

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

[2:21 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's my pleasure to declare this, the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries meeting held in Cardston, officially open. I would like to begin on behalf of my colleagues from the Assembly by saying a very special welcome to all of you who have come out to be with us today to present briefs and to participate in this very important subject.

I'd like to begin by saying that because this is a select special committee, everything that is said is recorded, and there's a copy in *Hansard* which is made available to the public. But we don't want anyone to be intimidated by these microphones; we try to conduct the meetings as informally as possible. The process we've developed – and we're now about 60 percent of the way through the process – is that we invite the first six presenters to come forward and take a seat at the table across from us, and we begin with the first presenter. That brief will be presented. It can be either a written brief that's read or an oral brief that's presented, or it can be a combination of the two. We've had all three. Then members of the committee will be given an opportunity to ask a question or make a comment, and then we ask if there are any supplementary comments or questions that those of you present would like to make.

I might start by asking: can you all hear me? Okay. What I'd like you to do as we go through this is that if a voice drops or you have difficulty hearing, just give us a signal and we'll attempt to get the volume turned up so everybody can hear.

I'd like to begin by introducing the members of the committee who are with us today. Starting on my immediate left, Pat Black. Pat is a member of the Assembly for Calgary-Foothills, and we're delighted to have you with us today here in deep southern Alberta, Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Seated next to Pat is Mike Cardinal. Mike represents the constituency of Athabasca-Lac La Biche in the Assembly. Both Pat and Mike are members of the Progressive Conservative government caucus.

Next to Mike is Pat Ledgerwood. Pat is the Chief Electoral Officer for the province. He's also had extensive involvement in the past on federal redistribution commissions and, therefore, is certainly no stranger to this process. We really welcome Pat and his expertise on the committee.

Going down, then, to the other end of the table: Mr. Tom Sigurdson. Tom is a New Democrat member in the Assembly and represents the constituency of Edmonton-Belmont. We expect later one or two other members of our committee. Committee members today had made separate arrangements for travel, so we still expect that we may have one or two others who'll come in late.

It is our custom when we're in a constituency and we're focusing right on that particular constituency to involve the local MLA as well. So I'm extremely delighted to welcome to the table not only a colleague but a very good personal friend, Jack Ady.

Bob Pritchard is our senior administrative officer, so if there are any glitches in the organization or the planning, you can go to Bob and he'll in turn pass the blame on to Robin Wortman, who's standing by the door.

What we intend to do this morning is give a very brief overview, a slide presentation. The material is all contained in the letter we've handed out. Once we complete that, we want

to show you something that has come about as a result of some of the first meetings we had. The question was put to us: have you considered switching from looking at the number of electors per constituency to the number of people who live within the riding? Because, as Tom Sigurdson has put it so well, when someone phones the MLA, you don't ask (a) are you a Canadian citizen and a voter in this constituency? You don't ask questions like that; you respond. Therefore, we've got some other information which we'll show you, and you'll see how there's a very positive benefit for the Cardston constituency by using the total population figures.

Come on in, Frank. I'm pleased to welcome Frank Bruseker. Frank is a Liberal Member of the Legislative Assembly, and he represents the constituency of Calgary-North West.

So let's proceed with the slides at this time, Bob. All right. The first overhead merely shows the number of eligible voters based on the revised 1989 list. That was the list used in the last general election. They're arranged alphabetically. If you go to the next page, the next overhead . . . I thought it was going to be coloured.

MR. SIGURDSON: Do you want me to do this? Do you want me to walk through this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like to? I don't mind. Go ahead, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: I'll give Bob an opportunity to relax his voice and throat and just walk you through the remaining slides.

Next is a list of the constituencies in numerical order according to electors. You can see at the top end we have Edmonton-Whitemud at 31,500, and at the bottom end we have your constituency where we are today, Cardston, which has 8,105. There is the anomaly footnoted at the bottom of your page that the Blood Indian Reserve, which has approximately 1,800 voters, did not participate in the enumeration. So Cardston is somewhat low, and we'll come to that at another slide later on.

When you take the total numbers of electors in our province and add them all together, you get approximately 1.55 million. If you take the number of constituencies we have, which is 83, and do the appropriate division, you end up with an average number of 18,600. That is the number that when you add 25 percent – plus or minus – you end up with a top end of 23,000 and a bottom end of approximately 14,000. The reason we're going through the plus or minus 25 percent is that Justice McLachlin in the court of British Columbia handed down a decision that said you could have a variance; you don't have to have the exact same number of voters in every constituency. She suggested a variance of plus or minus 25 percent, and that's the reason we're operating with a plus or minus 25 percent variance here.

We turn now to the coloured sheet. Those constituencies that are highlighted in green are greater than 25 percent above the average, and you can see that they're all urban. Those constituencies highlighted in pink are constituencies which have less than 25 percent less than the average, and they are all rural constituencies.

Turning to a map of our province, when we put the colour on the map, you can see the range throughout our province. These are the constituencies that have 25 percent below the average. There are two little dots on there that you may or may not be able to make out. One is St. Albert, nestled right next to the city of Edmonton; it's coloured in green. And then there's

Medicine Hat; that's also coloured in green. They're above the average plus 25 percent.

This slide is of the city of Calgary. You can see that the city is still growing quite rapidly on the periphery, and these constituencies are well over the 25 percent variance that was suggested by Justice McLachlin. The same with the city of Edmonton. The green areas indicate those constituencies that have more than 25 percent outside the variance.

The city of Lethbridge is quite all right. It falls within the average, and there shouldn't be any changes there. Medicine Hat, on the other hand, is now, I believe, the fourth largest constituency in our province and is well over the 25 percent suggestion.

The city of Red Deer is a bit unique. We have two constituencies in the city of Red Deer. What happened was that in 1983, when the last commission sat, the city of Red Deer was one constituency and it was far too large in terms of electors. When they divided the city into two, any which way it was looked at or examined, the constituencies became too small in terms of elector population, so they went out into the county. The dark line, the outside line, is the county of Red Deer where they've gone in to bump up the population. The brown line is the city boundary itself. These are the only two constituencies in Alberta that have both a rural and urban component.

The city of St. Albert: again, another area that's still growing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's just pause for a second. We've got a group of high school students who are coming in to join us.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Welcome.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome, students. We're just going through a presentation now with some of the background information. We have not yet begun the actual hearing process. Go ahead, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: This is the city of St. Albert: again, well above the 25 percent suggested allowance.

Again returning to the map of Alberta, if this time we highlight those constituencies that fall below 35 percent - there they are on the map. These are the constituencies that have 35 percent less than the average. The next slide is even a little more revealing, I suppose. We have a number of constituencies that are 50 percent below the average, including the Cardston constituency, and you can see that they're all in southern Alberta. The blue dots indicate those areas where the committee has traveled to or will travel to. Have we got Wainwright up there yet, Bob?

MR. PRITCHARD: No, we don't have Wainwright on there.

MR. SIGURDSON: Some of them we'll be having return trips to. We've had such a wonderful time and people are so happy to come out and fill our heads with information that we have to go back for return visits. So we will be returning to Hanna and Edmonton, and going into Wainwright as well. These are the dates of the committee hearings, and we haven't gotten the latest additions on there yet. Knowing we would have a lot of representation from areas that perhaps may be most affected, the committee has tried to set up public hearings in those constituencies, so the dots indicate the public hearings, and again the purple colour indicates those constituencies that fall 35 percent lower than the average number of voters in our pro-

vince.

Now, as the chairman indicated, earlier on we looked at the number of voters per constituency versus the number of individuals who live in a constituency. I cited the example of this constituency of Cardston where 1,800 people were not on the enumeration list. We have, in some areas, people who choose not to participate in the electoral process due to religious conviction or they're immigrants. We have a good number of people here today who represent people who are not involved in the electoral process just because of their age - they fall under the age of 18 - and yet we spend provincially well over a billion dollars on education. So they have a role inside the political process but they're not recognized.

When we take the change, we move from a total number of 1.5 million people who are eligible to vote to 2.365 million; we move up well over 800,000. Dividing again by the number of constituencies we have, we end up with a population range of 21,000 to approximately 35,000, if I'm reading those numbers correctly.

That would be total population. You'll see the difference when we move to total population. When we have the enumeration figures, we have 19 constituencies that are over 25 percent. When we go to total population, we only have 18 constituencies. Using the enumeration, we have 24 constituencies that have less than 25 percent of the proposed allowance. That moves down to 22 percent, and you can see them highlighted there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just before you take the slide away, Bob, it's important to note Cardston. When we're looking at strictly the voters list, Cardston is on the bottom, and now, while it's still in the pink area, Cardston is in the upper half of the pink area. So the position has improved significantly.

MR. SIGURDSON: This again shows the map of Alberta. We have another couple of additions of designated rural constituencies that go into the over 25 percent category: Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie. Calgary has pretty much stayed the same. You can see that there are some constituencies still on the periphery that require adjustment. Edmonton: some minor changes in terms of population being over 25 percent of the suggested allowance.

Here's where you start to see some significant changes. Those constituencies that were 35 percent below the average have fallen from 16 in number to 12. If you'll recall those constituencies that were 50 percent and under, we've fallen from five to just one, and that's Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

We've had, as you saw earlier, the hearings in and around our province. We've now had a few more added, and you can see that the total number of written submissions we have received to date is 64. We know that we're going back to a number of areas because there are more yet to come, and here today - I'm not sure how many we've got.

MR. PRITCHARD: We have nine today. I should mention those are written submissions, Tom, that we've received in the mail, over and above the presentations.

MR. SIGURDSON: With that, Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Just a quick recap before we get right into the hearing part. We're here because of a court case in British Columbia, and a lot of the statistics you've seen are based on: what if we move

in the same direction in Alberta as they did in British Columbia due to that court case? We as a committee have not drawn any conclusions. We made a deliberate decision to wait until we had heard from all those across the province who had input and advice for us before we would sit down and begin our deliberations. We're looking at how other jurisdictions handle the situation. We find that the federal government allows special consideration for the Northwest Territories, where there are two seats, and for the Yukon, where there's one. None of those three seats meets the population criterion of plus or minus 25 percent. We find the legislation implemented in both British Columbia and Saskatchewan allows for special consideration for northerly, sparsely populated ridings. So even though we've given you statistics based on what would happen if we were to adopt the plus/minus 25 percent, I don't want anyone walking away believing we've locked into that and it's a fait accompli. We're here to hear your concerns, to get ideas from you. We've had some excellent briefs presented in the last few days – well, throughout the process, but the last few days in particular, while we were in Hanna and Red Deer – by people who have come out and really given some serious thought to the process.

