

[Vice-Chairman: Mr. Day]

[7:05 p.m.]

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Well, ladies and gentlemen, good evening and thank you for being here. We are a somewhat smaller committee tonight, but then again you're a smaller crowd, so we won't intimidate each other. I do want to thank you for coming. I just said to somebody that this is the leftovers from the last one in Red Deer, but using the word "leftovers" isn't very complimentary. Actually you are the folks, a number of you, who deferred to those who traveled some distance. We thank you for doing that so they didn't have to travel many miles again to be back here tonight. We appreciate you returning to make your presentations.

Can I ask, maybe just by a show of hands . . . As you are aware, we go through a presentation where we explain all the implications, and we go through the ridings and show you the numbers. If you don't need that again, then we would be happy not to do it. If there are people here who need that explanation, certainly we'll run through it again. Are there any here who are not aware of what's happening and would like us to run through the presentation? It only takes three or four hours, and we don't mind doing it. No, I'm just joking. It doesn't take that long. But if there's anyone here who'd like us to run through that, we will. Okay. Everybody's comfortable with the process and what we're doing. We appreciate that.

I'm going to invite, then, if I can, our first three presenters tonight. Have you got an order there, Bob?

MR. PRITCHARD: Sure. Yes. If we could have Lois Potter Stigings come up, please, and Ray Reckseidler and Bob McGhee and Rudolf Van Doornum.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: If any of you folks feel more comfortable joining us here at the table, feel free to do that. If those chairs back there are what you like, if you want to keep your distance, that's up to you, but feel free to join us up here.

Just to remind you again, the bank of microphones is not to give a confrontational aspect to this. This is a special select committee of the Legislature that was struck by the Legislature; therefore, all its proceedings go into *Hansard*, are publicly recorded, and available to you in print. Should you get in touch with us and like to see your words, everything you said, in print and you pass it on to your grandchildren for years to come, you will have a recorded statement of everything.

Okay, first on the list. We'll go with first come, first served. We're pleased to have His Worship the mayor of Red Deer making a presentation tonight. Your Worship, would you like to begin?

MR. MCGHEE: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman and members of the panel, I think by now perhaps you've heard about everything, and what I can say is there's really nothing new under the sun. I think when I saw the comments in the paper you put out, it was very upsetting to me and probably to most of the speakers you've had so far where the court decision in B.C., strictly looking at representation by population - to me, it really said that we didn't learn from history. What's in existence today in the federal system is very unsatisfactory. As the recent budget, the latest thing, would show, it would appear that those who have the population set the policy and the rest have to take what's left, if you want to call it that. So I would think if the outcome of this is to strictly set the ridings by population, we're really moving backwards to an untenable

position that we have with the federal government now. I'd hate to see Alberta go that way. We have a tough time now outside the two metropolitan areas trying to compete.

I think the best thing I can do is give you some examples of that situation and how it might be even more emphasized in the future if we were to proceed on representation by population. Red Deer is a member of the Red Deer planning commission, which has 42 municipalities, and it's partially funded, up to 60 percent, by the provincial government. This provides valuable service, especially to the smaller communities in helping them in planning and other areas. About seven years ago the process started where these commissions on an average were downgraded by approximately 40 percent. This might not seem drastic, but to the smaller communities it is. The larger communities can afford their own planning departments, et cetera, but when you have populations of 400 or 500, it's very difficult for them to find the means to provide adequate economic planning for themselves.

Also, at that time we tried to convince the Alberta Planning Board that an important part for the commissions would be economic planning and assistance to these smaller communities, and we were told that no way were these budgets to be used to that effect. In the last couple of years they changed their minds and said that yes, that'd be a good thing to do to help out the smaller communities, because many of them are now losing population. But it was a little late. Losing 40 percent of your budget doesn't leave you much room to do anything but normal or standard planning.

