

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

[7:10 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Someone else want to lead us through? Tom, you want to take a turn?

MR. SIGURDSON: Sure. This is the list of all of the constituencies in our province, not by population in this slide. The next slide again shows all of the constituencies in the province but in numerical order starting with the highest, Edmonton-Whitemud, at 31,500 and going down to Cardston at 8,100. You can see how everybody else [inaudible]. Also, the point about Cardston that should be pointed out is that the Blood Indian Band of 1,800 on the Blood Reserve chose not to be enumerated. So Cardston, while it's the lowest, the numbers aren't exactly accurate. What we've done, then, is taken all of the names on the voters' list. They come to one and a half million and some change in the '83 electoral divisions, and simple division gives you an average of 18,685.

Using the decision that was handed down by Justice McLachlin of British Columbia, where she had suggested that a variance off the mean of 25 percent would be tolerable, if you take the average plus 25 percent, you get 23,300, and the average less 25 percent, you get 14,000. Those are the numbers that we've got to somehow play with or justify or rationalize. Using again the list of constituencies, you see that there are a number of constituencies, those in yellow, that are well above the mean plus 25 percent. All of them are urban constituencies. Then there are a number of constituencies over in the pink that are below the mean less 25 percent; again, all of those constituencies being pretty much designated as rural constituencies. Putting that onto a map, you can see that all of the . . . There's Alberta and all of the constituencies that fall outside of the mean plus the variance, plus or minus 25 percent. So it's a good part of the province, a good number of the constituencies.

In looking at the city of Calgary, the highlighted colours are those constituencies that are above the 25 percent.

MR. CLEGG: That's because of expansion around the outer areas.

MR. SIGURDSON: Yes, pretty much. Again when we get to Edmonton, which I believe is the next slide, you'll see that those constituencies that are on the outside of Edmonton pretty much are growing and falling outside of the plus 25 percent. Other urban centres around the province - well, Lethbridge-East and Lethbridge-West, neither of those constituencies . . . They're perfectly within the mean and the range of plus or minus. The city of Medicine Hat, though, with its population, is well over the plus 25 percent allowance. The city of Red Deer: the red boundaries are the actual city boundaries, and the outer boundaries are the boundaries of the constituencies. In 1982 what the Electoral Boundaries Commission had to do in order to bump up the population for two constituencies, they had to go to the county of Red Deer to build up the population to give the city of Red Deer two constituencies. It was large as one constituency, extraordinarily large, one of the largest in the province then. In order to make two constituencies, they did have to go outside into the county, and I believe they're the only . . . Stockwell, am I correct?

MR. DAY: Correct.

MR. SIGURDSON: . . . two constituencies in the province that

have all urban areas plus a rural area outside a municipal boundary.

The city of St. Albert. Again the same problem: a growth area well over the mean plus 25 percent.

This is a map, again, of the province, and the constituencies that are highlighted on this map are constituencies that have a variance of 35 percent. They are the mean and under by 35 percent. So there's quite a number down in the eastern and southeastern area and then the three up in the Peace River block.

MR. EDWARDS: Did you want to go back to 5?

MR. SIGURDSON: Sure. Yeah. That's minus the mean, minus 25 percent, all of those constituencies?

MR. EDWARDS: Yes.

MR. SIGURDSON: Compare that to the other one, and you can see that there are still a lot of constituencies that are well below the average by 35 percent. These five constituencies are constituencies that have populations, I believe, under 10,000 voters and again are all located south - south of what? - well, in the south of the province.

This is the map showing all of the locations where the committee is going to be having hearings. As you can see, we're having hearings in the areas that are to some degree the less populated areas in that there may be some reason for change in those areas. There's certainly going to have to be the opportunity for people to come forward and present their views about their constituencies, their needs, to be properly represented.

A list of the public hearings. We've got High Level today, and here we are in Peace River. A point that was noted is that on November 15 we've got Edmonton; that's location number 4. Edson is location number 5, and then on the 16th we go back to location number 4. So we will have 17 locations in total, Edmonton and Calgary having more than one meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mention that Grande Prairie is a.m., not p.m.

MR. SIGURDSON: Oh, and Grande Prairie tomorrow. If you get so excited by the presentation tonight that you feel you must take in yet another and you want to bring more friends, tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. in Grande Prairie at the library we'll all be there waiting for you with open arms.

MR. CLEGG: I will be there . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Fair enough. Good.

MR. CLEGG: . . . with one or two people, but I won't take him back to go through this again.

MR. SIGURDSON: Again, there's the map of the province showing the hearings and the highlighted areas, as well showing those constituencies that are certainly well under the mean less 25 percent. That's actually mean less 35 percent, isn't it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, 35.

MR. SIGURDSON: So we are trying to hold public hearings in those constituencies that are quite out of shape in terms of voter

population, out of shape with the voter average in the province.

Those are pretty much the slides that we have. I guess with that, Mr. Chairman, I'll turn it back to you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much, Tom.

Any other committee members or staff? Stock?

MR. DAY: No, that covers it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Frank?

MR. BRUSEKER: I just have a sort of question. I wonder why it is that Taber-Warner kind of shines out in the bottom there as being close to the average there, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering if you perhaps could address that issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are the tapes running? I'll do that at a later time.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moving on to a more serious question, do you have one, Mike?

MR. CARDINAL: No, I don't have one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Let's set this down and then everybody come up to the table.