May I ask, before we begin, are there any questions? Have we left a major gap in understanding why we're here or what we're doing? You understand we're not actually drawing lines between constituencies. Our job as a committee is to report back to the Legislative Assembly to recommend the parameters in which the legislation should be drawn, so that when an Electoral Boundaries Commission is struck, they will go out and use those parameters to do their work. They will actually draw the lines. The intent is that they will draw the lines based on the parameters we have set and recommended to the Assembly and that the Assembly, in turn, has adopted.

Okay. If there are no questions, we can proceed. Bob, would you call the first six presenters forward?

MR. PRITCHARD: Sure. The first six will be Burke Thomas, Mel Cottle, Gary Johnson, Pat French, Ardell Hartley, and Mick Barnett.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, remember, if any of you have trouble hearing any of the presenters, just give us a signal and we'll attempt . . .

MR. THOMAS: Mr. Chairman, lady, and gentlemen, I'm here just on behalf of myself; I represent no town, village, or committee whatsoever. I would like to point out to this committee that several of the things I was questioning were covered by Mr. Bogle, but I'll still address them, if it's all right.

First of all, I was under the impression that we were here today to try and save this as a constituency of its own. This is a large constituency. It takes a good two hours to drive across it one way from the other, unless you drive like my wife; she can make it in an hour and a half. You're a good seven hours from the Legislature. I should say, seven hours to Edmonton, and then try and find the Legislature Building.

Now, this book they put out says there are 8,100 eligible voters in Cardston and 1,800 from the Blood Reserve. I don't know just where you got the 1,800 from the Blood Reserve, but this morning I met with the assistant to the administrator for the Blood Reserve and there are slightly over 7,000 people on the Blood Reserve, all of which are in this riding. There are 3,600 people who are 18 or over. I don't know where you got this 1,800 from, unless they've got an awful lot of young people and

one or two old ones. Now, they choose not to enter into any political forum because they're after their own autonomy through the federal government, and entering in and taking sides might jeopardize their cause. But they're people; they're individuals. They have concerns; they have needs. When those needs are met, they're met by the representative from this constituency, because this is the constituency they're in. So that raises the population considerably in this constituency.

I'm glad I wrote my last will and testament this morning. I'm scared of these people behind me; I think somebody is going to shoot me.

Anyway, the MLA, whoever he is who represents this constituency, must deal with one municipal council; one county council – you've got that? – three towns: Cardston, Magrath, Raymond; three villages: Stirling, Hill Spring, Glenwood; three hospitals: Cardston, Magrath, and Raymond. And he doesn't satisfy anybody, I don't think, do you, Jack? He deals with six irrigation districts, and that's no little job.

Now, I put that this compares to an MLA from the city of Edmonton who has one city council to deal with, perhaps two school boards – maybe three if they have private schools – and three or four hospitals. And there are maybe 15 or 16 MLAs to do this. So everybody's not hollering at the same MLA all the time. They share the work. To put this constituency or any part of it with someone else, or to share us, would put an awfully big workload on one MLA – a tremendous workload. Because, after all, the MLAs are our representatives.

We're agriculture people in this entire constituency, and it seems to me we had a Premier once who used to say that oil was our nonrenewable resource and agriculture was the only renewable resource. You ever hear that? Now, the rural areas need help in acquiring things we have to have: irrigation, market roads. Soil erosion and many other things, I don't feel – I say "I" because I represent myself – the urban MLAs would give that much consideration to those things. Maybe we could add two or three members in Edmonton, two or three in Calgary perhaps, but I believe we should leave enough rural members that you would have very close to the same as urban members of the Legislature. If not, what's the sense of trying for a Triple E Senate? These things concern me, and I trust that they concern you.

The last thing I would like to say is that I sincerely hope you gentlemen and this young lady are here today not to give lip service but to truly take these things into consideration and make your decision later. I hope the decision hasn't already been made.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Burke. Before we go to questions, it's my pleasure to introduce Pam Barrett. Pam is the House leader for the New Democratic Party. She represents the constituency of Edmonton-Highlands.

Now, questions from committee members. First, Pat, is there anything you can add relative to the Blood Indian Reserve and the count?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Mr. Chairman, I think the best way we can explain the 1,800 is that that is the highest number we've ever received on an enumeration of the Blood Reserve. The numbers are from just over 1,500 to just under 1,800. Those enumerations are conducted by Blood Indian Reserve people on the reserve, so that's the figure they give us.

MR. THOMAS: I'm sure that's right, but nevertheless the people are there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. But clearly, by going to a total population base, we're then using Census Canada figures which no one will question, and then we do get the full amount. You say 7,000; that's the figure that would be present.

Any other questions for Burke? Yes, Mike, and then Pat.

MR. CARDINAL: I have a question for Burke. He must have lived here quite a long time, and possibly has a . . .

MR. THOMAS: Nearly 65 years right here.

MR. CARDINAL: . . . general idea on how people perceive themselves, as to how they fit in with the existing government system being centralized six hours' drive from here. Do you feel a bit isolated and you need at least the representation you have now if not improved, I assume? Is that a general feeling in this area, that you're distant from Edmonton?

MR. THOMAS: Well, I don't feel we feel distant from Edmonton. We've always had a representative here who has given us fair and good representation, although not maybe of the political party of my choice. I feel we've had good representation, but we wouldn't want to have a member like from Crowsnest Pass. I mean, we just don't go that direction. I have nothing against them, but I mean, it's just not our system to go that way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Thomas, I appreciate your presentation; it was straightforward, and that's something I think is really important. My question to you is, first of all, do you feel that representation should be based on full population as opposed to eligible voters?

MR. THOMAS: No. If you have it on full population, we'd end up with about 63 members from the urban centres and about 20 from the rural.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, Burke; I'm not sure you understood her question. She was asking specifically about the two sets of slides shown, whether you'd use the voters' list or the total population.

MR. THOMAS: Well, you'd have to use a combination of both perhaps. I realize that population is what democracy is all about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. I don't think we're making ourselves clear enough. Some jurisdictions in Canada use the voters' list. We have done that up until now. Other jurisdictions take the census list and count every man, woman, and child. So you do one or the other. We're not really talking about the question of rep by pop. It's which of those two lists you use. I think that was your question.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. I would prefer, for me, the voters' list because we are a province of regions. Everybody is a place of regions and likes and dislikes, et cetera.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Okay. Thanks very much, Burke. Anyone from the audience have a question or a supplement they wish to add?

Okay, Pat, you're next here.

MS FRENCH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Cardston Municipal hospital I would like to make a submission in contention of Bill 22, which if enacted would in all probability result in the absorption of the Cardston constituency by the surrounding constituencies. The implementation of the 25 percent factor would most definitely spell the demise of our constituency as it now exists.

If the Cardston constituency were to be divided and dispersed to other constituencies, the present constituents would risk an unacceptable level of representation due to the following factors: (a) background, culture, and religion. We are atypical of the rest of the province and the surrounding constituencies. (b) The inability of our MLA to fully discharge his or her duties in such a large constituency due to, one, increased geographical size; two, the increased number of constituents to represent; three, increased number of organizations in the constituency - for example, as Mr. Thomas has already mentioned, our town and village councils, irrigation districts, the number of hospital boards, school boards, chambers of commerce, and special interest groups. Four, the increased miles of road; fifth, the distance from Edmonton; and six, the impact on the MLA's family, considering the increased workload for the MLA.

It is a sincere hope of the board that your committee will re-examine the percentage factor and consider the ramifications of such boundary changes to the constituents of both the Cardston constituency and the others facing the same prospect.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Pat.

Questions? Pat, and then Tom.

MRS. BLACK: Pat, thank you very much. I have a question for you that I'm probably going to ask most of you. You talked about traditions and your culture and heritage, et cetera. Do you think there should be a two-tiered system in this province for distribution, one that deals with rural constituencies and one that deals with urban constituencies? What I mean by that: should there be a distinguishing average mean that applies only to urban and another one that applies to rural?

MS FRENCH: Well, I really think, you know, that the way you have presented it, looking at straight population versus a voters' list, we are overlooking this factor. I think it needs to be taken into consideration, the urban versus the rural, because there are differences. Looking at the system that you are proposing, we are going to lose this perspective.

MRS. BLACK: Well, keep in mind, Pat, that we're not really proposing anything at this point. What we're really trying to do is get your thoughts. You mentioned some very definite distinguishing factors that pertain to your riding in particular, and you obviously feel very strongly about those factors.

MS FRENCH: Right.

MRS. BLACK: This is why I'm asking if you feel there should be a two-tiered system, basically, within the province.

MS FRENCH: Well, I really feel, like I said, that the rural communities do need the appropriate representation. And I feel that when we're looking at population figures, we are going to do away with a lot of the rural voice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Pat.
Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you. The judgment that was handed down in British Columbia says that each voter has to have almost equal representation in the Legislature. What we have currently is that if you were to take the constituencies, say, of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, Cardston, and Macleod and add all those populations together, it might equal, say, Edmonton-Whitemud, that voter population. So there you have three MLAs to one MLA.

Now, you've argued that due to size, history, and other factors, the constituencies ought to stay pretty much the same size. I guess the question is: would you be more inclined, then, to support an increase in the number of urban MLAs in order to maintain a certain geographical size for rural constituencies if people's votes are to mean anything at all? If you had your choice, what would the choice be: more urban MLAs or larger rural constituencies? I'm asking you for help now.

MS FRENCH: Would you define that a little bit more? When you're saying larger rural areas, you know . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, if we have to come down to a choice of trying to equalize as best we can, we can either increase geographical size to bring up population figures or we can decrease population size in the urban centres to bring down the population. But that would probably mean an increase in the number of urban MLAs, and overall as well.

MS FRENCH: An overall increase in the total MLA population.

MR. SIGURDSON: Uh huh.

MS FRENCH: I think we really have to consider the geographical distances, you know, because if we get an area that is so large that the MLA has a problem making contact with his constituents, then I think we're going to create more of a problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's good. Thanks, Pat.
Anyone else? Anyone from the floor? Okay. Thank you very much.
Ardell.

