for record. You know, start over again by announcing your name, your title, and then begin again, please.

Mr. Istace: — Sorry. Chris Istace, city council, Estevan. There's going to be a statistical change in traffic flow on Highway 47 from 2011 to 2012. Mrs. Young didn't allude to there that Crescent Point put in a very large transloading facility in Stoughton. That large transload facility is actually larger than the CP rail facility within Estevan and the CN [Canadian National] rail facility in Bienfait. Much larger than that. I think it's a 150-car shunting line that they're transloading daily. And that speaks to the super-Bs and tank trucks that are filling there on a daily basis.

As well, the other trucks that are actually running overweight, because they came to council for an overweight permit, is SaskPower's gone into a 10-year agreement to sell their fly ash down to the United States. And they're hauling every day from Boundary into the city limits. And they're actually over national highway weight exemption. They went from the province, but we as a city, of course, wouldn't give it. So those are extremely large super-B cement fly ash trucks. So those have been added on 47 South.

So I just wanted to add that little bit of information. But for statistical truck information it wouldn't be there in 2011, I don't think. But 2012, and as myself and as Mr. Kindopp said, Highway 47 North is the only way we go. We don't go to 39 when I have my kids in my vehicle. When I'm working, Highway 39's fine, but not with my kids.

Thank you for your time. I apologize if I was out of order.

The Chair: — No not at all. It's my decision to take questions from the floor, or statements. That's fine. We have a question actually though. Mr. Vermette wants to ask something I believe, so go ahead.

Mr. Vermette: — Well I just want to make a comment. And I think the Deputy Chair raised a concern and I think put it out with partnerships. And one of the groups that did a presentation, workman's compensation, I believe, Mission: Zero. And I talk about the safety and looking at it.

The potash industry over there's doing work in one area and that was part of the presentation. And just to see the partnership that they've done with the municipality to deal with some of the highway stuff, it's interesting to see. So if you go into *Hansard* or we could provide you with, you know, somebody could give you that contact information, just to see what they're doing over

there. So it's not only dealing with I guess highways. It's dealing with partnerships, how to work with . . . You have a lot of industry around here that maybe that's a partner that will come on side and saying, we're willing to do something to add to what they're doing in a partnership, to say, we see we're causing part of the problem. Maybe we can work together. So think about those partnerships and using industry too as well, because it sounds like there's a lot of activity going around and it might be helpful to help with your partnership in trying to get your message across.

[14:00]

The Chair: — I have a question from Mr. Cox now. And you'll notice the time. We'll have a few minutes . . . Well we may go over 2 o'clock, so that's fine and the next presenter will have to hopefully just be patient and wait.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'd like to thank the committee too. There's been a lot of information here to digest. Some of us who aren't from this area weren't familiar with that and I thank you for presenting that.

Just a quick question, back to the Highway 47 comments and further to what Ms. Chartier said. Are you tracking any increase in accidents or fatalities on the Highway 47 now that there's more traffic going there rather than going 39? Do you see that becoming a problem too?

Ms. Young: — We haven't been tracking anything recently. 2011 I think, as you said, there was . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . On 47?

Mr. Cox: — Just on that stretch between here and Stoughton.

Ms. Young: — It's considered to be a very dangerous highway.

Mr. Cox: — Okay.

The Chair: — Thank you. I have Mr. Steinley now.

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much for your presentation. I really appreciate it. A couple of questions. We've had a lot of numbers with accidents involving . . . SGI presented for three hours last Tuesday to us, and a lot of their accidents they broke down by alcohol being a factor, speed being a factor, distracted driving being a factor. Is any of those numbers . . . Do you guys have a breakdown of that for your numbers of accidents on Highway 39 and 47? Is there other things adding to these accidents like distracted driving, like alcohol, wildlife, or is it mostly just strictly an engineering issue with just it being a single-lane highway?

Ms. Young: — We haven't actually requested. Our only breakdown is head-on collisions, rollovers, and other. And that's the only way that we had broken it down because our focus is, you know, how many lost . . . lives we've lost and how many injuries. And from a safety aspect, we haven't gone into the detail that you folks are with your committee.