Well, let me say on behalf of the committee how very pleased we are that you are with us. It triggered in my mind that in addition to sending out letters of invitation to municipal governments, school boards, hospital boards, health unit boards, and a multitude of other local interest groups, we should add to that list returning officers, because our returning officers across the province have a feel for the boundaries. They have to deal with it in a 28-day period, and they've got to live with what changes the politicians make, so I think your presence here tonight is excellent in terms of the kinds of input you may have for us and the questions you wish to ask the panel. It's also good in terms of what we can do in future in terms of getting more input from other returning officers. So welcome.

Do you have a presentation you want to make, or do you have some questions? How would you like to lead off?

MR. PETERSON: I'm just wondering the reason for the meeting. I have nothing ahead of time, but I've looked at some figures myself, and I was just wondering if it's strictly on population, or do you look at areas or . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't I ask Frank to give a little bit of background as to why this committee was struck? It's an all-party committee of the Legislature. We've got specific terms of reference. And that, I think, will get the ball rolling in terms of why we're here. Frank?

MR. BRUSEKER: There have been a number of events that have occurred. I guess basically we could go back to 1982, which was when the last commission was struck that established the boundaries as we now have them. Within this last year there was a judgment in British Columbia, in the Supreme Court there, which suggested that the electoral boundaries as they are currently set up in British Columbia are not acceptable under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Canadian Constitu-

tion, which basically says that we must lean towards the concept of one man, one vote – not that we must adhere to it strictly, but we must lean towards it.

The role of this committee, therefore, is to examine the existing boundaries and the existing legislation which guides those boundaries and determine to our best judgment and in the best interests of the constituents and the MLAs who try to serve those constituents how we can best make amendments to the legislation so that a commission, which will ultimately sit down with maps and pencils in hand to draw new lines, can draw the new boundaries.

So what we are going to be doing in our committee is meeting with people from around the province and getting input from people as to what's right and what's wrong with the way things are right now. If the boundaries are to be changed, how can they be best changed to meet the needs of the people of that area, not necessarily the current constituency but the area that is under discussion? So we are just meeting with people to try and find out what their feelings are so that when we look at the legislation, we can look at it with, hopefully, all of those pieces of information in the backs of our minds so that when we amend the legislation, we can do it for the best of the people of the province.

So that's what our committee is doing, and we are just now starting our travels around the province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Stock?

MR. DAY: I think that covers it, other than to emphasize the possible far-reaching implications that are involved in . . .

MR. CLEGG: Come on in, Bernie. Pull up a chair. Here; I'll give you another one. I'll introduce you, because I know Bernie. Bernie is now a new Peace River councillor. He used to be a councillor with improvement district No. 22. Bernie Banping: Bob Bogle, Tom Sigurdson, Frank Bruseker – am I saying that word right, Frank? – Stock Day, Mike Cardinal, and Harold Peterson.

MR. BANPING: Hi.

MR. CLEGG: Have you got any statistics? What I'm trying to get in the back in my mind . . . There's an absolute trend towards urbanization, if I read that right. Have you got the figures for the 1986 election? Did you compare them at all with the '89 election voters' list? Just to get an idea of what . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: As a committee we have not yet done that. We've just made a decision to engage an individual who is a whiz with computers and is going to be compiling a whole host of information for us so that we can go back and look at historical trends, we can look at growth areas, just any number of factors.

There's a question of whether or not we should be looking at the total population rather than the electors. It's been suggested that that in itself may tend to give an added boost to rural Alberta, because the suggestion is that the average family is a bit larger in the rural areas than it is in the cities. Setting that aside as the reason, the whole purpose of our committee is to get all of the facts on the table so that when we make recommendations back to the Legislature, recommendations that would deal with the parameters for a commission to use on the next redistribution, they're very thoughtful and well thought out.

For instance, we've traveled to Regina and Winnipeg. We have one more out-of-province trip planned, and that's to Victoria.

There were two key observations we made in both Regina and Winnipeg. Stock, why don't you pass those on?

MR. DAY: Okay. I'll try and just kind of bring Bernie up to speed here. Did you get some material that was sent out, Bernie? I won't ask you if you read it, because . . .

MR. BANPING: I got it at 5 o'clock tonight.

MR. DAY: I know if you're like me and you get packages like that, because you're busy you don't have a whole lot of time to be poring over it.

Basically, as you know, there are 83 constituencies in the province, and the number of voters in each varies considerably.

MR. BANPING: Yeah. I quickly ran through this.

MR. DAY: Right. You can see it in there. A recent court case - there was a Professor Dixon in British Columbia who challenged that on the concept that we should be looking at not firmly the principle of one man, one vote, but democratically that's what we should be aiming at. The Dixon case went to court, and the ruling that came out of that was that - this is rough, nonlawyer ruling talk here, so you might be able to understand it - you don't have to have an absolute one person, one vote in every constituency, but you do have to have them fairly close. What the ruling was there reflected on what the House of Commons already does and a number of provinces, not all; that is, you figure out what your average is. So we divide 83 into 1,550,000, and you get about 18,000 people per constituency. Now, that would be an average constituency. But given a lot of different factors, you can have some variance there. It doesn't have to be 18,000 smack on the nose, and 25 percent, either above or below that, is what the McLachlin case in B.C. was suggesting could be accommodated and still maintain this democratic principle of one person, one vote.

In Alberta just over 50 percent of the constituencies fall outside of the 25 percent. There are a few that are at 35 percent, some as much as 50 percent. I guess in a nutshell that's why we're here, because there's a legal opinion that provinces which are outside of that variance need to do something to remedy it. This is what we're doing, looking at all the implications and trying to hear from people in various areas who might have some thoughts for us or concerns about that process.

Now, in Manitoba they have an interesting situation. They actually have a 10 percent variance, which has really caused difficulties, problems, et cetera, and made for some strange-looking constituencies, some wide-ranging boundaries.