MR. HARTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the select special committee. On behalf of the United Irrigation District of Glenwood, we are very deeply concerned about what will happen if the boundaries are changed and the impact it could have on how the MLA could represent the area. We strongly feel that having representation based entirely upon the amount of population is not fair. In the rural areas the needs are more spread out and of a greater variety, and various problems arise that do not arise in the cities. The geographical size of the area can have a great effect on how effectively the representative can deal with remote problems which may differ greatly from his own local knowledge, experience, and willing-

ness to get involved. Spread too thin, he would not be able to handle small problems but would turn to areas with a greater amount of voting support.

The number of organizations within the district would need to be considered, such as small towns and villages with relatively few people but having a variety of needs quite different from areas of larger population. Also, there are areas of several special needs such as irrigation districts, oil wells, sulphur plants, a fertilizer plant, a park, logging, saw mills, a high tourism area, and the Indian reserve. Within the Cardston riding, it's been mentioned, we have three towns, three villages, nine hamlets, one MD, one county, six irrigation districts, three hospital boards, two school boards, five organized senior citizens' groups, two chambers of commerce, and several service clubs.

The people on the Indian reserve choose not to be enumerated, but they are still part of the area and have many needs and problems that require attention. We feel that their population should be considered when taking into consideration the size of the riding.

The miles of road within an area and the type and amount of traffic would have quite a bearing on the workload of an MLA. There may be a lot of heavy trucking, transportation, and because of location a great deal of tourist traffic as well. A sparsely populated area requires many miles of road per individual vote. Rural areas need strong and separate representation from urban, as agriculture and oil business are the largest businesses in Alberta. The Cardston riding is a considerable distance from Edmonton and requires many hours of travel besides the regular workload. Therefore, we feel that the boundaries should be left as they are to give us of the rural area the strength of representation that is so definitely needed.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much.
Questions. Yes, Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: We've heard a lot of people talk about urban and rural comparison, but I'd like to compare two rural areas. The two gentlemen are sitting at the table right here with us, so maybe they could have some input in this too.

If we look at Cardston and Athabasca-Lac La Biche, they are two rural constituencies both relatively isolated, although there are good roads to each. Athabasca-Lac La Biche is half again as large in terms of population as Cardston and substantially larger in terms of area. So even between just those two rural constituencies, there's substantial inequity. The question I would put to you is: how do we address that inequity, then, if we leave the boundaries alone, as I think I heard you suggesting?

MR. HARTLEY: Yes. I don't know the specific area that you're talking of, but is there a large area where there is not any population?

MR. BRUSEKER: Ask Mike. It's his constituency.

MR. HARTLEY: Which area are we talking about?

MRS. BLACK: Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. HARTLEY: This would be my concern: if there's an area where there are not a lot of roads per population.

MR. CARDINAL: No, it isn't. The voting population is close

to 14,000, which is almost within the 25 percent variance, but there are areas that are not populated. But, in addition, there are areas in there that you can't see on the map. I have about 50 summer villages, I think, to deal with, so they're in there somewhere. They're not towns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mike, here's another way to answer that question. Athabasca-Lac La Biche has a total population of 21,025 people. The Cardston constituency has a total population of 19,515. That's close to 1,500 population difference.

MR. HARTLEY: That's close to the same population.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very close.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Athabasca-Lac La Biche is about four times the area of Cardston.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anything else, Frank? Any other questions from panel members? Anyone else? Okay. Thanks very much. Mel.

MR. COTTLE: My name is Mel Cottle. I'm representing the town of Cardston. This letter is addressed to the hon. Bob Bogle, chairman, Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries.

It was with dismay that the town of Cardston learned of the upcoming electoral boundaries study, not so much because we are opposed to a periodic review of all boundaries to – and I quote the letter from the select boundaries committee – “establish a basis on which the citizens of Alberta may best be represented by their Members of the Legislative Assembly,” but because it appears from the information we have received that the main criterion for making the changes will be the number of citizens in each constituency. We believe there are many fallacies in this position. I would ask for your careful consideration of the following factors before making any changes.

First, the right of all Albertans to fair and equal representation. At this very moment Alberta is pressing the federal government to take steps towards a Triple E Senate, which in effect would give Alberta equal representation in the Senate, thus allowing provincial concerns to receive a fair hearing in the face of the much larger populations of eastern Canada. How then, I ask you, can this same provincial government deny the right of rural Alberta by rezoning electoral boundaries strictly on the basis of population?

Second, the increased possibility for MLA conflict of interest with the various people organizations within these large boundaries. Because of the physical size of some rural constituencies, problems and priorities vary greatly. To increase the size of these constituencies will multiply the chance of conflict, presenting the real possibility that the MLA may be working with one organization to solve a certain concern and, in doing so, would be in direct conflict with another organization within his constituency boundaries; examples: equity funding for schools, environmental issues, agricultural programs, public works grants, and so forth.

Third, the number and variety of political organizations in a rural constituency. The rural MLA must work effectively with a wide variety of elected boards and councils, while an urban MLA will have a relatively small number to contact. I won't repeat the numbers that have been mentioned earlier.

Fourth, the geographical size of the constituency. Rural MLAs spend a lot of time on the road in order to meet the needs of a few people scattered over a large geographical area.

Fifth, the diversity of problems to solve. The rural MLA is required to have a good understanding of a variety of subjects and government programs. These topics vary from agriculture to small

business loans, from environmental issues to the community enhancement grant, each taking time and effort but all required for the constituents to be “fairly represented.”

Sixth, personal consideration for the MLA and his or her family. Any redistribution of boundaries into a larger constituency with more constituents and more miles to travel will undoubtedly put increased time demands on the MLA and added stress on the family.

Mr. Chairman, I believe these are but a few of the many reasons the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries should reject any boundary change that alters significantly the personal contact a rural MLA presently has with his or her constituents. Remember the old axiom: if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Signed by Stanley Johnson on behalf of the mayor and council, town of Cardston.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Mel.

Yes, Pam.

MS BARRETT: In terms of the argument about efficacy in doing the job, what would you say or how would you fix the problem that most of the other rural ridings face, which is large geography and much larger voter population? Would you suggest, or would it be logically construed from your argument, that those ridings should be made smaller then?

MR. COTTLE: Are you saying those rural populations that have both a large geographic area and a large population?

MS BARRETT: Yes. If you'd look at the voter population alone for the moment, you'll see that there are a number – first of all, technically speaking, most of the other rural ridings would have larger voter populations. Secondly, they would also be geographically larger, as you can see from the map. Should I construe from your argument, then, that those ridings should be made smaller? In other words, if you're saying that your riding is of an ideal size, by implication does that mean that all the other ridings are too big?

MR. COTTLE: I don't think I said my riding is an ideal size. I said that I do not want this riding to be made larger than it is because I think that lessens the effectiveness of the MLA.

MS BARRETT: Okay, so then we . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pam, we should share, just for everybody's information, that one of the pieces of statistical data we've asked for in addition to the number of square miles in each riding would be the number of square miles of settled area. We want to know where the people live within the various ridings, because it's important to note that. I remember when we were in Grande Prairie, this issue came up relative to a comparison between the Dunvegan riding and Chinook. We found that if you looked at the settled part of Dunvegan, it was very comparable to the settled part of Chinook.

MS BARRETT: Yes, Bob, but that doesn't mitigate against what I'm getting at here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. I just wanted to share that information.

MS BARRETT: Chinook, for instance, is geographically, I would suggest, three times the size of this riding . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Much larger, yes.

MS BARRETT: . . . has a larger population, and is settled throughout, according to the MLA for that area. I listened to her the day before yesterday.

So what I'm asking is: should we derive, should we take from you instructions that if you don't want this riding to increase geographically or by value of population - would you be suggesting the reverse would be appropriate, that those larger rural ridings should become smaller?

MR. COTTLE: It could be one solution perhaps; as someone mentioned earlier, a different criterion for rural ridings than urban ridings. Maybe that could be covered in that.

MS BARRETT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks.

Anyone else? From the floor? Thanks, Mel.

We'll take one more, and then I think the students have to leave at 3:30, so we'll take a short break of about 10 minutes - I understand we have coffee and juice at the back - and then get back to the hearings.

Go ahead, Gary.

MR. JOHNSON: My name is Gary Johnson. I'm representing the Cardston Progressive Conservative Constituency Association, and I'm glad to be here.

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, some of the submissions you've heard so far as you've traveled around the province I suspect have been very emotional. An issue so basic to our democratic rights is bound to result in emotional presentations. Perhaps none have offered you a solution that respects the needs of rural and urban Albertans and holds the hopes of standing up to the precedent set by the B.C. court. We're here to break that train of submissions. We think your committee can present to the people of Alberta a formula that addresses the stresses urban MLAs face in representing large populations and addresses other stresses associated with representing the incredible diversity of constituencies in this province.

Our solution begins with the assumption that what Albertans want is equality of representation, not representation by population in the cold numerical sense that the Americans have chosen. We think that Albertans want a more fundamental equality. They want a constituent in Edmonton-Whitemud to have the same quality of representation as a constituent in Cardston. It comes down to this: every single Albertan deserves an equal claim to his or her MLA's time, and time is the key here. To give every MLA the same number of constituents may ensure fair representation in a relatively homogenous country, but it doesn't work in Alberta. It doesn't work in a province that has sparse, near-tundra conditions in some constituencies and dozens of occupants per square metre in city high rises.

We have constructed a formula which attempts to weight these considerations, considerations which make it vastly more difficult for some MLAs to represent constituents than others. Each consideration is weighted in our formula according to the number of constituents an MLA can't see because the nature of the constituency takes the MLA away from the people he or she represents. For example, if he is behind the wheel for several

hours a week driving to and from Edmonton or across a constituency, there are a certain number of constituents the MLA can't see that an Edmonton area MLA could. We add up the number of constituents he can't see because of these factors, subtract them from the number of constituents an urban MLA could represent in the same amount of time, and we have the number of constituents a rural MLA could provide the same quality of representation to as the urban MLA.

We will assume, then, as a starting point, that every constituent should have 10 minutes with his or her MLA every year. I think that's fair for a beginning assumption. Your committee may in its wisdom come up with a more accurate figure which will enhance the formula, but for now we'll work with a 10-minute per year factor.

The first consideration that deserves weighting is the distance of a given constituency from Edmonton. For every hour the MLA spends on the road, there are six 10-minute slots or six constituents he or she doesn't have time to represent. To calculate how many constituents that MLA can see for every hour he lives outside of Edmonton, let's assume the average MLA travels to and from Edmonton every other week, or 26 weeks a year. That's 26 hours of time lost with constituents, doubled because it's a return trip, which means 52 hours a year. If the MLA saw six constituents per hour, then that's 52 times six, or 312 constituents a year the MLA can't see for every hour he lives outside of Edmonton.