Mr. Steinley: — Just in follow-up, and I really appreciate the fact that you bring up the notion of enforcement because that's something that can go province-wide is with enforcement and

there being more enforcement, particularly speed. I drove down by myself today actually and I can tell the speed that vehicles are travelling is quite substantial and it's something that I think enforcement, if there was a larger presence out there of enforcement and the ability to do that, there'd be definitely a decrease in speed.

Ms. Young: — Well that's something we could deal with right away.

Mr. Steinley: — Yes.

The Chair: — Thank you. Ms. Chartier has a follow-up question.

Ms. Chartier: — Just in follow-up to Mr. Steinley, you had said in your presentation that the average speed, you had had it clocked at about 120 kilometres. And how was that documented?

Ms. Young: — That isn't documented by statistics. It's just documented by travelling on the highway personally, personal driving.

Ms. Chartier: — Well just echoing again what Mr. Steinley said, I think the piece around enforcement is huge, even in the short . . . Whether or not twinning happens in the short term or long term, there are things that you can do in the very near future to ease some of your stresses, I think. So I appreciate that, that that was one of your recommendations as well. So thank you for that.

Ms. Ireland: — Can we just ask how we can help get more Mounties on the highway? You know . . .

Ms. Velestuk: — We just got a couple more last year.

Ms. Ireland: — How do we check with . . . I mean they are stretched so thin.

The Chair: — Well I can answer that question. I can answer that question. It's part of a recommendation that we'll take from this committee, from your presentation, that you believe enforcement's a good initiative to start. I mean that's what we're looking for, is that kind of recommendation. Can we promise that will come? I can't guarantee that.

When the recommendations are put together — and the committee will sit at the end of June to make our final recommendations — if we do decide on enforcement, we can't direct where it goes. But there are very competent officers in both the RCMP and the municipal departments that will be able to assess the mandate needs. I know the deputy minister of Policing is my ex-chief of police I used to work for in Prince Albert, so he's very up on analysts and studying this factor as well. So if the enforcement issue does come forward and we do get more officers, we could have a hybrid model of RCMP and municipal departments seeing increases.

There's also some recommendations possibly for additional manpower, via SGI we've heard, on overtime basis immediately to help solve the problem. So there was those kind of recommendations. Your recommendation today on

enforcement's taken in. It will be tabled now as well. And I want to thank you for your time.

If you have any other data you wish to present after today, please feel free to get a hold of Legislative Assembly Service. Up till June the 6th we're taking written submissions. So to the city of Estevan, if they would like to have a written submission, feel free to put something in as well, sir. That's definitely beneficial to the committee moving forward. We have a lot of information to go through now. But as we get to the end of our committee hearings and get ready for our recommendations and our final report, it's good for us to have the information sooner than later so we can go through it. So thank you for that. Do you want to . . . another point, sir?

Mr. Kindopp: — I just wanted to maybe perhaps mention that I think that one of the recommendations that I would give to you is that we start to move more and more towards a zero tolerance in terms of speeding, in terms of cellphone use, in terms of distractions and the other safety around the vehicles and that.

I think it's safe to say that everyone assumes that they can go 10 per cent above the speed limit so right away they hit the highway at 110 or if you're going to Saskatoon, you do 120. A lot of people say I can get 113 out of it with going by an RCMP officer and they won't . . . [inaudible] . . . but that just seems to snowball. As you creep up on another going at 110, well then you move to 115 to get by and then you stay there and then . . .

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Yes you know, you raise a good point. It's zero tolerance. I don't doubt for one second that the members of this committee . . . In fact I know for a fact that we have a goal. Zero tolerance for all of us would be perfect. I want to see no more fatalities, but we can't legislate smart. So that's on the record now. So it's pretty much that, you know, we'd sure like to.

And I liked your point about education in here as well. I think that's a valid point that, you know, it comes with the business of responsibility. I've said to the media before, I'll say it again, and the members of the committee believe this too, I fully believe that driving is a privilege, not a right, so use that privilege wisely . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Responsibility, yes sir.