In Saskatchewan they have a median that they work with, but they allow, as an exception, for what they call two northern constituencies just because of the gigantic landmass area. So while there is, you know, this acceptance that, yes, there should be an average and, yes, there should be a line drawn on how big the average should be, even within that there are exceptions, both at the provincial level - Yukon Territory is another example. Prince Edward Island is another example where that variance isn't strictly held. Those are some of the exceptions.

So what we're trying to do is to look at what we should be doing in Alberta, what's going to meet the demands of democracy, I guess, and of these court rulings and apparent legal opinions and yet satisfy and meet the needs of constituents who

want to be properly served.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good. Anything anyone would like to add to what Stock has said in his overview?

MR. BANPING: I think that probably one of the major concerns, which Glen is well aware of, is again - you were just talking about the vast area, particularly of the Peace River riding. I mean, it takes you a good six hours, at least, to get from one end to the other of it, whereas a lot of these smaller constituencies, you can do it in probably an hour or half an hour in some of them.

MR. DAY: Well, Bernie, I can get across mine in about six minutes if the lights are all green. As the police walked in, I had to modify that statement.

MR. PETERSON: Most of your constituencies in the city could fit within one polling subdivision in a constituency out here.

MR. BANPING: That's right.

MR. DAY: I'm sorry to interrupt you. Then as far as the size . . .

MR. BANPING: No, that's fine. I think that as far as looking at electors, you know it's pretty hard to use that rule straight across, especially in the north where you have such great areas to maintain as well as look after for your MLAs. You know, like how many miles have we got in just the Peace River riding alone of, say, highways alone, not to say anything else about maintenance and road building in the north?

MR. CHAIRMAN: As Stock mentioned, in Saskatchewan, while they're using the plus or minus 25 percent, they allow the two northern ridings to go up to a minus 50 percent so that you could give extra weight to the distances. One of the other things that we discovered, and we think it was more by accident than design, is that the chairman of the commission in Saskatchewan, a retired judge, had served as an MLA for a rural constituency between 1935 and 1946. While that was more than 40 years ago, he had not forgotten what it was like to be a rural MLA. In the discussion we had with him, that point came through loud and clear. He was very aware of the difficulties in getting around a rural constituency and servicing it and meeting with residents, so that was a real plus.

MR. BANPING: I also talked to our mayor tonight. In fact, he brought me this. He gives his regret that he was unable to come - previous commitments. Also, he talked to Bob Walters today, whom you had lengthy discussions with this afternoon, and he said basically that the town of Peace River's concerns are pretty near exactly the same as mayor Bob's were in High Level.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's good.  
Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: I just want to point out a possible problem that's not been examined yet, and that's the difference in population. I think what has happened with the decision that was handed down by Justice McLachlin is that it came to a point where you either represent people or you represent mass, and that's very difficult. I know there are travel restrictions.

In my constituency I've got 23,000 eligible voters. During the course of the Principal collapse I had a number of constituents who wanted to see me. I couldn't see them all at once because everybody wanted to have private meetings. As it came, we were extending; the meetings kept on coming, and the appointments kept on coming, and the schedule got longer and longer. Those who were calling in late were being bumped two, two and a half days down, and they were saying, "My member doesn't care enough to make some time available immediately for my concern." So I think that maybe one of the problems this committee has is trying to balance out the problems of landmass and trying to get around and the problems of population. Because with everybody, when they have their problem, that's the most important problem that any MLA could possibly ever deal with, and why isn't the MLA there?

I wonder, with the kind of technology that we have available to us today, if through the use of facsimile machines – I see that you've got the paper that came up from Edmonton probably only a few moments ago.

MR. BANPING: That's right.

MR. SIGURDSON: If members – Glen, Bob, Mike – who represent large rural areas had perhaps a different kind of budgeting system so that there were facilities in population centres in their constituencies so that those constituents could go to those centres and the MLA could then plan to be in there. It's very difficult to have an office in Fairview and then have problems of the people from Rycroft or Bonanza trying to get to their MLA. That's still a great distance away. Would additional dollars put into constituency budgets for rural MLAs make a difference so that there was a visibility in the community?

MR. BANPING: I think that just fortifies what we did when we did the original split in the planning commission. Okay, there was X number of dollars for each planning commission. Well, they frowned on us, because how come our expenses were so high in comparison with the population we had? Well, we had a really hard time convincing the MLAs and the planning board that, hey, it takes us two or three hours to get to a meeting, so we need more money than the guy who's got, like you say, half an hour to get across the area. I think that's one thing that could be looked at for sure. Don't you think so, Glen?

MR. CLEGG: Yeah. I didn't give it much thought. I just know that I've had the occasion to be at one corner of mine, and the police have gone, and even if I speed, it's two and a half hours of driving from Bear Canyon to Tangent. Then there are 30 miles on the other side of Tangent if you want to go up to the point here. But just figure Tangent to Bear Canyon is over 200 miles. I'm not trying to say – you know, that's a philosophy of population: one vote, one member. I understand Tom's concern too. The people in Bear Canyon and the people in Bonanza and Tangent, for example, which are all 100 miles from where I live because I'm more or less right in the centre, phone up, and certainly I can't drop everything, because it's a half a day's job to go and see those people.

Now, with you, Tom – I mean, if you have one person . . . You know, we're kind of hard up in the north. In some cases, those people haven't even got a car, or if they've got one, it probably wouldn't even go. As their representative, I feel I'm obliged to go there. You know, 600 kilometres a day is not

uncommon for me when I'm home and in my constituency, because I've been in Bear Canyon and Tangent and then I've been in Dawson Creek that same night. I understand the other concern, and I know the court case too. You know, we had this when I was with the MD and we went to a convention. Here's the little MD of Fairview, with a population of 1,800, and there's the county of Strathcona, and they said, "Well, how come you can get the same vote as us?" They had 50,000 people; we had 1,800.