In the case of Cardston, our MLA lives six hours out of Edmonton. If we multiply 312 constituents by six, we have the number of constituents Jack can't see because of his distance from Edmonton: 312 times six is 1,872 constituents.

Distance from Edmonton is only one factor that should be weighted in the formula to accomplish fair representation. The second consideration is the number of schools, hospitals, and other elected representatives in a given constituency. MLAs, as you know, spend an inordinate amount of time with these officials. In urban areas there are far fewer municipal-level officials elected in each provincial constituency, and the task of representing these officials is often shared with other urban MLAs. Rural constituencies often have several town and village councils, counties, hospital boards, school boards, and municipal districts, with only one MLA to represent them all.

Let's make a modest assumption that each elected representative gets two hours of an MLA's time. Again you may be able to choose a more accurate figure, but for the sake of demonstration, this one will do. If we assume that the average number of elected representatives in a constituency is 10, then each of the elected representatives in the constituency over and above the first 10 is taking the MLA away from two hours of meetings with constituents, or 12 constituents, using our average of 10 minutes per constituent. In Cardston there are 91 elected officials, and when you add up the officials from all the town and village councils and counties and hospital boards, et cetera, 91 minus 10 is 81, and 81 times 12 is 972. That means our MLA doesn't have time for 972 constituents each year that an urban MLA would have time for because of the number of elected officials he serves.

The third and final consideration that we think must be weighted in this formula to achieve equality of representation is the size of the constituency itself. Some urban constituencies are less than 20 minutes across at their most distant points. Others in the north can't be less than two hours from one end to another. In Cardston our southernmost point is the U.S. border. Del Bonita on the border is 85 kilometres from Kipp in the

north, and on an east-west scale we stretch 105 kilometres from Waterton in the west to the furthest reaches of the Belly River in the northeast. It takes about 80 minutes to cross the width of the constituency.

Let's suppose, then, that an MLA makes an average of one round-trip in his constituency per week. Again, I think that's a pretty modest assumption. Many MLAs may have to travel a bit more often than that. For every 10 minutes added to the length of the constituency, two constituents aren't heard a week. I say two, not one, because we're assuming a round-trip again. Multiplying that by 52 weeks, we have 104 constituents a year who aren't heard because the MLA is on the road. In Cardston, with 80 minutes across the constituency, we multiply 104 by eight and find there are 832 constituents that our MLA doesn't have time for in a given year because his constituency is so large.

If you add all these considerations up and subtract them from the average population per constituency, which your figures show me is 18,685, then you will have a reading of how many constituents a given MLA can fairly represent. Let me show you how that works out for Cardston. To determine the minimum number of constituents our MLA could fairly represent, we first subtract the 25 percent of the average, following the logic presented by the B.C. court case. That gives us 14,014 constituents. Then we should subtract the number of constituents our MLA can't see because of distance from Cardston to Edmonton. Subtracting 1,872 constituents drops our total to 12,142. Then we subtract the number of constituents our MLA doesn't have time for because he has so many elected officials to represent. Subtracting another 972 constituents, our new total is 11,170. Finally, we subtract the 832 constituents our MLA can't see because of the vast size of the constituency and we come to a total of 10,338 constituents that our MLA can fairly represent. Because of the nature of our constituency, our MLA can give the same quality of representation to his constituents as the MLA who doesn't face these difficulties only if we drop the number of constituents he serves to just over 10,000.

We recognize that you may wish to change this formula if you find it could be more equitable. You may, for example, feel that distance from Edmonton is only a factor if the constituency is more than two hours out of Edmonton or the number of elected representatives only begins to impinge on an MLA's time seriously if there are more than 20 elected representatives. We hope you won't fail to consider this formula because of such factors. We have only attempted to give you building blocks for a workable formula, and we hope you will take the formula and use your knowledge and experience to work with it. We feel that this formula provides equality of representation, and fair and equal representation is what your committee is all about.

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, we've only dealt with those considerations we have a basis for in fact. When an MLA is sitting in a car or plane in transit across the province, he is not representing constituents: that's a fact. When he's meeting with an abundance of municipal-level elected officials, he's not meeting with constituents: that's a fact. And when he's trapped behind the steering wheel crossing a large constituency, he's not representing constituents: that, too, is a fact.

We have left out arguments that many of us feel are also very real but that we can't prove. We have 12 Hutterite colonies and the largest Indian reserve in Canada in our constituency. We think that poses extra challenges for the MLA, but we can't prove that. We think the average rural MLA spends more time with each constituent than an average urban MLA. That's because of the vast number of issues they have to deal with.

Any one constituent can have questions as broad-ranging as agricultural subsidies and irrigation to small business, as well as the concerns shared with urban counterparts such as health, social program needs, and culture. I don't think any other segment of society has that many programs to be dealt with on an everyday basis.

The rural interests are all the more challenging to represent, because the major interests rarely culminate in the person of a single leader. In the city often one union leader or group of leaders can speak for a large segment of the population. Farm organizations are less co-ordinated and farmers have more individual concerns. But we're not adding this to the formula, because no matter how broad-ranging rural needs are compared to urban needs, we feel the bottom line is that everyone has a right to the same amount of his or her MLA's time whether they're urban or rural. Percy Wickman may be perfectly justified in saying he doesn't have the time to represent 31,000 constituents in Edmonton-Whitemud. Well, nor does Jack Ady have the time to represent 15,000 constituents because of the considerations Percy Wickman doesn't have to contend with. We submit to you that these other considerations are just as important in determining Jack's ability to represent as population is to Mr. Wickman, and these considerations should be weighted accordingly.

Will the courts accept this formula? I'm not a lawyer; I don't know. Even a lawyer couldn't tell you for sure. But I do know that in her judgment British Columbia Justice McLachlin said that deviations from the 25 percent rule would be allowed if they contribute to better government of the populace as a whole, giving due weight to regional issues within the populace and geographic factors within the territory governed. Geographic considerations affecting the servicing of a riding and regional interests meriting representation may fall in this category and hence be justifiable.

She goes on say it is up to the Legislature to determine the relative weight of these considerations. This formula attempts to do that. We hope you will give it your due consideration.

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, the diversity of this province is our greatest asset. We have spent the past 15 to 20 years fostering that diversity. The government of Alberta has supported cities, but it has also endeavoured to put in place a viable infrastructure of agricultural programs like street assistance and sewage system assistance. We have built top-quality hospitals and schools in our rural areas that are the envy of other provinces. I think it would be a grave mistake to put in place a political system that would undo these accomplishments. Few countries in the world have within their boundaries the immense variety of climates, industries, and cultures that we have in this one province. We have Hutterites and Indians, Ukrainians, French, and Germans. We have mountains and prairies, lakes and forests, the most modern of cities, and huge, open ranches. Our lifestyle and our potential is in our diversity. It doesn't also have to be our democratic downfall.

Thank you for your attention.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Gary.

With the concurrence of the committee and because it's 3:30 and I know the students have to leave, I wonder if the committee would agree that we allow any questions to come from the students before they depart. Any questions on the process today and what you've seen? Okay. If you need to slip away now, you certainly can do that. Thank you for coming.

Okay. Questions from the committee first. Pat? I knew we wouldn't get away without a question from the accountant in our

group.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, you knew you couldn't get away with it.

I love formulas here. I just love formulas and I think they serve a tremendous purpose because they self-adjust on their own as factors change, so your presentation was rather dear to my heart.

One thing I didn't notice in your formula, and possibly it's built in, is: as one of those terribly underworked urban MLAs who is in the upper bracket of population and doesn't have the 6,000 square kilometres to travel – I do have 24,000 eligible voters in my riding – I didn't notice how you factored within your formula the concerns that would deal with the urban side of things. I didn't see that. I'm wondering if you had factored that in or if that was a part of your formula.

MR. JOHNSON: Not so much, I don't think. It's mostly to do with the rural constituencies. However, if you remember, I alluded to the point in there that sometimes – and you can correct me if I'm wrong; maybe I'm being presumptuous here – representing 20,000 or 30,000 people in the city might be, I shouldn't say as easy, but about equal to representing a much smaller population in a rural constituency. Would you accept that, or is that . . .

MRS. BLACK: Well, I have to admit that in my own riding I have 13,500 homes, and I door knock those. I can't, say, go into a small town or village and know everyone. I have to go door to door. I think my neighbour in Calgary-North West, Frank Bruseker, and I have two of the larger growing ridings, and for a lot of our population you have to go in the evenings because both mother and father work. So you don't have the same camaraderie you might have in a smaller community. You have to go out and get to know people – you don't automatically know – and that's a lot more difficult.

One thing that is different is that we on the government side at least, and I think on the opposition side as well, all of a sudden have to become experts in what traditionally has been called rural settings. I'm the vice-chairman of the forestry and natural resources committee, and I'm the only urban female on the whole thing. When people started talking about stock growers, I thought they were talking about the brokerage business and they were talking about cows. I had to go out and find out right now about cows, because I didn't know anything about them. So you have to learn more very quickly, because as you say, you're focused on an urban setting but very quickly must learn about the rural. I can tell you about all the fish in this province now, which I didn't know before. You must learn that very quickly when you're from an urban setting. So I think there's a little bit of a discrepancy there as to . . .

MR. JOHNSON: Our point is not to suggest that urban MLAs don't work hard. I think they . . .

MRS. BLACK: No, we work in different ways.

MR. JOHNSON: Different ways and different settings. Wouldn't you support the idea that maybe an urban MLA could use a constituency office a little easier than a rural MLA? Would your constituents come to you more?

MRS. BLACK: Definitely. In fact, my constituency office isn't

even in my constituency. It's four blocks out, because the rent is cheaper and it doesn't . . . Actually, Frank's riding is where my constituency office is, and it doesn't make a particle of difference. It's four blocks out and no one has had any problem accessing it. So from that standpoint, you're quite right. If I don't hit the red lights, I can go probably travel my riding from one end to the other in approximately 20 minutes, maybe half an hour.

MR. JOHNSON: So I think the whole key to our formula is time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks. Frank and then Mike.

MR. BRUSEKER: I just want to point out that the constituency office is also only one block away from the pro shop for the golf courses, but that's got nothing to do with today's . . .

I like formulas, and I appreciate the effort you put into this one a little bit. I suggest your formula won't work, because I'm going to ask you a question. Would you support an increase in the total number of MLAs in the province, increasing more than 83?