So again thank you for this, and we'll take written submissions from anybody in the area who wants to submit before June 6th as well. We'll take a five-minute recess and that way we can change the seats and get the new presenters up. And thank you very much.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

The Chair: — Great. Thank you very much for coming back after the short recess. With us now I believe is Mr. Greg Wallin, administrator from the RM of Browning.

I'm not sure if you were here, Mr. Wallin, during the initial introductions, but witnesses are asked to present, keep it to 15 or so minutes if you like. I'd let you know we have no one after you, so if it's a longer presentation that's fine.

We also have a lengthy period of time allocated for questions and answers by the committee members. If you have anything to present, a written document that you wish to be tabled, let us know and the staff will take that from you and table it for us to review later on, and for the public to see as well.

One other point is that I think you may or may have not understood this, but we will ask questions and we will not debate with you, no member will. And the only thing you cannot do is ask us a question. There could be a veiled kind of a question, like we saw in the last presentation, about how would you get something, how would you take a further step, and I'm prepared to answer and field those questions. But to be direct to a committee member per se, it's not allowed. So having said that, welcome and the floor is yours, sir.

Presenter: RM of Browning No. 34

Mr. Wallin: — Hi. Like I say, I'm Greg. I'm here representing the RM of Browning. The fellow that was with me had some of the . . . Brian was supposed to come. He had a lot of statistics on traffic accidents and stuff which I don't have, and I don't have anything other than brief.

I will be fairly brief because we have . . . As the RM of Browning, we have a lot of the same concerns that you'd have with the driving, the distracted driving, because with increased, our traffic on a lot of our roads . . . We have an oil loading facility too on a rail crossing. Like, our traffic's went up from, in the last three years, from 200 vehicles a day to a 1,000 vehicles a day. So in saying that, with that comes a lot of distracted driving, a lot of speeding, a lot of intersection violations and whatnot. So like I say, we do have the same concerns that is in the first report here.

And in saying that, we met with the Hon. Harpauer in Regina a couple weeks ago and she was the one that advised us to come here, that maybe to start here and make some presentations. And what we would like to see is some sort of a partnership. We had heard through the grapevine too that SGI might be looking at, was looking at the same things that we were, trying to have some enforcement or have some way of stopping, like slowing people down, making them abide the intersections and whatnot. And in saying that . . . So we had talked to a few people, and Ms. Harpauer had said that to come here and, you know, thought it was a good idea that maybe, maybe we could start something, because there's . . . Also at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention there was a seminar there, and there was 90 municipalities that attended that had the same, you know, the same concerns.

And there is a lot of municipalities that are willing to ante up or partner to try and control some of this. And I guess that was our . . . The long and the short of it is that we would like to partner with SGI in providing service. We've already applied. Between the RM of Browning, the RM of Coalfields, and the town of Lampman, we've applied to and been approved for an enhanced RCMP officer that will come to Estevan, which gives Estevan another RCMP officer. But it will be dedicated to our two municipalities.

And in saying that, this is when we heard about the SGI may be looking at the same thing. And we really think that it would be

an opportune time to put this together to do, to set up to see what the statistics are, see how you could slow it down. And you know, the federal government, like I say, has already approved our RCMP officer. And in saying that, I think there's two more municipalities around us applying for one this year because everybody has the same concern.

The deaths out on our roads in the last five years are atrocious, and most of them due to either going through a yield sign, going through a stop sign, or speed. You know, I know there's . . . or distracted driving. Two of them were distracted driving. Drove, you know, drive right in, head-on into somebody. All they were doing was texting. They were . . . The phone, one hit a train, you know, texting on the phone, so . . . I don't have, like, a whole bunch of . . . other than that's our concern. We have the same concerns, and it was nice to see that, you know, there is a bigger party that has the same concerns as we do.