So you've got a big job ahead of you, and if you can keep everybody happy, which I know this committee can, it's no problem. But it's certainly harder to represent an area of 200 square miles – that's the wrong word; 200 miles by 200 is linear miles – than it is to represent an area even 20 miles by 20 miles. My constituency: you could put Edmonton and Calgary all in it and have lots of farmland besides. That's where the problem is. I appreciate all the problems you people are going through, especially after the court case.

MR. PETERSON: I don't think you can use the formula of just numbers of people alone. I think it has to be a formula of area plus the numbers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tom?

MR. SIGURDSON: Manitoba just took the formula of numbers, and their variance is 10 percent. It created one constituency in order to get up to 18,000 people. It created one constituency from the middle of Lake Winnipeg to the border. From Hudson Bay to the middle of the province it created a constituency called Rupertsland. It's 1,060 miles by 230 miles, and there are no extra provisions for travel or facsimile or office or anything. I know that no member on this committee is going to hand any other member a bottle of sleeping pills with which to commit suicide, but creating a constituency like that would . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again, one of the things we learned while we were in Manitoba was how they wound up with a situation like that. They had a commission struck that consisted of the chief judge of the province, the president of the University of Manitoba, and the Chief Electoral Officer. All three of them live in the city of Winnipeg, so there was no rural expertise. There was no one there to speak for rural Manitoba. When they brought in their initial report – the process followed, I believe, in all jurisdictions is that an interim report is issued so that interested parties have an opportunity to examine it and then come to the hearings and explain whether they like it or what adjustments they think should be made. There were many, many groups who presented briefs requesting changes, because there was a disregard for natural boundaries, municipal boundaries, and traditional boundaries between constituencies. So the commission really had its hands full, and I don't blame them. It's just unfortunate that they didn't have anyone on the commission with a rural knowledge base from the province of Manitoba.

Yes, Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Harold, you mentioned actually something that's come up on a number of occasions, which is the idea that in the consideration of determining the sizes of constituencies, we need to look at both the area in terms of square miles and the population. Do you have any suggestions as to how we

might actually – you mentioned a formula. I was wondering if maybe in your mind somewhere you had an idea sort of already half formulated that you could share with us.

MR. PETERSON: Not really. I didn't even know about this meeting until just before dinner.

MR. CLEGG: He was in my office today; the only reason he got stuck to come.

MR. PETERSON: That's the only reason I'm down here. While I was waiting for Glen to come, I did look at some figures. I'm thinking of the whole area, and I can sure relate, because Kay has a tremendous constituency in Peace River, and she has to service that by airplane. I know she has quite a job, and she's done a remarkable job of doing it. I think Al Adair has done a good job of trying to service his constituents, but I don't know how he can cover the area that he does – it's even bigger than Glen's – and represent the people properly. I've always had the thought that the whole top of both the Peace River and Dunvegan constituencies should have become a new constituency to properly represent the people in the north.

I don't think you can look at just figures. The rural people are feeding the rest of Alberta. They're supplying the natural gas, the oil, and pretty near everything that everybody in the city uses. I think also another formula that you should probably look at is voter turnout, when you start talking about figures. I just took a quick look at a few of them, and we'll take a look at the ones right here in the Peace to start with. We'll look at Grande Prairie; they have 22,850.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is this based on March 20 this year?

MR. PETERSON: Yeah. They had 10,108 voters, or 44.3 percent. Lesser Slave Lake: 12,074; 1,629 voted. Peace River: 15,808; 6,489 voted. Nobody is being disenfranchised because of those numbers. They just choose not to come out, so they're not really being disenfranchised. You should look at the number that voted. If they don't care to get out and vote . . . You can look at some in Edmonton or Calgary. I've got a couple of good ones from Calgary.

MR. CLEGG: Well, if they didn't vote in that election, let's stroke them off the list. You don't have to do any more than that.

MR. PETERSON: Calgary-Forest Lawn: 23,969; there were only 9,049 who voted. Dunvegan had 7,202 that voted, and I'll tell you that until this election Dunvegan had the highest percentage of turnout in Alberta at any election.

MR. CARDINAL: You had over 71 percent.

MR. CLEGG: We got beat this time.

MR. PETERSON: We got beat this time; we had 68.7 percent. In 1986 we had 72.4; in 1982 we had 82.67; in 1979, 80 percent. I didn't put the by-election in there because it's not relevant. By-elections attract more attention.

MR. DAY: You've raised the area of considering voter turnout, Harold, and it's sort of unique to Dunvegan because you're looking at from '80 until now – what? – three different MLAs,

two different MLAs?

MR. BANPING: Three.

MR. BRUSEKER: You must be hard on your MLAs up here.

MR. DAY: Three different MLAs, right, yet a consistently high turnout. Why?

MR. PETERSON: Why? Because Grant Notley made it that way. There was a real push on both ways, and everybody has gotten interested. I can guarantee you there were very few spoiled ballots. People voted, and they voted earnestly. They take it seriously. They almost get into a fight sometimes.

MR. CLEGG: Yeah. If you look at those figures over the last 15 years, you're going to see that it doesn't change when we're talking about turnout. It might change 2 or 3 percent, or there might be an exception to that rule, but it'll stay that way. Although, like you say, with the voters themselves – I'm not too sure if you can look at it that way – those percentages will not change that much, if you get those books and look at them.