MR. JOHNSON: Oh, I would think so, if you use the time element and the formula. There are some people out there we aren't getting to because of distance and time involved. Maybe that's what it should be.

MR. BRUSEKER: The reason I ask it of you in particular, Gary, is that I am, as Pat mentioned, one of those urban MLAs. I just did a little quick arithmetic here. I figured if I worked 360 days out of the year and took five days off, 10-hour days and six slots per hour, I could meet a maximum of 21,600 constituents. That doesn't allow me time to travel back and forth to Edmonton. I'd have to add that on top of my 10-hour days and so on. So if we start using a formula like this, it would skew my constituency down probably to the 15,000 electors range, which means I'd need someone in there helping me in my constituency – just using that and forgetting about travel to Edmonton and all the rest of the kinds of things. That's why I asked, because if we applied a formula like yours equally across all the constituencies, it might mean a substantial increase.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Jack had a comment he wanted to make.

MR. ADY: I just wonder if Gary hasn't devised that primarily to factor in the very things that are different in a rural area from an urban and not necessarily to put that factor into the urban centre. And of course even if there were additional seats struck in our Legislature, say two more in Edmonton and two more in Calgary, that would reduce your average, and it could be brought within the average that was brought down in the court case. Those other factors Gary has outlined are strictly isolated to rural constituencies, and that's what he's tried to do, separate them out as the difference from yours. I realize you're trying to by the same token indicate you have some differences as well, but I don't think anybody is taking the position that there should not be any additional seats or that any area should not have fair representation.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess the reason I raised the question is that whatever formula or decision we make has to be, I think, equally applied right across the province, both urban and rural.

That's why I raised the issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Frank. Thanks. Mike, and then Tom.

MR. CARDINAL: Okay. Just a quick comment. Gary, I really appreciate your presentation, because I am a rural MLA faced with exactly what you're describing, and as a rural member of this government I feel we should target on equal and effective representation for all Albertans. We do have regional disparities in Alberta, and as Albertans we're always complaining that we have regional disparities between central Canada and the western provinces, so we have to keep that in mind. But I won't go into detail on that.

Now, you know, there's always this question, the difference in workload between the urban MLAs and the rural MLAs. I know we're all busy. I know Pat as an urban MLA is always busy too, but I think it may be different types of work we do. Now, one area that amazes me today is the door knocking bit. Pat and Frank say they door knock. As a rural MLA, I don't have time to door knock because we're running long hours, and I guess in rural areas people come to you more than you have to go and look for work. We have no time to go and look for work. We just can't.

MR. JOHNSON: I think we alluded to that a little bit in this presentation. You know, maybe there's a little difference between rural and urban people, where rural people demand a little more one-on-one interaction. I think that's an arguable point, and what you say can be easily factored in.

MRS. BLACK: Our people expect you at the door.

MR. CARDINAL: I don't have to go to doors to look for work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I've got Tom next. Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. To respond quickly to Mike's no time to door knock, if I can just throw in one of the differences between an urban member and a rural member, rural members have those - you said 91 - elected officials and they bring a certain message to the MLA, whereas in urban Alberta we haven't got those 91 elected officials out there that our constituents can turn to. They turn to us. And that's why we also go out to them, to find out what some of the issues are. If we're going to have proper representation, we have to be the ears and the legs, whereas I think there is some assistance in rural constituencies where you've got more ears and more legs. I think that's a difference between having time to door knock or not.

MR. JOHNSON: But the point we alluded to in here, though, was that perhaps in the urban areas you have groups or certain leaders that bring an issue to you - is that not true? - rather than individual constituents.

MR. SIGURDSON: Oh, indeed. But we also have an increased number of constituents that do that as well.

The point I wanted to make: I didn't do Frank's calculation, but I did calculate on a 40-hour week, 52 weeks a year, the number of constituents I would have in that I'm in Edmonton and have no travel time or relatively little, although I do put 40,000 kilometres on a year. I get 12,480 constituents under

your formula. I added all the constituents in Edmonton and ended up that under your formula in order to have an equitable number of MLAs, we'd end up with 29 MLAs in Edmonton and probably a comparable number more for Calgary. [interjection]

MR. CHAIRMAN: In fairness, you heard Jack respond that . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: I know I heard Jack respond, but you see, I'm taking that I don't have any travel time. So using that formula and using it equitably . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you and Frank are taking the same position, that if you're going to develop a formula, you apply it to all.

MR. SIGURDSON: That's right.

MR. JOHNSON: But that's not our suggestion here.

MS BARRETT: Oh, but logically it must be your suggestion, because you couldn't derive your argument by the deductions unless you started from that point. So I think it would have to hold if you want to go with a formula like that, unless you attempt to vary them between rural and urban. But logically you must have started from that point, because from where would you deduct that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Jack would like back in. Burke, just a minute. Jack.

MR. ADY: I think there was another point Gary made, and that was that he was putting forth a formula as a suggestion and certainly didn't cast any of his numbers in stone but put it forth to the committee as a building block, something they may look at to devise a formula that might work to satisfy the rural versus urban split. He certainly wasn't saying that 10 minutes was cast in stone or so many people per hour or anything. It was something you could start with as a committee to build something that might work to come up with a formula that would be acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As a committee we have heard over and over and over again the need to give some consideration to distance, to number of communities in an area. One thing that pleases me about this formula is that it's the most concise proposal we've had to date.

MR. BRUSEKER: And the most detailed as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. We may not agree with parts or all of it, but I give you credit for the detail and the way you've gone about it.

Pat, you wanted to get back in for a minute.

MRS. BLACK: Just a quick question, Gary. Traditionally in Alberta we have said there should be as close to equal representation from urban and rural in total within the province. Do you feel that we are putting too much emphasis on the B.C. court case? Do you feel we've put too much emphasis on that, or do you feel we should stand alone as Alberta and say, "This is the way we're going to do it; this is our tradition."

MR. JOHNSON: Certainly.

MRS. BLACK: You know, I kind of get the feeling: forget what B.C. did; that was their problem. Do you think we've put too much emphasis on that case?

MR. JOHNSON: I do. That's my own personal opinion. I feel we have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks, Gary.

I promised you a short break about 20 minutes ago, but we've got one more brief that needs to be presented so Mick can get away. Go ahead.

MR. BARNETT: My name is Mick Barnett. This is indeed a brief brief. Hon. Bob Bogle and members of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries, the Cardston school division board of trustees shares many of the concerns that have been expressed here today. We believe that any boundary change that decreases the opportunity for direct contact with our MLA will make it increasingly difficult to receive fair and equal treatment from the provincial government. Not only will our access be limited due to the fact that increased constituency size will place increased demands on the MLA, but the diversity of our province may prevent our MLA from acting on behalf of our best interests. We have specific concerns about representation concerning equity funding, capital building funds, distance education, access to the Minister of Education, and a host of other issues that will require the need and assistance of our rural MLA.

The Cardston school division board of trustees would ask the committee to carefully consider these facts, as well as others that have been presented here today, before making any recommendations to increase the size of the Cardston constituency. Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Thanks very much, Mick.
Questions? Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: You talked about access to government. One of the things I've always had a problem with - I live in the capital city, so I can't speak about myself - is that when we elect people to Ottawa or to Edmonton, it seems that once they go to Ottawa or get to Edmonton, sometimes they get stuck in the bureaucracy and the muck and the mire and they're there forever and government doesn't seem to reach out to the degree that perhaps it ought. I was actually quite impressed recently - and I say this from an urban perspective - because we had two tours from the federal government in Edmonton. One was the GST hearings; the other one was on unemployment insurance. I was quite pleased that they came outside Ottawa into the periphery of the country, Alberta. I know that you've got representation in your MLA, Jack, but do you think it would be helpful if there were all-party committees of government, such as this one here, not studying electoral boundaries but perhaps looking at the problem of educational funding or hospital boards? So instead of just putting the burden onto one MLA to take a message to Ottawa, you'd have a number of people that were elected to do the public's business coming into Cardston so they could hear matters that pertain to education or health or agriculture or energy. Then you've got the ears of a number of members that are taking a message back. Would that be beneficial?

MR. BARNETT: Perhaps it would be beneficial, but each

organization, such as a school division, has a provincial organization they address their needs to and lobby for their interests, and our MLA is very beneficial to these organizations. They have, as I suspect, or I think I know, caucus committees derived from these things. Well, I guess the answer to your question is: we are doing quite well the way we are. Just don't dilute our system any more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Okay.

We have three briefs to be presented. We'll take a short coffee break, be back at 4 o'clock sharp, get through our last briefs and everyone will be able to go home on time. Thank you.

[The committee recessed from 3:42 p.m. to 3:51 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, just before we reconvene with our presenters, Pat Ledgerwood's going to give us a little more background to the case in British Columbia involving the Fisher commission and the McLachlin decision. Pat.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Can everybody hear me if I sit down? Okay.

In B.C. they had a unique situation in that their population went in their lowest electoral division from about 5,600 to their highest which was about 68,000. The B.C. government had a commission headed by a Justice Fisher. He reviewed their electoral division boundaries and recommended a couple of things: that they get rid of their dual-member ridings, also that they have one average and they be within plus or minus 25 percent of that. The B.C. government didn't do anything with the Fisher commission report, so an individual, Professor Dixon, took the case to court. Madam Justice McLachlin ruled that the Fisher commission - basically, she agreed with the Fisher commission and said, "Yeah, it should be plus or minus 25 percent," and that was viable. And it's a very good judgment. If anybody would like to read it, I'd be pleased to send you a copy.

The B.C. government didn't really react to Justice McLachlin's ruling, so Dixon went back to court and said, "You must react." The court at that time, Justice Meredith, said no, the courts will not get into government and it will be up to the B.C. government to do what they want. They formed a commission. The commission basically adopted the Fisher report, and that was tabled in British Columbia on January 15 this year and came into effect the end of January. Their boundaries are established now. They went from, I believe it was, 68 ridings up to 75. They have a population of about 2.9 million, so numberswise they're fairly close to Alberta.

I think maybe I could answer any questions you have on it now. That was just to try and give you some background on the Meredith and the McLachlin decisions. Incidentally, Madam Justice McLachlin is now on the Supreme Court of Canada. There was no appeal to her decision when she was on the court in B.C.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any questions of Pat?

Thanks for that amplification of the situation in British Columbia.

All right, we'll get back to the presenters. Broyce, we'll begin with you, please.