Another area is the capital sports facilities that are being built in the two major centres. We have no argument on what's taking place. But what is happening is that the rest of the province has been pretty well left out, and we find that our young people, or some of them, are going to have to go to these centres in order to reach their aspirations. We'd like to see this same type of support throughout the province. If our representation is watered down even more, we can't see this happening in the future.

Another area is our Red Deer College, which a year and half ago approached the provincial government for degree-granting status. They were the first, I guess - a new approach to the government. Since that time there have been many others. We realize now there are strong groups in the two major centres also starting to vie for the next university, and this is for the reason that the current universities are reaching, I guess, their total growth to be able to accommodate people and then have a feasible facility. They are starting to look at capping and stopping any future expansion. So sooner or later another university is going to be required in Alberta. We have no doubt, with the strength of representation, that we have little hope of it coming to Red Deer, that it'll go to the other centres again, therefore accumulating again a bigger drawing area.

Another interesting aspect is the per capita spending in this province. It's far weighted to the two major centres. I really didn't realize this until about four years ago when one of the departments put out a summary of the previous eight to nine years. As an example, our particular community received from that department less than half the per capita spending that went into Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge. We can see this getting worse in the future. So what we can see out of this is the same scenario that is occurring in our federal politics, and we would not like to see this happen. I don't know what we can do to counteract this. When you analyze it, the only thing I can see is that the rural municipalities really control the wealth.

Urban centres have no wealth in themselves. The rural municipalities have the oil, gas, forests, et cetera, and perhaps it may be in their benefit to try and take control of these so they can get an equal share of the economic growth in this province. I don't know what the answer is. I have no answers for you to what the representation should be for the ridings. I don't think we need any more MLAs, but I don't think . . . Now I lost my thought.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: You just said that we don't need any more MLAs. I've taken special note of that.

MR. MCGHEE: I would think that population is one criterion, but I think with the diversity of this province and all provinces it cannot be the only criterion. We have to take in terrain, area, and the people themselves from the dryland prairies to the mountains. To take an absolute outlook that population is the only criterion would be wrong and would not be fair or equitable to all the people of Alberta.

That's all I have to say.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Your Worship.

Before we go to questions, I'll introduce the members of the committee, now that we're all here. I'm Stockwell Day, MLA for Red Deer-North and also from the Progressive Conservative Party. To my right – I say that carefully – is Tom Sigurdson on the committee and also . . . When I say "representing," we don't mean representing the party on the committee, but just in case any of you were wondering what our banners are in the Legislature: Tom Sigurdson, NDP, and Frank Bruseker, Liberal. Also, we're delighted to have with us Mr. Ron Moore, the MLA for Lacombe.

I'll move to any questions from the panel, the committee.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Your Worship. Just one question. If you say that population shouldn't be the sole criterion, would you make it the primary criterion?

MR. MCGHEE: No. I think you have to look at different parts of the province. When I see the representation by population only, I can see some ridings that to me would be unrepresentable in the true fashion that they should be represented.

MR. SIGURDSON: Of the current constituencies?

MR. MCGHEE: No. If the plan is to go to representation by population only, if that is the change.

MR. SIGURDSON: But given all the possible considerations there might be, something has to be the primary criterion, I suppose. That's why I ask: would you make population the primary criterion, still considering all the other factors that . . .

MR. MCGHEE: Oh, I'll take a wild guess and say it should probably represent 40 percent of 100 percent of the factors, which would be the prime consideration. I might also add that I meant to say during the presentation that the strength of any country or province depends on the strength of all its parts. If you look through history again, those countries that failed did not look at that type of philosophy.

MR. SIGURDSON: I wonder if I could just throw out one more historical argument then. We had the Boston Tea Party,

and that was no taxation without representation. That was when a number of people were being taxed and didn't have representation. I suppose people in urban centres might argue.

MR. MCGHEE: Well, I'll counteract you on that also and say they established a Senate to counteract that, which has worked reasonably well in the States. As you can see, there is no specific area that has become a dominant force.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, just while we're on that topic, would you then suggest that the province ought to have a Senate?