And we would just like to be, like to move on it, and have a partnership. You know, like one accident, for SGI's sake . . . You know, ours is just, you know, a life we can save, as well as SGI. But I mean even . . . SGI is the one paying the bill on it. You know, one new half-ton and a one-ton. That pays for the . . . That pays for one RCMP officer for one year.

Like the cost of the RCMP officer that it's costing us is \$120,000. It's \$180,000, and the federal government picks up 60 and we pick up 20, which, you know, if to partner with SGI for a year is a very small amount to, you know, that we could all . . . and then we could . . . It's a place to start, to start the stats. Everybody has to have stats to figure out, you know, and we think it would be an opportune time to pursue that a little bit further.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. I guess I just have a question for you. You mention it — and then we'll have Ms. Wilson — is you were at SARM, and they had about 90 RMs at a presentation. I know that the Ministry of Policing has presented a document to SARM, and it talks about bylaw enforcement and special constables and RMs working together. Because it sounds like to me — and correct me if I'm wrong — that some of your issues are going to be on your RM municipal road structures, not definitely the highways, so it could be policed by special constables with the powers of stopping for speeding and violations of rules of the road.

Mr. Wallin: — It definitely could be, yes. And that was looked at. We've been studying this for, I've been there 20 years, and it's probably about the last eight we've been considering some sort of law enforcement. The RM of Wilton up north had their own, and we met with them. We went up there several times to see how they were doing things. And as a matter of fact, if I understand right, they just shut theirs down and they're going to enhanced RCMP.

The Chair: — Yes, we'll check on that. Is that right? Ms. Wilson.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Greg, for your presentation. You talked about the increase in oil activity, in rail, and the traffic count increase. However I'm just curious, you said you've been here for 20 years. Have you seen any wildlife increase? Has any of the accidents or casualties been

due to wildlife — moose or deer?

Mr. Wallin: — Some of the accidents have been. I don't know of anybody that's ever been injured or hurt with wildlife, but I know definitely the moose is in our area now. It definitely causes more damage to vehicles than a deer does. That's for sure. But no, most of the accidents, most of the fatalities have been at intersections, or the one was just on the highway east of town, and it was a car went into the front of a school bus.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Okay. We have Mr. Vermette.

Mr. Vermette: — Yes. Thank you, Greg, for your presentation. Just trying to . . . You're talking about having, whether it's a special constable or an RCMP. You say you've applied and you've been granted, the two municipalities have been granted or RMs have been granted. What cost would that be to those . . . I'm just trying to understand the cost to yourselves as a municipality.

Mr. Wallin: — \$120,000. The full cost of one RCMP officer is 180,000, but it has to be approved by the federal government, which they've approved it already, and they'll pick up 60,000 and we pay 120.

Mr. Vermette: — Okay. I wanted to be clear because I thought you'd said 60 per cent. So it's 60,000.

Mr. Wallin: — 60,000.

Mr. Vermette: — So you will share 120 with the other RM?

Mr. Wallin: — That's right. And that we're not, we're haven't tied in to the . . . We have to meet with her or with them to set up the agreement or whatever. And I don't know what the fine revenue, how it all works. I know how it works for the urbans like with RCMP, but we're hoping it works the same as that so that there would be some revenue generated back. But you had mentioned one thing about hiring your own constable and Wilton got out of that. You end up, basically then, you're running your own police board, and as a group of volunteers, I guess as a municipal council, they're not willing to be the police board.

And we initially looked at that and we were going to go ahead with that but it ended up we weren't willing to be the police board and rewrite the, you know, we . . . But then when this enhanced police service came in, we jumped on that and think it's a great idea and think it's a great idea. Like, and we just don't want to see so many . . . Like that's where we said we'd like to form a partnership because we don't want to see . . . Okay, we're going to hire one. SGI is going to come in and hire one. You know, traffic safety is going to come and hire another one. It would be nicer just to, if we need to, let's partner together for the two of them.

The Chair: — Sure. I like the idea. Thank you for the recommendation. I know there was one RM last week presented to us saying they were prepared to look at that idea of sharing costs for special constables. It's just one thing we've heard already, so that's why I wanted to ask if you had looked at that.