MR. JACOBS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm presenting this

brief as president of the Foothills Little Bow association, which consists of the following members: the county of Forty Mile No. 8, the county of Newell No. 4, the county of Lethbridge No. 26, the county of Vulcan No. 2, the county of Warner No. 5, the MD of Taber No. 14, the MD of Pincher Creek No. 9, the MD of Foothills No. 31, the MD of Cardston No. 6, the MD of Cypress No. 1, and the MD of Willow Creek No. 26. Also, I'm presenting the brief on behalf of the council of the MD of Cardston, as reeve.

First, I would like to speak on behalf of the Foothills Little Bow association. It is interesting to note that all the above municipal districts and counties are a part of electoral divisions whose populations fall below the minimum requirement of 14,000 electors. This, of course, is due to their being rural areas whose populations have declined considerably over the past 20 or 30 years. I believe the reasons for the decline are known to all present. However, I believe what is important is to recognize the tremendous contribution rural Alberta makes to the abundant life enjoyed by Albertans in general. Also, considering the complex problems that exist in rural Alberta, surely rural Albertans are entitled to equal representation with their urban associates.

For example, consider the following factors which an MLA representing a rural constituency has to contend with. Number one, large geographic areas, people being spread out over many miles of dusty, snowy gravel roads which need to be traveled. Number two, party-line telephones, which make communications sometimes difficult and extremely time consuming. Number three, many types of organizations and boards: rec boards, irrigation districts, planning commissions, town councils, village councils, senior citizens' boards, tourism boards, ambulance authorities, waste authorities, health care boards, and of course MDs and counties and others. Number four, individual concerns tend to be unique, varied, and different, and their solutions could require considerable of the MLA's time and effort.

Also, Mr. Chairman and committee members, let us consider the challenge of survival that faces many rural Alberta communities today. Let us ask ourselves this question: is it in our best interest to maintain a strong, viable, diversified rural Alberta? I suggest the answer is an emphatic yes. Therefore, let us give rural Albertans equal representation. Let us acknowledge that there are important factors other than population that need to be considered.

Mr. Chairman, please now let me speak briefly on behalf of the MD of Cardston No. 6. We are a rural community. Our electoral population is much below the minimum requirement. Nevertheless, our needs are varied, different, and complex. We have several irrigation districts, two town councils, two hospital boards, a school board, two ambulance authorities, Chief Mountain solid waste authority, historical societies, senior citizens' boards, health boards, an MD council, chamber of commerce, and also the native people of the Blood Band and their many diversified problems and challenges. I know our MLA, Mr. Jack Ady, is a very busy man. I would seriously question the wisdom of extending the geographic size of his division just to give him more population. Of course, the same principle applies to other municipalities in the Foothills Little Bow association.

Mr. Chairman, I acknowledge that urban divisions tend to have larger populations than rural, but I also submit that representing rural people is unique. For example, in any given rural area an MLA may be representing a small group of people who are concerned about irrigation, mining, tourism, environ-

ment, ambulance, garbage, land use, cattle, recreation, hogs, farming, drought, soil erosion, roads, plus the usual problems of schools, taxes, hospitals, et cetera. Plus he may have several different areas in his division with similar problems.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I sincerely believe it is in the best interest of Alberta to strengthen rural Alberta. I believe rural Alberta has made and will continue to make a tremendous economic and social contribution to the people of this province. I believe they deserve and should have equal and effective representation. Therefore, on behalf of those I represent, I respectfully suggest rural Alberta should continue to have at least the same proportion of representation that they now enjoy.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Broyce.

Questions from the committee? Okay. Frank and then Tom.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Broyce, for your presentation. A number of people, yourself included, have listed that variety of bodies that a rural MLA deals with. Are you suggesting, then, that generally speaking across the province we should not increase the workload of a rural MLA?

MR. JACOBS: I think what I'm suggesting is that the only basis for representation should not be population. I think representation needs to be effective and needs to be as fair as possible, but I doubt we'll ever find a system that will make representation by population completely perfect. I think there are lots of other factors to be considered. I'm not suggesting that we increase the workload of an MLA. I think the rural MLAs at present are doing an adequate job of representing the people. I'm not prepared to comment about how much time it takes them to do that, but I think they are doing an adequate job. I think also what I'm saying is that we in rural Alberta feel we should have the continued proportion of representation we've enjoyed in the past.

MR. BRUSEKER: So you're suggesting that we maintain approximately a 50-50 split in terms of the number of seats.

MR. JACOBS: Yes, I am.

MR. BRUSEKER: All right. Let me ask you another question, and this is not a facetious question. A number of people, yourself included, have expressed concern about time for travel, time for access to the MLA. Should this committee make a recommendation that cabinet ministers, who have a substantially larger workload than your average MLA, shall we say, be selected only from the cities?

MR. JACOBS: No, I wouldn't think so. I think cabinet ministers should be selected by the Premier on the basis of what they can contribute and on the basis of merit. I'm not suggesting that a rural MLA can't handle his assignment and his job of representing his people. We're just saying that, sure, rural MLAs are busy people; so are urban MLAs busy people. We're just saying that let's not make the basis of representation strictly on population. I'm not suggesting that we need two MLAs in the Cardston constituency, nor am I suggesting that our MLA or any of the MLAs who represent the constituencies of the Foothills and Little Bow could not also serve on the cabinet. Some of them probably have and do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Broyce, thank you. I'm well aware of rural depopulation and the problems that has caused not only in rural Alberta but the problems it has brought to urban Alberta. Every time a person leaves rural Alberta, they end up somewhere else, and more often than not they end up in one of the larger urban centres, which creates a good number of increased problems. Currently we have a split in population of 60 percent residing in urban areas and 40 percent in rural areas. There is stability in rural areas and there is perhaps less stability in the urban areas because of the constant fluctuation of people that are settling and resettling. You argue that there should be 50-50 representation between urban and rural, knowing, as I just said, that the population split is 60-40. I'm wondering if there is a point, a number you could envisage, where that change would have to occur. Do we go 65-35? Do we then start making changes?

MR. JACOBS: Well, I think first of all we look at all the factors. You know, we have to ask ourselves: are the urban people not receiving fair representation simply because they have a larger population? I'm not convinced in my mind that an MLA representing 25,000 people is not giving effective representation to those people. Maybe because of their life-style, because of their needs, he's giving very good representation to those people. Maybe he could give good representation to 30,000 people. If he's a good MLA and committed to his assignment, I'm sure he could. I'm just saying let's be careful here; let's look at all the factors and give them serious consideration before we decide on strictly population for representation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other questions? Anyone else? Thanks, Broyce.
Guy.

MR. BOWLBY: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen. I'm here on behalf of myself. I'm an active rancher and farmer in the area. When I heard about this, I gave it quite a few hours of thought, and I'd like to submit my brief as to what I feel is important to rural communities and, I'm sure, the urban part of our great province.

As you well know, I think all Albertans are proud of being leaders. We lead; we don't follow. The fact that we are pushing for a Triple E Senate shows that we are leaders, and we've got one elected already. But I would like to mention this: in our rural areas a farm family has at least from a half million to \$10 million invested, far more capital than an urban dweller. Consequently, I feel this great investment we as rural Albertans have in Alberta should have a loud voice, as it has now, in Alberta.

As has been mentioned, we have 41 seats for rural and 42, I believe, for urban. Now, I'm convinced on this Triple E Senate, like it has been suggested by the province, that regions need to be represented, and the disparity of these regions can only be done by equal representation. From Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta we should have equal representation. That way all of Canada gets to benefit and not just two special provinces. My name suggests that I have a little bit of French in me too, but don't let that hold you back. However, I still love French, and I still love the English as well.

Going on in my brief here, as it has been mentioned, there is

no other industry in the world or in Alberta, whatever, that has more money invested than agriculture. Therefore, we should have, as I've mentioned, a strong voice in provincial affairs and not a weak one. For example, we have in the urban communities mostly labour, and their needs are being met. We have nurses' strikes; we have lawyers demanding more: we have all these. I'm sure these concerns can be met with the representation we now have in our urban areas.

I'd like to bring this out in my brief, that our prices today for our products are way below what they should be. If we weaken the voice we now have in our parliament, I'm sure we're not going to have that representation like we have been getting. Our present government has been giving us cuts on input costs, and they have enabled a good farmer to stay in business.

If we do get less representation in the House of Commons, as has been mentioned in the news media on Quebec, when you give them a little power, even the Quebeckers say, "We want more." Now, where is it going to end? If we give the urban 65 seats and the rurals 29 or 28, whatever the case may be, where is it going to end? Maybe the axiom here might be approved: when we want you to bark, we'll rattle your chain. It can happen; it can happen. I very strongly feel that rural Albertans should have equal representation in our parliament, because we have the two sides of our culture here in Alberta.

I'd like to just ask a few questions here on the Triple E Senate. Of course, elected Senators, we don't have that today; they're appointed. But we do have elected MLAs, and for a good reason. We vote men or women in that are good, strong voices. They're not appointed just because you're some good buddy of theirs. That's the reason for elected Senators and, of course, elected MLAs: because we vote the best men in possible. Equal representation from all parts of Canada despite density of population: this provides a healthy climate; all of Canada will benefit from any laws which are changed. Effectiveness: of course, that takes in the effectiveness of your equal representation, because you have more effect upon the nation. Now the courts are telling us that we should go backward, I feel, and not forward. We should have the best representation from our sparse areas. I don't know what you take as being a hypocrite, but I think that's being a little bit hypocritical, to tell Canadians one thing and Albertans another. My feeling is: let's practice what we preach.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much.
Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Guy, I appreciate your presentation. I gather, then, you would suggest that we ignore the ruling that came out of B.C. and establish our own method for distribution within the province.

MR. BOWLBY: Correct. Absolutely.

MRS. BLACK: And you would feel quite comfortable with an even 50-50 split between urban and rural.

MR. BOWLBY: I certainly would.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Thanks very much.
Susan.

MS S. SMITH: Mr. Chairman and committee members, my name is Susan Smith. I don't represent a group here today, just my own concerns. I would like to address a few points for your consideration.

Number one, Alberta has in the past demonstrated its commitment to both rural and urban regions by balancing them; that is, 42 urban divisions and 41 rural divisions. Many governments, including our federal government, have not demonstrated that commitment, with the result that vast regions of Canada have felt powerless and without effective representation. Some governments have compensated for the tendency of populations to aggregate by establishing bicameral bodies, one to represent on the basis of population and the other to represent on the basis of region. We in Alberta do not have the luxury of that type of representation, and so each MLA faces the task of representing both a population and a region. Some presently have large populations and small regions. Others represent smaller populations and considerably larger regions. Those divisions with large populations may argue that the present division is unfair, but by the same token those with large regions may also argue the same, for rural Alberta, in terms of geographic size, comprises far more than 50 percent of the province.