MR. MCGHEE: No. I think the Legislature should be the Senate in some ways. I don't think we need any more government. That's including municipalities too.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: I was going to follow with a comment, but His Worship covered it quite well there.

Frank, any questions?

MR. BRUSEKER: No.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Your Worship, we're interested to have the mayor of a city the size of Red Deer – it must be some 56,000 or 57,000 by now – making a presentation, especially from the point of view from which you've come. Can you tell me, just for interest's sake – I don't know if they made the data available to you. You mentioned that Red Deer, as an example, has received less than half the per capita spending of the two major centres. Did they break that down for you to show you what particular areas of spending were significantly higher?

MR. MCGHEE: Yes, and I might add that since that summary it was never done again.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Could you give us some indication of what areas of spending were significantly higher?

MR. MCGHEE: I think during that time period the two major centres and Lethbridge were in the area of \$1,200 per capita. Our own municipality was \$400 and something.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. MCGHEE: Then there were a few below us even.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Any questions from those assembled here?

MR. MCGHEE: Excluding the media.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Right.

Mayor McGhee, we thank you for your time. Last time you were here with your own busy schedule, you deferred to people who were traveling, and we appreciate that and also appreciate your remarks this evening. Thank you.

Also, by continued way of introduction, our support staff: really the brains behind this whole operation, at the table with us is Mr. Bob Pritchard, and at the table over here is Robin Wortman. They're the people who really keep us going here on this committee. Nice to have you with us, or essential to have you with us.

Lois.

MS STIGINGS: Thank you. Hon. Chairman, members of the committee, I'm Lois Potter Stigings and I reside in the constituency of Innisfail. I believe that the current legislation and established convention of 42 urban and 41 rural divisions being designated within the province of Alberta is just and in the best interests of all Albertans. The vast and diverse geographical area which constitutes this great province of ours necessitates that regional concerns play an important role in determining electoral boundaries. All Albertans' best interests cannot be served if electoral boundaries are determined on a strict representation by population basis, nor if they are determined through utilizing a formula such as a 25 percent plus or minus factor. Furthermore, I do not believe an increase in the number of electoral divisions is necessary at this time. The recent British Columbia court decision that favours representation by population is a decision that affects British Columbia only, and there is no obligation, therefore, to establish Alberta's electoral boundaries in a similar fashion.

My reasons for maintaining the current ratio of urban/rural electoral divisions are twofold. Firstly, I am concerned that a reduction in rural divisions will give rise to polarization and alienation within Alberta and between Albertans, similar to that which exists between the prairie and Atlantic provinces and central Canada. The fact that a majority of Albertans reside in urban areas is acknowledged and reflected in that a majority of divisions are allocated as urban divisions.

A recurring theme in Canadian historical accounts centres around the dilemmas a sparse population inhabiting a rugged mass of territory encountered, circumstances and situations which still challenge us today. Another recurring theme in our history revolves around regional socioeconomic disparities and the accompanying alienation which has come to be a prominent feature of Canadian politics. As Albertans we are acutely aware of the realities of these themes on a federal level. I'm concerned that this may occur at a provincial level as well if the opportunity arises.

Secondly, the lower House, or House of Commons, represents Canadians on the basis of representation by population, while the intention of representation in the upper House, or Senate, is to provide equal representation for each of Canada's regions. We as western Canadians have always felt that the current system did not provide adequate representation for us. Thus, the concept of a Triple E Senate has captured the imaginations of many Canadians. Through these two types of representation we seek to ensure that both individual as well as regional or provincial interests are served.

I would suggest that the common perception amongst Albertans is that our Legislature does and should continue to represent us in both these capacities. Current legislation and the convention of designating 42 divisions to represent our urban areas and 41 to represent rural electors has accomplished this. It has provided a framework within which the checks and balances of these two types of representation can and do serve all Albertans' best interests.

Thank you.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Lois.  
Panel?

MR. BRUSEKER: Just a question. Are you suggesting, then, that we make no changes whatsoever to the current boundaries?