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah, but even if a constituent comes forward and you know that they didn't vote, they're your next-door neighbour; you still have the obligation to represent them.

MR. CLEGG: I know.

MR. SIGURDSON: If it's a person who's not even a Canadian citizen, if they're having a problem with immigration, you have the obligation to represent them. Or a student in high school: you still have the obligation to represent them.

MR. CLEGG: For sure.

MR. SIGURDSON: I know it's a difficult thing. I've often wondered how you can increase . . .

MR. PETERSON: But also in a city riding you fight to get a swimming pool in your constituency; it'll cover the whole constituency. Try and get one swimming pool in here that'll cover the constituency.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, again, to use my constituency as an example, we were talking about MLAs who have to deal with a number of municipal councils. As an MLA in an urban constituency I don't deal with the Edmonton city council on a regular basis. I do, however, deal with seven different community leagues, all of which have facilities, all of which apply for community facility enhancement programs. I've got a task force in the northeast zone of the city that has taken unto itself 10 specific areas in which to examine everything from transportation to hospital construction and the needs studies that are associated with that. You know, again dealing with 22,000 voters, different layers, different structures, most certainly a different structure, indeed I don't have the travel time that's associated with that that a rural member has to face, but I think that the different structures are enough to keep me busy as well.

MR. PETERSON: From a returning officer's point of view I know that a city returning officer doesn't have to travel at all. I put on 4,500 kilometres in the last provincial election. I have

to go all the way out to Gundy, and everybody around the table knows where Gundy is.

MR. DAY: Sure.

MR. CLEGG: I have to go through B.C. to get there, by the way.

MR. PETERSON: We've got 35 voters out there.

MR. CLEGG: I have to go through Dawson Creek and around to get to it.

MR. BRUSEKER: No bridge there.

MR. CLEGG: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is the wrong forum to make that pitch. Nice try.

MR. CLEGG: No, we don't need a bridge. Sorry about that. An election from Bear Canyon to Bonanza, yeah, but not . . .

MR. DAY: But he is in Boomer's constituency right now.

AN HON. MEMBER: How'd you make out with the telephone?

MR. CLEGG: Good. I was in Gundy two or three times.

But just to follow you up, Tom – and I don't think we should get into an argument – I have about 90 elected officials that I look after; you know, three IDs, two MDs, two hospital boards, two school boards. I think there are about 90.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Town councils, village councils.

MR. CLEGG: Towns, villages; there are at least 90, maybe more. And I deal directly with them because there's nobody else. Like, you know, in your school system and county – sure, I'm not saying you're not dealing with them, but they're direct, and I can guarantee you that all 90 of them will be in touch with me every year once at least, you know.

MR. DAY: What would their feeling be, Glen, if, just hypothetically, the constituency of Dunvegan was enlarged, more people taken in, et cetera? Would they say: "Well, that's the way it goes. We'll just work with the system." Or would they get frustrated and pull back, thinking there's less representation?

MR. PETERSON: I could probably answer that better than you can.

MR. CLEGG: It'd better be better than me. Yes; you're probably better. That's what I brought you for.

MR. PETERSON: First of all, we had the constituency of Spirit River; we had one in Dunvegan and Berwyn. They amalgamated into Spirit River and Fairview. That's when we had Spirit River-Fairview. It stayed that way for quite a while, and then Spirit River-Fairview changed to Dunvegan, and we took in part of Smoky River and took in part of Grande Prairie.

There's really not been that big a problem, but if you're going to cut one completely out, I think there is a problem. I'm not

saying that within the area, the ones we deal with in this area, there can't be some shifting of boundaries to make it a little bit more equitable. I think that probably Grande Prairie city could become an urban. Smoky River could take in probably the rest of the Grande Prairie riding. Peace River: we don't know what's going to come with Daishowa coming in here and seeing the influx of people that are coming in. It's going to increase, and we're going to be way out of line; Dunvegan's going to be out of line. The only solution I can see to make it more equitable is to cut off the whole top of Dunvegan and Peace River and form another one, which would make a small riding up there with few people in it. You see, otherwise, then, Dunvegan would have to come and take in part of Grimshaw or something.

MR. CLEGG: See, I certainly couldn't go farther west unless – and they want to annex in since I've become MLA; they do want to come into Dunvegan.

AN HON. MEMBER: So this is Dawson Creek and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is off the record, is it?

MR. CLEGG: Yeah. This is off the record. They want to come in, but . . .

MR. DAY: This is most of B.C. you're talking about?

MR. CLEGG: Yeah. But, like, I'm only three miles from Grimshaw, so to annex that isn't a great problem because it's three miles farther, and that's still only – well, of course, that depends where your MLA's from. He could certainly be from Grimshaw. But that isn't a big problem. You know, the problem is the outlying areas, because three miles is not a big issue, so that could be looked at. Some of the borders could be changed; I agree with that.

MR. SIGURDSON: Harold suggested that Grande Prairie become an urban constituency. That would leave Sexsmith floating around out there somewhere. Would you propose to . . .

MR. PETERSON: Sexsmith is already into Smoky River.

MR. SIGURDSON: Is Sexsmith in Smoky River? It's right at the border; I thought the highway was the border.

MR. CLEGG: In '86, Tom, you had to go into Smoky River. It goes down to Emerson trail just south of Sexsmith. Sexsmith in is Paszkowski's.

MR. SIGURDSON: It is, eh?

MR. PETERSON: And we go to the county boundary.

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah. I'm aware of that. I thought Sexsmith stayed.