Mr. Wallin: — You had mentioned too about highways. No, we're looking at all of our roads, like, and one of the big concerns we have as well as this is the weights of the trucks, you know, so I mean, whereas as our RCMP officer that's allocated to our area will have scales and whatnot to weigh the trucks and whatnot too. But even just the talk of it already that we had a public meeting and whatnot about the RCMP, even the talk of it already, I think, has slowed the traffic down and has, you know, and we're not even concerned about the fines. We just want to slow the people down, make them more aware.

The Chair: — Good point. The media and all . . . We've seen a reduction this year already from last year in fatalities maybe because of all the work the media has done in putting the message out. So it could be very effective. Ms. Chartier.

Ms. Chartier: — First of all, thank you so much for your presentation. And the point about partnership, I think, is very important. But I'm curious. So you've got an enhanced RCMP officer. Can you explain the enhanced RCMP program?

Mr. Wallin: — What I know of it I can tell you. Like we've met with the RCMP F Division several times. We had a public meeting and we did apply for it a year ago and it got approved for this year. We're at the point now we need to meet with them to finalize the agreement. There'll be a memorandum of understanding that we'll sign. And then that member will become a member of the Estevan RCMP service. Like we won't tell him what to do or whatever. We can tell him what our concerns are why we went into this, you know, but that would be with Darryl in Estevan here. He's the sergeant. But he would still work under Estevan RCMP.

And yes, if there is a need for him to go somewhere else because of an emergency or something, yes they've already told us that that will happen. You know, he'll be taken off but we still will have our regular RCMP service too so it's, all it is doing is supplying another RCMP officer, but will be dedicated to our square miles.

Ms. Chartier: — Do you have any sense, is it an annual commitment, the memorandum of understanding? Is it a three-year agreement?

Mr. Wallin: — I think a three-year agreement. You have to give one year's notice to back out. I'm hoping that now that once we're in and I'm hoping we don't get out because, you know, once you have a service you don't want to decrease the service.

Ms. Chartier: — Yes. And is this . . . So they're obviously a generalist, as all RCMP officers are, and they wouldn't be dedicated . . . They're dedicated to your particular area but not to traffic safety. I know that there are some police services that have dedicated traffic safety units. So this . . .

Mr. Wallin: — The way we understand, no, it's a full RCMP officer. They'll do, you know . . . But they will definitely take into consideration what our concerns are, why we went into that enhanced RCMP service. But no that was one of the questions that was at our public meeting and they will . . . They're an RCMP officer. Like they will be . . . And they said we wouldn't have somebody new, a new recruit. It would be somebody that

has been an RCMP officer that has been trained and has all the
...

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. Well thank you for that, for clarifying those details.

[14:30]

The Chair: — Thank you. That'd be a general duty officer. So the enhanced policing model is a 70/30 split in cost share. It's just a standard thing that any municipality can enter into and you pay 70 and the RCMP, the federal government, puts in 30. And then your agreement will go on. As you're prepared to pay, I'm sure they're prepared to put the member there. So I know, as my time as the minister of Policing, there was a lot of that discussion going on and RMs were looking at that because some of them were much more financially solvent than others are.

But I liked your point though about the partnership issue. If there's a recommendation that comes forward, I'm sure that the Ministry of Policing will be working with you to talk about other needs in the area because there's no point in them putting two or three in if you're going to get two or three in as well, cost shared with the RM. So there'll be a different way to look at that model, I'm sure, and you'll be negotiating that with the Ministry of Policing and SGI. So that's a good point. Any other questions? Mr. Cox.

Mr. Cox: — Just to clarify for me, and maybe you can answer or Greg can. The enhanced police officer program you're talking about, does that differ from what the cost is now for an RM? Darryl, you can maybe, or Mr. Hickie can answer that.

Mr. Wallin: — Yes we pay a per capita cost for what service, the RCMP service we have now. And this one is the full cost. We pay the full cost of that officer. And that's what they're estimating the full cost is, is 180,000. That's to supply the car, the wages, the ...