MS STIGINGS: I think some fine-tuning perhaps is in order,

but I don't think any significant changes are in order.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Just to follow up, you're basically saying we should maintain 50-50 because it's historical. In fact, if we look back to the foundation of the province, there were two urban constituencies and 23 rural constituencies – nowhere near the 50-50 split – which reflected population at that time. Does it not, therefore, seem logical that we should continue to reflect the way the populations are now? I mean, that's the way the province was created at that time.

MS STIGINGS: To some extent, although I understand that 60 percent of Albertans live in urban areas and 40 percent rural.

MR. BRUSEKER: True.

MS STIGINGS: So this 50-50 isn't a long way out, and I think the geography plays a significant factor in this. I guess political equality doesn't necessarily mean equality of numbers.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, okay. I guess the next question – I'll steal this one from Tom – is: if we move to 65-35, do we then make a change, or do we go to 70-30 and shift away from 50-50? At some point the population has to be reflected in it, and I guess my question is when.

MS STIGINGS: Yeah, I understand. My understanding, too, is that some people who are making forecasts of what life will be like years down the road are suggesting that perhaps there will be a decentralization of population. Perhaps that may occur too, and the opposite may be true, where there'll be more. I think for the time being and since the federal problem is at the forefront – you know, the problem with the Senate and so on – perhaps we pay a bit more attention to the problems on the federal scale to keep our own house together and happy.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Frank?

MR. BRUSEKER: No, I'm done, Fred.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Sorry. Go ahead, Bob.

MR. SIGURDSON: It's okay, John.

Lois, would you support the notion that the party that receives the greatest number of votes should form the government?

MS STIGINGS: In any democracy it isn't necessarily the majority, plurality of votes, that wins. I guess democracy is our chosen type of government and the best we can see. That happens occasionally, but I feel it's consistent. Perhaps consistency is . . . You know, it can happen to everyone, to anyone. It isn't singling anyone out.

MR. SIGURDSON: But if a party had 35 percent of the vote, then with a clear majority of seats – because that's based upon what we heard earlier from some political scientists. They advised us that with the current setup we could have 35 percent of the people voting in one way and still have a very strong majority in terms of the number of seats. Do you think they should be able to form a government?

MS STIGINGS: What other alternatives are there?

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, if you have a different form of representation so you have population playing a more important role. I'm not talking about proportional representation, but where the constituencies are somewhat more evenly divided based on population than they are currently. Then it may very well be the case that a greater plurality would be required to form a government. It's not very often that governments have an absolute majority given total global vote, but a greater plurality than, say, I think the figure was; 35.8 percent was what could carry a government to power in Alberta.

MS STIGINGS: Although this is where I suppose the concern with everyone's best interests comes to the forefront. I don't think if that were the instance – that a government came in with 35 percent of the vote – that perhaps everyone's interests would be served. The interests of some of the rural constituencies, for instance, like forestry or tourism or whatever it is, I think would fall to the wayside.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Mayor McGhee, you had a comment on that?

MR. MCGHEE: Yeah. I wouldn't support getting away from electing people strictly on the percentage and somebody appoints somebody. So they're not representing you. They're representing a percentage. I think there's no way we should get away from strictly representing a person that represents us. Then you're selecting someone and they're responsible and you can boot them out.

MR. SIGURDSON: I would very much agree with that. I just look at some of the figures that came out in the most recent election. I think the third or fourth highest vote-getter lost the election. That was in Edmonton-Whitemud. He had the third or fourth highest vote taken in the province of Alberta. That says a lot about the discrepancies we've got between constituencies currently, I think. It does from my perspective anyway.

MR. MCGHEE: A democracy is not a perfect system.

MR. SIGURDSON: Oh, I know.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other questions?

Lois, you mentioned the 42-41 split. You also touched on the reality that the trend projected in the year 2000 is a move away from the cities: as transportation becomes easier, people moving back out into the rural areas and commuting. As that happens, and if you are making a suggestion to people making boundaries . . . You've got a city, you've got people moving out, and there are more acreages. Would you lean toward including the acreages in the rural constituency or in the larger urban constituency, as you see them spreading out from the city?