Number two, if population becomes the deciding factor in redivision, the quality of representation for the rural regions cannot help but suffer and thus be denied the same opportunity for effective, fair representation. Urban divisions have a more ideal setting for the best representation because of the greater accessibility to an MLA; that is, urban divisions have public transportation which runs in all kinds of weather. Urban divisions are so small in some areas that all persons in the division could be within 20 minutes or less of an appointed meeting place. Urban MLAs do not have the same travel time commitments both to and from Edmonton and within their divisions. For example, the divisions in Edmonton have these advantages to the extent that no other region has. Surely those kinds of factors must be considered in allowing for the best representation of peoples. The farther from the seat of government, the more an MLA has to work to match the representation of those closest to the seat of government. A balancing of representation between urban and rural divisions would seem to be best achieved through a smaller population and a region small enough to effectively manage in more remote and rural divisions. To treat them the same in terms of population is to treat the rural division unequally.

Number three, if urban divisions are given a far greater balance of power, the give and take of weighing urban and rural costs and benefits to legislation will be greatly diminished. Whatever our altruism, the fact remains – we have experienced it in federal politics – we should know that when the power of decision-making for vital western matters is in the hands of the industrial, populated east, the commitment to western concerns is not the same. It will come to that between urban and rural matters in Alberta if the urban divisions are given the greater power by virtue of their population. Therefore, let the province of Alberta continue its commitment to its rural peoples by maintaining that balance of power between both its vital urban areas and its vital rural areas. When competing interests share a balance of power, they are more likely to be co-operative. It becomes a matter of scratching backs, as it were. Therefore, let Alberta give a strong, continued recognition to a regional rural factor and weigh it in with population.

Number four, a democracy is to represent all its peoples in the best way it can, and that means weighing interests. Too often

in the past governments have taken the easy way out and tried to do that in terms of population only. That has often resulted in dissension because of this very fact of population aggregation. Let Alberta take the courageous way and maintain or improve the balance it has historically recognized, that rural regions will only receive fair and equal representation if population is only one factor in many.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Susan.

Questions? Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Susan, I want to put a scenario to you that happened recently. We talked about democracy and representation. Would I be correct, starting from this point, that the party that receives the greatest number of votes should form a government?

MS S. SMITH: Yes.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Recently there was an election held in a neighbouring jurisdiction, and their rural/urban split was such that there were more rural seats, although the population in the urban centres was greater than the population in the rural part of the province. During their election more people voted for the party that formed the official opposition than voted for the party that formed the government, because the party that formed the government had the rural seats. Do you think that's fair?

MS S. SMITH: I think that in some instances you may not come out with the result that is the norm, where the majority – where might makes right. We have somehow fallen into that kind of thinking, and in some instances it works out all right. In others where you're balancing very distinct interests – you've got urban interests and rural interests – when you give population the main factor, you prevent some of those interests from being heard. In your scenario the one group was elected when the population was against that group. Am I not right in interpreting that, what you said?

MR. SIGURDSON: The will of the majority . . .

MS S. SMITH: The majority voted against a party that did not receive the . . .

MS BARRETT: That did not win government.

MS S. SMITH: Yeah, that did not win government.

MR. SIGURDSON: That's right.

MS S. SMITH: You'd have to look at it, I guess. It might appear unfair to some, but if it came out of a balancing of interests, I think that has to be accepted, that there are going to be some costs to a system of not relying solely on population. You're going to have to recognize that there will be costs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just for the sake of argument, I'm sure if we looked at the voting record of the 100 Senators in the United States Senate, where each state has two Senators regardless of its population, we'd find a number of scenarios where the majority of Senators voting in favour of an issue would represent

states with less than 50 percent of the population.

MS S. SMITH: Yes, exactly. And where we don't have that option of having people representing regions and other people representing populations, that's going to happen, and it's just a matter of balancing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks, Susan. Anyone else? Tom?

MR. SIGURDSON: No, that's fine, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Yes, Pam.

MS BARRETT: Would you suggest, then, that having that second House might remedy this dilemma?

MS S. SMITH: I think that in a province possibly the cost factor of having a second House is too costly, that you just can't restructure that way for a province of this size. I think there are some states in the United States that have a bicameral.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All save one.

MS S. SMITH: In fact, I think they do – there was a court ruling that said they represent on population, whereas on the federal level they represent on region. I think again that's going with the might makes right. It's leaving a vast segment of regions underrepresented, because you're not putting a factor on the importance of a region and what comes out of it.

MS BARRETT: So you suspect that even if we did have, say, an Alberta Senate comprised of six elected representatives, that ultimately there might be a challenge, that they wouldn't be allowed to represent on just geographical area?

MS S. SMITH: Well, that is possible, but also just the costs, because then you're going through so many readings and then it has to be approved. I think possibly a province this size can accommodate in other ways besides doing it on a bicameral, that some formula can be worked out.

But I would like to address a question that you asked earlier about whether some of these northern regions were too large and whether some of the urban regions should be realigned. I think definitely there is a need to realign and give smaller population groupings in the urban areas, but to compensate those by dividing some of these northern regions. They are so vast, I don't see how any MLA can possibly effectively represent. In that way we can still maintain that more or less 50-50 division. Give some of our northern regions a better chance at representing their people and some of our urban regions a better chance, and try and balance it out so we have about a 50-50.

MS BARRETT: The implication of that would mean a much larger Assembly. Are you willing to pay for that?

MS S. SMITH: Well, I recognize that it may, but we're talking about fair representation of people. And we're prepared, I think, as a people to try and ensure that the representation we expect is also available to people in other divisions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
Anyone else? Yes.

MRS. LAYTON: I keep hearing this fair representation of people. The only example I can think of, as a mother and grandmother, is that we have children and we sometimes travel and bring fruit back. One of my sons maybe would have had one child; another one had seven children. So here's a family of nine, and here's a family of three. I don't bring a case of fruit for the family of nine and maybe just give the family of three a third of a case of fruit. So I think the needs are very important to consider here and that we don't necessarily need more representation in these divisions in the city.

You know, it's just like – I don't know who it was who said something like, "If the wagon's not broken, don't fix it." I think we need to be very concerned now at this time about financial problems, and if the wagon's not broken, don't fix it. We don't need to give them larger representation because of their needs, but here we have the diversification, and we need it. I think that if we don't get the representation, there's just a kind of restlessness among the people nowadays, and I think you can see this. Even the Indian people, for example; the different cultures and that, they really need to be heard. I just feel like there's going to be more demands on more local government, for example. Like the province of Alberta is feeling lots of times that we don't get adequate representation from Ottawa because we are so different here, and so we strive for more local decisions that would fit our needs. Right? So I just feel that if these things are not considered, what it could lead to is more demands for more local government that would fit our needs here, because we need to be represented. It's a very desperate thing, the way people are thinking nowadays and the way the world situations are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
Karen.

MRS. FOLSOM: Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I'm Karen Folsom, and I'm a resident of the village of Hill Spring, one of the three villages within the Cardston constituency. I also happen to be the municipal administrator of that village. I'm not here speaking officially, but I am here to present some of the concerns and the views of the people who live in our community. As the municipal administrator I appreciate the opportunity to present a paper that outlines the concerns and priorities of our village and the surrounding area. Issues that lead our concerns are schools, cultural and historic ties, economic development, and adequate representation.

The village of Hill Spring was founded in the early part of this century by settlers from the Cardston district. A school was immediately established to educate the youth of the area. As transportation improved and the rural population declined, the community school closed and students were bused to other schools in the district. Hill Spring has a lot of community pride, and concern for the welfare of our town led to an effort to again have a school in our village. Everyone worked together and accomplished this, so in 1987 a new school with grades 1 through 9 was opened in our village, and it presently has an enrollment of 150 students. The high school students travel by bus to Cardston. These arrangements contribute to friendships and associations that we value highly. Hill Spring feels strongly that our area should remain politically with the Cardston area, since our school board affiliations and ties are with them.

Another area of concern is our cultural and historical ties. Since Hill Spring was settled by people from the Cardston district over 75 years ago, the people of this area have had

strong associations with the greater Cardston district. Business contacts and banking are traditionally tied to Cardston. Since this area of the province has been settled, a distinctive culture has developed, accentuated by strong family and friendship bonds. The Alberta government currently has a commitment to maintain our cultural heritages, and we feel that Hill Spring should be aligned with the Cardston area politically to help foster these links.

Although the population of our municipality is small, approximately 260 people within the village and 280 in the rural area, we are desirous of maintaining our community, of seeing growth as opposed to stagnation. This population has grown to some extent, and the projections are for continued growth. We don't want our village to die. This past year we completed a five-year plan that saw the building of a new school, a new community centre, improved facilities at area lakes and parks, and the addition and improvement of recreation facilities. We are a vibrant community. The village is presently embarking on an ambitious program of surveys and review through an economic development committee to formulate a plan to follow to ensure our continued viability as a community. We anticipate growth. The provincial government has a policy of supporting growth in rural areas.

We are of the opinion that maintaining our constituency and having an MLA who represents us is vital to our overall success. This is one of the most beautiful parts of our great province. Tremendous potential exists here if we have the energy and talent and help to develop it. Because we live in a rural setting that covers a large geographical area, we perceive that our representative has a big job to adequately handle all the various municipalities, hospital and school boards, and distances involved in doing so. We recognize the problem the government has in allocating the representation equitably. We also feel that we shouldn't be put into too large a constituency that would not give us the input we desire about our future. We do request that Hill Spring remain with the Cardston area in the event that the constituency boundaries are redrawn. In the light of government policies regarding rural development, how about giving us the representation we have traditionally had and see what we can accomplish through vision and hard work? We feel that the help and guidance our MLA gives us and the interest he takes on our behalf is vital to our success.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Karen. Any questions or comments? Just as a footnote to what you've said, Karen – you've put a lot of stress on culture and historic ties – we recognize that Cardston was one of the first constituencies in Alberta, created in 1905, and therefore it does have a certain historical claim that is unique among the constituencies.

MRS. FOLSOM: The reason I wanted to stress these ties is that if you look at the map, the Cardston constituency sits here and then the Blood Reserve – you know, we're kind of a little island . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're up on the west side.