Mr. Cox: — Right now it's just a flat rate per head?

Mr. Wallin: — A per capita rate. Yes I think ... I can't remember the figure off the top of my head. I think we pay around \$20,000 for regular RCMP service.

Mr. Cox: — So this is substantially more?

Mr. Wallin: — Yes. Then it'll be over and above that.

Mr. Cox: — Okay.

The Chair: — On that note too, I know that if there's a recommendation, if more officers are put onto the streets based on recommendations, it's a standard kind of a placement where we would pay for the full amount of each officer like we do right now for the specialized units. So that's the kind of thing to take into consideration as well. There would be some negotiation with the federal government, I'm sure, to get some cost recovery. But if we make a commitment as a government I guess moving forward, the ministers of the day, it would be as it is now with the specialized sections. So dedicated traffic enforcement is where we would go to, not just general duties, I

understand too. Ms. Wilson.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Geographically, how do you compare with the rest of the province in the size of your RM?

Mr. Wallin: — The same size, 18 square miles. But there's two of us going in, Coalfields and us. We're 18 miles by 18 miles.

Ms. Wilson: — Okay.

Mr. Wallin: — And then they're 18 by 18.

Ms. Wilson: — Because some RMs are larger than others, so I'm just asking in comparison where would you range on the scale of one to ten?

Mr. Wallin: — With the majority.

Ms. Wilson: — You would.

Mr. Wallin: — The majority of them are 18 by 18 in the province. Like out west and up north some of them are bigger where the ... Out west because there's less population, lots of pasture, I understood they made them bigger then. And there is some that are amalgamating together now too, so they will become bigger.

Ms. Wilson: — So per kilometres of roads, would you be an average size RM?

Mr. Wallin: — As far as kilometres of road, the RM of Browning is considerably higher. The RM of Browning's been in the middle of the oil field since the '50s. It's an old oil field there, and poor planning back in the day and whatnot, we built every road, which is, you know, now that just doesn't happen. You build corridors to get to the wells and whatnot. You know, being so old and being, you know, where it started, kind of started in that area, when a road was needed, we just built it. Now we've got every road. We've got probably close to double the amount of roads that an average municipality would have.

Ms. Wilson: — And would you need those roads or could you block them off and just use main corridors?

Mr. Wallin: — Not so much anymore because they've developed the oil field around. You know, we do have some places where we'll have 2 miles of road that'll end, you know, to a trail then and whatnot, but it's pretty hard. You know, it seems like we're still building more roads every year.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you very much for your answer.

Mr. Wallin: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Vermette.

Mr. Vermette: — I do want just for clarification, Mr. Chair, you talked about, and I know it was 120 that you're splitting, so it's each 60,000 for the RM. But you also mentioned something about 30 per cent cost something, and I got a little confused with what you guys, what program you guys are talking about.

The Chair: — That 180 is a total cost. You're going to take 120, which is 70 per cent shared both ways, and there's 60,000 that the Government of Saskatchewan's going to give to this member then I understand too. Right? Because it's a 70/30. It's 120 split two ways.

Mr. Vermette: — Take the offer.

The Chair: — Right. And it's the other 60,000 which is going to be the 30 per cent given from the federal government, roughly. It's a ballpark number they use for recouping costs for patrol vehicles and those kind of things and training issues. That's what it is.

Mr. Wallin: — Right. Okay. I see what you mean.

The Chair: — It's just a 70/30 split for the most part because there's an allocated number of officers per capita in the province by the RCMP agreement right now. This is a brand new position that wasn't part of the actual agreement.

Mr. Wallin: — Okay.

The Chair: — Any other questions? Thank you very much. Your presentation was well . . . And again, if you have anything to table with us, you can submit it before June 6th, and we'd appreciate that. Thank you.

Mr. Wallin: — Well thank you for your time. Okay, thank you.

The Chair: — The committee will look for a . . . The Chair needs a motion to adjourn. Mr. Steinley. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — So moved. The committee now will be adjourned. Okay. Thank you so much.

[The committee adjourned at 14:35.]