MS STIGINGS: I don't know. I guess the only comment I could make is that perhaps the interests of acreageholders would be similar to those who live in the urban areas. But those people who derive their living from agriculture, for instance, are perhaps better served by someone representing a rural riding rather than being drawn in with an urban.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other thoughts or

comments?

MR. BRUSEKER: I'd like to add just one comment. Lois, while you may be right that in the future we may see a tremendous migration out of the cities, I think at that time it would behoove whoever the government is to look at re-evaluating boundaries and maybe changing them back so that maybe you go to 40-45 in favour of the rural areas if the population is there. I think what we have to deal with is what's happening now, not what might happen 10 years down the road.

MS STIGINGS: That's right, and I feel for our present needs the present designation of ridings is best.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Good. Thanks very much for your presentation.  
Rudolf.

MR. VAN DOORNUM: Rudy. My name's Rudy Van Doornum. I'm not a representative of anything. I came to the last meeting because of the reaction I had to what the MLA was reported to have said in the *Innisfail Province*. I disagree totally with him. For the record, I came to this meeting to make a representation because of what I heard at the last meeting. Imagine, or if you take . . .

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, Rudy, did I miss it? What constituency are you . . .

MR. VAN DOORNUM: Innisfail.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: You're from Innisfail. Okay. Thanks.

MR. VAN DOORNUM: Pick a group of eight people. Just imagine a group of eight people here. Divide them on a proportion of 5 to 3 and say that both groups have equal representation. If you accept the bounds as of the recent court case, 25 percent is acceptable. If you accept these as bounds, 125 to 75 is the ratio of 5 to 3. Basically, what you're saying is that out of a group of five people, two basically do not count. Whatever basis you divide the people on – gender, colour, language, their heritage – you would say that this is discrimination. But if you say urban or rural, and this seems to be the reason for the division, then it's okay. To me this doesn't seem fair. If you say it's a historical problem, there are lots of things that happened in history, things that happened – you know, we're here to change things for the better. I believe the report that was in the *Province* said that historically it's been that the urban . . . Okay, we've done it this way before or it's always been this way or it has been like that for quite a while, so why change it or why change it in my backyard? You know, it's okay to change. My grandfather was a blacksmith in the army. I don't think my father could have found a job like that, and I definitely won't be able to find a job like that. We have to change, so I would say that representation would have to change also.

What's been said is that – there were comments that MLAs cannot represent geographical areas. If a specific MLA cannot do it, if he stepped down and said, "I can't do it," I'm sure there would be someone from the party or, if not someone from his particular party, someone else who would be willing to step in and say, "I will do it."

The 25 percent leeway: the impression I got last time was that it was acceptable to the courts in B.C. It seems to be the limit here. Why not start off with 100 percent, or why not start off with equal representation and find out why we should have a variance from it? What we have argued now is people saying there is a variance and this is why we shouldn't change: because I represent a specific type of industry. The MLAs were not elected by industry, but they were elected by people.

Thank you.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Rudy, for your comments.

Panel members, questions?

MR. SIGURDSON: Rudy, I've got a couple of questions.

In the British Columbia court case Madam Justice McLachlin said that 25 percent is an outside variance and best not go beyond that. From your presentation you're saying that's far too great an allowance. In two of the provinces we visited, they had - in Manitoba they had a permissible allowance of plus or minus 10 percent. What that caused in one part of the province was that, in the northern part of the province, it created a constituency that was 1,060 miles by 990 miles.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: No, 230 I think it was.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, half the province. Whatever the width of the province is at the top, it went to the dead centre of it. I don't think there's anybody . . . And in Saskatchewan what they've done is that because they have a very sparse population in the northern part of their province, they have a plus or minus 25 percent everywhere in the province except for the two most northern constituencies, and they have a permitted variance there of plus or minus 50 percent. Given those two situations, where you've got one that goes to an extreme where you create a huge area, and then you've got Saskatchewan that's got that one permission for two constituencies and they justify it based on sparsity of population, do you think that's . . .