MRS. FOLSOM: . . . that's out by ourselves. If a person was looking at the map, they might arbitrarily think: oh well, this would be better here or there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pat is listening to you, and Pat will be on the commission.

MRS. FOLSOM: It was just something that as a village – you know, the people who live in our area had a strong feeling that you might know of those concerns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Karen. Anyone else?
Okay. Leroy.

MR. WALKER: My name is Leroy Walker, and I'm representing myself. I appreciate the opportunity that a social 30 class of ours at the high school – I'm the principal there – took in coming down.

Sitting here, I couldn't help but listen to a couple of you mention that you like formulas and so on. I'd just like to mention something that I hope all of you as MLAs know about, and that being the Alberta Schools Athletic Association, basically known as the ASAA. I hope all of you have had things brought to your attention, that you know what we are about. I would propose to you that maybe some of the similarities in this organization are just exactly what we're talking about here.

We have approximately 283 high schools in the province of Alberta. As a past president of the Alberta Schools Athletic Association, I am aware of the development of the zones. We traditionally had 10 zones back in 1956, and following the Alberta Sport Council's example and so on, we have gone to eight zones: two urban zones and six rural zones. Out of those eight zones, the 283 schools that we have as part of us, if we were to use but the formula that is on the paper I was sent as a principal, the 25 percent, Calgary, from which we have two MLAs here today . . . We have 25 high schools in the Calgary zone. If we have 283 high schools in our province and we divide that by eight, I believe we have a 35-school average, which would mean, if we took the 25 percent, that Calgary would not fit into it, and it shouldn't be a zone in the ASAA.

We have in the different zones, for example – very quickly; I don't want to waste your time here – Calgary with 25 high schools and 25,000 students. The Central zone around Red Deer has 46 high schools and 10,000 kids. Edmonton has a problem we won't get into, but Edmonton Metro and Public together have 26 schools and 26,000 kids. North Central around Edmonton has 48 schools and 12,000 kids, North East has 34 schools and 7,000 kids, North West has 29 schools and 5,000 kids, South Central just above us has 34 schools and 7,000 kids, and South, which we are part of, has 41 high schools and 9,000 kids, for about 103,000 kids in the province of Alberta. Now, I realize we're not talking about necessarily the same things, but I'm saying to you that the 103 high schools in this province feel that each of them is very important. As part of a very viable association we all have things such as debate teams and football teams and basketball and so on.

I would venture to say to you that a zone such as ours, with the 41 schools, has more teams than either of the urban centres, and we have very viable concerns. Therefore, I would suggest to you as an individual, not speaking on behalf of my school, that I would hope this committee would look at other things besides strictly population. There are other things to definitely consider.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Leroy.

Questions or comments? Anyone else? Again, thank you.
Wayne.

MR. W. SMITH: First of all, I would like say how much I

appreciate you coming to Cardston to listen to some of the concerns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the fact that your MLA did a little arm-twisting here to get you on late.

MR. W. SMITH: Yes, and I appreciate that as well.

I'm Wayne Smith. I'm representing the village of Glenwood. I just might mention that Glenwood and Hill Spring are pretty well situated right next to one another and have almost identical histories. As I present this brief on behalf of the village of Glenwood and those now in the Cardston constituency, I want to make two points very clear. Number one, a realignment based on – I call it – British Columbia's 25 percent formula would put unrealistic expectations on the rural MLAs and jeopardize the future of rural Alberta. Secondly, if something must be done, because of the uniqueness of this constituency it should be kept intact and not split up.

The government needs to realize that what is being proposed is not in keeping with Canadian history or practice. Even at the federal level Alberta's representation in the House of Commons is 91,365 people per MP, Saskatchewan's is 71,000, and Prince Edward Island's is 31,000. That is not what I would call equal representation. Historically, P.E.I. has been given special consideration and rightfully so. Is not Alberta's plea for an elected Senate to partially try and counter the power wielded by the larger, so-called urban provinces such as Ontario and Quebec? Let us look at the other provinces and see what has historically happened and what the present practice indicates.

According to the *Canadian Almanac and Directory 1990*, the provinces have the following discrepancies between the highest and lowest representation per MLA. This is based on 1986 election results, and you probably know these. British Columbia, 3,000 versus 66,000; Alberta, 8,000 versus 31,000 and something. And it goes down the list: Ontario, 19,000 versus 78,000; Prince Edward Island, 1,900 versus 11,000. From this information it is easy to see that most provinces work on a ratio differentiation between the bottom and the top of about 1 to 3 or 1 to 4. Alberta falls within that range. The glaring discrepancy is British Columbia, which has a 20 to 1 ratio of disparity: 3,000 versus 66,000.

From what I understand, this move by the Alberta government was not self-initiated but is a result of pressure brought to bear following the B.C. court decision. The problems in B.C. were not only in the gross discrepancies of a 1 to 20 ratio but the fact that 17 constituencies had dual representation and that B.C. only had 69 seats in their Legislature compared to Alberta's 83 when B.C. has a larger population.

Having said that, I would like to address the question of the urban/rural split. According to the select special committee:

The review process leading up to the development of rules to govern the setting of electoral boundaries will include the following considerations;

- One option, based on current legislation and historical Alberta practice, led to the development of the current electoral boundaries . . . These boundaries were based on a redistribution rule of 42 Urban . . . and 41 Rural . . .
- A second option will be the review of a percentage factor above or below an average. If, for example, a 25% factor was used across Alberta, regardless of whether it is rural or urban, 43 constituencies would not fall within the parameters and would require boundary revisions.

I point out that the first option is based on current and historical practice. The second option is based on the decision to take

care of a glaring discrepancy in B.C. of a 1 to 20 ratio, double representation, and a lack of representation.

It just so happens that as far as I can ascertain, all of the Alberta constituencies in option two that fall below the 25 percent formula are rural ridings, thus creating an unprecedented disparity of 29 rural ridings versus 54 urban. We would be creating the same situation Alberta has been complaining to Ottawa about for years. We strongly recommend that the current and historical practice of keeping the rural/urban balance be maintained.

Let us go one step closer to the grass roots of the situation and look at the feasibility of creating larger rural constituencies. Since I am not totally familiar with the other constituencies, I will use the Cardston riding for comparative purposes. One of the best ways to make this clear would be to compare the Cardston riding with the closest urban riding, Lethbridge-West. The Cardston MLA must represent and deal with the needs of eight separate municipal governments, while two Lethbridge MLAs share one. In the Cardston constituency there are four separate hospital boards, eight recreation boards, four school boards, and numerous organizations and interest groups. Added to that are all the rural responsibilities of agriculture and recreation.

If the constituency is changed, the workload of the MLA could double, when he or she is already representing more organizations and municipal governments than, I would dare say, any urban MLA. In the south many of the roads are traveled by tourists coming from the United States. With the Crowsnest corridor, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre, Cardston Remington carriage interpretive centre, and Waterton national park, not to mention the heavy agricultural traffic and the numerous recreation facilities, the transportation requirements of this area, I believe, will surpass almost any other rural jurisdiction. How many miles of road does an urban MLA have to worry about? Increasing the size of the Cardston constituency will create such a workload for the rural MLA, who must approach the ministers of transportation, Recreation and Parks, wildlife, Agriculture, et cetera, on behalf of each of these municipal governments, organizations, and other interest groups, that it will be physically impossible to provide adequate representation.

I could go on with this scenario, but I won't because by now I hope you realize that rural constituencies need to be given special consideration, just as they are by the federal government, and that the 25 percent formula should not be applied. I think that if you take the rural jurisdictions and compare them from the point of view of exactly how many communities, organizations, miles of highways, et cetera, that our MLA is representing, you will find that, yes, we are the lowest in population, but, yes, this MLA has a greater workload than perhaps any urban MLA.

A final point I would like to make is that if everything has been taken into consideration and it is necessary to change the boundaries of this constituency, that it be kept intact and not divided up. The geographic boundaries of this district go back to when this area was first settled by the same group of people. As a result, the moral, social, economic, educational, and religious convictions of this area have a unique and common fibre. Please take this into consideration if it becomes necessary to redraw the boundaries.

In closing, I want to make it very clear that what is being proposed contravenes the current and historical practice of both Alberta and the federal government. B.C. would certainly not be a place to look for a formula, since its decision is to solve an

unprecedented, complex situation. The urban/rural balance must be maintained, and the heavy load placed upon many rural MLAs must be taken into consideration.

I thank you for allowing us this opportunity and hope that some of the things which have been said in this brief will guide the committee in their final decisions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Wayne.

Any questions from panel members? Anyone else? Okay. Thank you. Any concluding comments by panel members? Go ahead, Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of our committee I'd just like to thank the people of Cardston and the outlying areas for having us today. It's been a very informative session, and we appreciate all the effort you've put into your presentations. I guess one of the recommendations that we are going to put forward as a committee is that before the lines are drawn and the boundaries determined, we're going to recommend that the commission revisit the communities for further input from you people.

Once again I'd like to thank you for having us, and we may be back sometime.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll just conclude. I'll take just a couple of moments to read into the record some of the highlights I heard from the various presenters.

We were reminded of the diversity of this constituency: its rich beauty and heritage and the area that is covered. The second presenter went on to talk about the need to maintain the balance between the urban and rural representation in our Assembly. We then heard about Cardston's uniqueness, that this

is a special corner of the province that's different from all other parts of the province. We then went on and heard about the considerable distance from Edmonton and the challenges that gives. The right of all Albertans to be represented fairly and equally was stressed.

We then had a formula presented for equal representation, which looked at distance from Edmonton, the amount of time that a member would spend with local government members, and distances within the constituency. That generated some considerable discussion by members of the committee. We heard about access to government, and a school board member very eloquently expressed some of the needs. We heard about the challenge of many small, rural communities to survive in the tough economic times which we currently face. A Triple E Senate was raised and the fact that here we are, battling for a Triple E Senate in the federal system and some people are suggesting a pure rep by pop system locally. The cultural and historic ties of this constituency were again amplified. We then heard about the Alberta Schools Athletic Association, how it's divided in the province, and the representation. That was illuminating in itself. Finally, we heard about some of the special considerations that have been made both at the federal level and that we've historically made to accommodate special interests and ensure that there is fair representation.

So I conclude on behalf of the committee by saying how pleased we are with the time and effort you've put into preparing these briefs and presenting them to us. It's not making our job any easier, but we certainly do welcome your input. So thank you so much for coming out and being part of this exciting and challenging process.

[The committee adjourned at 4:45 p.m.]