MR. CLEGG: No, they didn't. Of course, that was changed in '86. You were right up until then; that's for sure. But I certainly would like to see the figures on the whole, what's happening over the last 15 years, and I'm sure there are so many more people in the urban. I'm sure that our constituency – and

you'd know, Harold – has gone down considerably. Have you got it since 1981, or it was in '82?

MR. PETERSON: In 1986?

MR. CLEGG: We went down about 900.

MR. PETERSON: We had 11,213. That was because of the economy. Worsley, Cleardale went down badly there.

MR. CLEGG: In one area we lost two-thirds of the farmers in the area, just one area. You haven't got them beyond that though, Harold?

MR. PETERSON: No, I didn't.

MR. CLEGG: So they do fluctuate, you know, within the space . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: Glen, do you hear from your constituents much that they're concerned about the fact that you live a hundred miles away and they want to see you? You said that you go out to see them, but do the constituents ever say to you, "Gee, I wish I could drop into your office, but it's so blinking far away that it's just not feasible"? Do you hear that concern from your constituents much?

MR. CLEGG: I must be honest with you, Frank. I hear it certainly from across the river: Bonanza, Silver Valley, Tangent. I mean, they're a hundred and some mile trip. Because Fairview – that's where I've got my office, because everybody from the northwest comes into Fairview sometimes. I had a couple of people in my office from Worsley and Cleardale today because they come as a service [inaudible] but they don't come from Bonanza into Fairview ever. Well, once a year, maybe, but they go into Spirit River or Rycroft. But, I mean, then you're looking at that extra. Of the people who come into my office, 95 percent would be north of the river. And I'm sure if I were located in Spirit River, it would be just in reverse. That's why I do have constituency tours. No; they do over on that side. On the north side, no, I wouldn't say they do. They're quite happy coming into town, and they'll come in and see me and phone to see if I'm in the office. But across the river it's an absolute problem.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's basically because of roads and bridge locations and so forth.

MR. CLEGG: Right. You see, we've only got one crossing, and it's at Dunvegan.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other part of it is that it can be perception. I'll deviate for a minute. There's a little corner of my constituency that used to be in the Cypress-Redcliff riding. The Cypress-Redcliff riding is two, two and a half, times the size of Taber-Warner in geographic terms but only about 60 percent of the population, and that little corner felt left out. I know how hard Alan Hyland worked to get into that area even though it only had 200, 250 electors. When it was transferred over to Taber-Warner after the last redistribution – and that was because of a petition people had in the area and different things – I'd go out to a community hall in the area once or twice a year. Alan did the same thing. So I'm not in that area physical-

ly any more than he was, but there's a perception of comfort, because their trading area ties in with Milk River, which is part of the Taber-Warner riding. Their trading area didn't go towards Foremost. So I'm saying part of it's perception.

When Dick Johnston moved his family from Lethbridge to Edmonton, there was a perception problem in Lethbridge-East that he was abandoning them. Well, he had a wife and a young family, and it wasn't practical for him to be living in Edmonton in an apartment five days a week and going home on weekends, so he moved his family. He went through a real . . . In fact, one of the challengers at his nomination had that as his key issue. Perception is so important.

MR. CLEGG: Right on, Bob. I think it's so important when boundaries are changed, although I hate to lose Gundy out of my riding, because they're all the way they should be.

MR. PETERSON: But there is also an economical factor to it. It costs about \$25 for every voter that's in that constituency.

MR. CLEGG: You see, the trouble is Gundy is only 25 miles from Bob Elliott's, and because he took that straight line, I have to literally go into B.C. through Dawson Creek and come back, because of the Saddle Hills really. And I believe – 40 votes?

MR. PETERSON: Thirty-five.

MR. CLEGG: Thirty-five votes. There's just absolutely no sense that those votes should be in my riding. I should have come another mile or two this way and let Bob . . . You've got to look at the problems in getting to service those; that's all I'm saying. Just draw a straight line . . . A guy has to drive 60 miles to get to see somebody when Bob Elliott – and I use his name just because of whoever is representing. It's what? Twenty-five miles from where he lives, and here I've got a hundred. Because of the numbers they could have sent me a couple of miles farther this way to get the same amount of votes, and it wouldn't have been a problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have several members of the legal profession who are presenting their thoughts and ideas to us on the implications of the Charter of Rights. Last evening we listened to a young man who suggested that when the terms of reference are drawn up for the commission, we should request the commission to go out and hold public hearings before they write their interim report and then go out again a second time after. The argument, as I recall, was basically in line with what you're saying now. If the commission had heard the argument why there should have been an adjustment at Gundy . . .

MR. PETERSON: The commission heard it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But after they had prepared it.

MR. PETERSON: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No?

MR. PETERSON: No. Brian did. They had a hearing at Grande Prairie. I was unable to get there, and I took my concerns to Grant Notley. He was sitting on the commission. He took it there, and it was disregarded.

MR. SIGURDSON: That was after the interim report though.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What was suggested to us last evening is that the commission should do what we're doing right now. We're out learning. So before you sit down to write any kind of report, you hear from people. Hopefully, then you correct a number of the problems on the map so that when you come out with your interim report and you go back, you're not hearing as many concerns.

MR. SIGURDSON: The process last time is that the commission got together, maps were drawn. I think the boundaries between Dunvegan and Grande Prairie were based on the MD?

MR. PETERSON: The county boundary it was.

MR. CLEGG: ID/county boundary.

MR. SIGURDSON: ID/county: that was the rationale for that. Following the interim report they went out for public hearings, and there was very, very little change following that. What Bob is suggesting is that before any maps are introduced to any commission, there be a period of public hearings to go out and perhaps hear from members, returning officers, political parties before they draw any interim . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's human nature. If our committee were drawing boundaries, there'd be some pride of authorship in what we've done. So if we were here seeing you after we've drawn the boundaries and you're making the points, there'd be a tendency by us to defend what we've done, whereas if you're out ahead of time, you're listening.

MR. CLEGG: You're doing the right thing, no argument: listen first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're listening.  
Frank, you wanted to get in a little earlier, I think.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I got my question in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You got your question in. Okay.  
Anyone else?

MR. CARDINAL: Yeah, I didn't get mine in. I've been too quiet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's a switch.

MR. CARDINAL: Yeah, it's a switch.  
I think I wanted to touch on a bit of what Glen mentioned. As a rural MLA I face the same situation as your end. You know, we talk about regional disparities in Canada, and as a rural resident all my life I know that we experience that in Alberta. The centres like Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer a bit maybe, are the growth centres. They're basically Alberta. That's where all our resources go to get manufactured.

MR. DAY: Red Deer's the fastest growing in production.

MR. CARDINAL: That's where all the jobs are. That's where all the services are. The recreation, social facilities – the good ones are all there. Most of the tax dollars go there.

I think when you're looking at equal and effective representation, we need to consider some of the deficiencies and outline the deficiencies we're faced with out in rural areas, such as the lack of those facilities and services, the lack of jobs, the standard of living that's considerably lower in rural Alberta than in general in more growth centres. I think that's effective representation. I have parts of my constituency that run to 89 percent unemployment. Now, you try that in a city and see what the difference is. I don't care where you go, when you talk about effective representation – one person, one vote – what you need to consider . . . I guess the final outcome is: what type of standard of living do you maintain at the end, after the representation is done? If it's a lot lower than other parts of the country, then there's something wrong in the system. That, I think, is very key, and it needs to be put across by rural Albertans. I'll say no more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well said.

MR. PETERSON: That's why I say that as far as the constituencies that are in the Peace River country, I see that they could be adjusted to get the numbers equal within the Peace River country. But I also see the whole top of the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Harold, can you tell us what you do from the time the writ is issued in an election campaign in terms of getting around your constituency and seeing the various polls and meeting the deputy returning officers? Could you just give us a quick run-through?

MR. PETERSON: You go like hell. And usually an election is called right when all the snowstorms are on. So you drive in blinding snowstorms . . .

MR. CLEGG: I'll talk to the Premier about that.

MR. PETERSON: . . . and whatnot.  
Usually, as soon as the writ is handed down, everything comes and you start getting your ballot boxes ready and you go out. It's not like in the city where the returning officer gets on the phone and has all their deputy returning officers there right away. I have to go out and travel the whole constituency, and lots of them I do on a one-on-one basis. I can't ask the guy from Gundy to drive all the way to Spirit River, which he doesn't get paid for, to a meeting. He gets paid for that, but he doesn't get any mileage.

MR. SIGURDSON: Don't they get mileage when they're enumerating?

MR. PETERSON: They get mileage when they're enumerating, yes.

MR. SIGURDSON: But not for attending a meeting.

MR. PETERSON: But not to attend a meeting. There's no pay at all for the poll clerks to get anything. I've recommended that the poll clerks also get paid to attend a returning officers' seminar to be instructed properly because they're just as important as the deputy returning officer. They do just as much work and are just as important in the final figures.

I don't know whether you're aware that in the last federal election there was an overturn down in Ontario. I think it was



North York where just because the poll clerk and the deputy returning officers hadn't signed the bottom of the poll book, it was overturned and there were 1,500 voters that were disenfranchised because of an error. I don't think that's fair.

Then I have go around and supply them with the ballots. I do go and pick the ballot boxes up, because we only have 10 days after the election until they announce the final count, and I have to be done. They have to be in, so I go and pick them up. I could pay them to bring them in, but it'd cost a lot more, and it'd take me a lot longer time to get them in. So the two days following the election I have all my ballot boxes in. I know Kay has had an awful time getting hers in. She gets them in by airplane and whatnot. You could get them by post. You never know when you are going to get them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You've mentioned Kay before. You're referring to the returning officer here in Peace River?

MR. PETERSON: Yeah. Kay Sokoloski, and she's been at it longer than I have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tom, did you . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: No, that's fine.

MR. PETERSON: You see, I'm only an ex-returning officer; I may not get reappointed because I get a little vocal sometimes. I lay pretty heavy on Glen once in a while about the hospital.

MR. DAY: Glen's been laying heavy here in Edmonton about the hospital too.

MR. PETERSON: I hope so.

MR. DAY: I think things are finally rolling, and we're glad, because maybe it'll keep him quiet for awhile.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bernie, anything you can add on that?

MR. BANPING: I don't think so, no. I think that, talking to Mike Procter, the mayor here, with his discussion with Bob in High Level today he pretty well laid everything out that our same concerns were. Apparently they'd been talking beforehand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the enumeration process have you had any difficulty with any blocks of people who have chosen not to be enumerated, or has there been good co-operation?

MR. PETERSON: Some of the Mennonites prefer not to get enumerated, Jehovah's Witnesses, but, you know, they are scattered, isolated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. PETERSON: We only have one Indian reserve - no, two, but there's hardly anybody living on the one. So there's no problem in that respect.

But going around the table here, we think of it from an MLA's point of view. I look at it from a voter's point of view, and we've always been told that we should not disenfranchise our voters. That's why that poll is set up in Gundy. It's a costly poll, but we have to set it up there because it's impossible to ask that voter to drive about 40 miles to get to vote. You just can't

do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a small investment for the taxpayer to ensure that the democratic process is maintained.

MR. PETERSON: But I try to get my polling subdivisions down to around 300, which we were supposed to, and I have cut one out. I've also been reported to the Ombudsman, and I've survived that. I've survived quite a few things.

MR. CLEGG: Well, I can guarantee you that if Gundy were cut out, I can tell you how many voters there would be go to Bonanza: two. I know who they'd be too. I mean, who's going to drive 70 miles to cast a vote? You get trouble from one end, but I mean it's absolutely essential that those people have the same right as anybody else to vote.

MR. PETERSON: You can also check my figures; consistently I've come in about third lowest in the province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In terms of costs.

MR. PETERSON: Costs.

MR. DAY: How do you do that?

MR. PETERSON: Organization.

MR. CARDINAL: Well, there you go: uses a dog team.

MR. DAY: Have you been approached to give the course for the rest of them?

MR. CLEGG: Well, you're just getting what I've been trying to tell you guys. We run an efficient show with our whole Dunvegan constituency, even including the returning officer.

MR. DAY: We've never questioned that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is all being taped, Glen.

MR. CLEGG: Good.

MR. PETERSON: Grant demanded efficiency and being treated equally. I've tried to keep it that way, and I've had very little problem with it. I've chosen from both parties and tried to be fair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, and when you get a constituency where you have had an extremely high turnout election after election, any type of misconduct by one of your officials would of course be brought to the attention of a variety of people. So that speaks . . .

MR. PETERSON: Oh, I have a few people that don't work for me again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Anything else any of the committee members want to comment on or ask questions on?

MR. DAY: Yes. I've appreciated hearing some of the comments. We've only done two of these now, but in each one

we've heard some interesting ideas that I hadn't personally either entertained myself or heard of before. I don't know how far any of them can go, but it's the type of input that's going to make our job even more interesting. A formula, as Harold mentioned, not based on numbers alone but looking at tying in area; I don't know if it stands up constitutionally, but considering voter turnout, a very significant question. People in an urban area might say that because we have X amount of voters, we shouldn't compete against a constituency that has less, but if that constituency's turning out more to vote, it adds a whole other complexion to it. So I've appreciated some of the points you've brought up.

MR. PETERSON: Well, your overhead singled out Dunvegan, and in the last one Peace River and Slave Lake and Smoky River, I believe, all had less voters out than we had.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We could have one slide to depict voter turnout, and what you've saying is Dunvegan would be . . .

MR. PETERSON: We'd look not too bad.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. Well, if you're using an average, you'd be top.

MR. PETERSON: If you want to put the costs in, we'd look even better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You sound a lot like Tom Addy from the south.

MR. DAY: Well, that might keep MLAs from not asking for hospitals, if you figured in fiscal dollars and how little was spent and things.

MR. CLEGG: If we save on an election, we want some facilities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Mike?

MR. CARDINAL: I'm done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tom?

MR. SIGURDSON: Done, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank?

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, that's fine. Thank you very much.  
Thanks for coming out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other comments, Bernie or Harold?

MR. BANPING: No, I don't think I have any more. I'd like to just say that if you do have more hearings on the boundaries, I wouldn't hesitate at all to have input into it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We do have hearings: Grande Prairie tomorrow and then . . .

MR. CARDINAL: Slave Lake is the next closest to here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . we're back in Slave Lake, I guess. What's the date for that?

MR. DAY: You're talking about the boundaries themselves?

MR. PETERSON: When you get down to the nitty-gritty of looking at boundaries – I realize that, you know, our numbers are down. We might have to come this way towards Grimshaw and take in some extra territory, and I see nothing wrong with that. I don't know if Peace River would like it but . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, as you know, our committee won't be drawing boundaries as such. What we will be doing is developing the criteria or the guidelines that we will present to the Legislative Assembly with the intent and the recommendation that those guidelines be built into the legislation and, therefore, be the framework so that when the commission does go out to do its work, they follow the criteria set out.

We're in Slake Lake on February 12 for an afternoon meeting, a 2 o'clock meeting, and we're also making presentations. We'll be at the rural municipal districts and counties convention – that's, I think, on the 14th of this month – for a presentation. We're also at the school trustees convention in Calgary on the 29th.

MR. CARDINAL: And the urban municipalities too, I believe.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, no. We aren't able to make a presentation to either the Urban Municipalities Association or the Hospital Association because their agendas were so full and we were late in terms of our process. So we've only been able to share with the executive of the association, and also we're working on meeting with the improvement districts.

MR. CLEGG: It's very unfortunate the way things turned out, because I know you would have had a bigger representation here, but because of a printing problem the letters that did go out didn't even have where the meeting was going to be held.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, this is day one of our hearings and . . .

MR. CLEGG: I understand all that, and I'm not criticizing anybody, but it's unfortunate. I think if something could have been organized . . . Although I did know about it, it had skipped my little mind, and I got a phone call from an administrator in Spirit River this morning. Then it finally clicked in. He says: "Is it important that you go?" I said: "Of course it's important."

MR. CHAIRMAN: While we haven't had people lined up at the door, the quality of the oral briefs we've been given today have really been good. Stock said that we've learned today; that's correct. Stock is speaking for all of us when he said that. We do appreciate you coming out.

MR. DAY: And 100 percent of all the presenters have said that they have confidence in us that we're going to do a good job.

MR. SIGURDSON: There's also the opportunity for those people that expressed disappointment that they weren't made aware of time, dates. If they could put something down in writing and send it to Bob as the chairman, or contact any one

of us by telephone, we'll certainly make the representations known at subsequent committee meetings.

have another cup of coffee or glass of juice, and we can just mingle for a bit before we adjourn?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't we adjourn from a formal sense,

[The committee adjourned at 8:21 p.m.]