MR. VAN DOORNUM: Well, let's say that I lived in one of the constituencies in northern Saskatchewan. The only time I seemed to notice the MLA up there was at election time anyway.

MR. SIGURDSON: Uranium?

MR. VAN DOORNUM: No, this was in La Ronge.

In order to get elected - you know, you weren't elected by yourself; there were people who were working for you. Surely to goodness these same people who wanted to elect you for some reason would be willing to assist you to hang in there. If not, I'm sure one of them would be willing to replace you anyway.

MR. SIGURDSON: Or hang you. Good; thanks.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Any other comments? Members?

Rudy, thanks for your thoughts. I appreciate the position that you're seeing it from and your input to this panel.

I'd like to, before we move to Ray, just let you know that we've been joined by another one of our colleagues, Gary Severtson, MLA for Innisfail. Gary, nice to have you with us here.

Ray.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: Thank you. My name is Ray Reckseidler, and I have provided copies of my presentation to you. I am a resident of the village of Delburne, a community of almost 600 persons located on Highway 21 and approximately 50 kilometres east of the city of Red Deer. That puts us in the Innisfail constituency. I serve on the village council as a councillor - I have since 1980 - and tonight I speak to this gathering as its designated spokesperson. The village of Delburne is appreciative of the opportunity to be permitted to present its views to the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries and thanks this committee for its indulgence in hearing this submission.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee's panel, special guests, ladies and gentlemen: there go our people; we must follow them, for we are their leaders. Sage words uttered by Mahatma Gandhi. In many ways these words are the focal point of this submission. No political entity can govern effectively without the support and consent of those it purports to govern. Any social entity, whether it is a society, a nation, a province, a city, or a hamlet, is only made of what it is: people. Take the people out of it, and watch that social entity disappear. Allow the people to speak out, to assemble, and contribute, and watch the entity interact. Make political decisions remote from the people, and watch the revolution. Listen to the people wherever they may live, work, and play, and watch how successful the governing becomes. What people want is a form of government which relies on agreement from below, not direction from above.

A viable sense of community is the essence of any social entity. All communities are composed of people, and people are remarkably intelligent, creative, and capable of making their own decisions if left or encouraged to do so. If the decision-making becomes too distant or too remote from the people, frustration, alienation, and polarization may, in fact, begin to set in. No democratic form of political governing can afford to have this occur without due consequences.

A quick historical update of Alberta's development perhaps seems appropriate at this point. The transition of Alberta society from its early rural agricultural orientation to a complex, highly dynamic urban orientation demands that new ways and means be found for ensuring the political stability which was formerly provided by the large rural agricultural sector. The earlier presentation and members of the panel alluded to that.

The home and family life of Albertans is undergoing rapid change and transition in the face of economic, social, educational, and technological progress. So, too, it seems, is the political process, and it is occurring in the political scene. Further, one should not accept the view, as expressed in some quarters, that it is impossible to achieve social or political stability in an age of change. Such views are unsound, for if that which is purported to be a fundamental principle becomes obsolete with change, then there was no basic principle there in the first place. Principles are never inapplicable if they are fundamental, and the emphasis and objective in searching for basic values and principles should be the discovery of those which remain meaningful even with the passage of time. Policies, programs, and institutions in which such values and principles are embodied must of necessity change with the times to meet new circumstances, but political values and principles which are truly fundamental can and should be conserved.

It should be pointed out also that stability in modern times cannot be achieved through endeavours to suppress or retard the

many powerful and divergent forces tending to produce disequilibrium and possible change. Stability under such circumstances is possible only through the provision of well articulated and accepted values and goals by means of which the numerous forces and institutions of a dynamic society can be constructively harnessed and co-ordinated. What are these fundamental principles upon which any change, political or otherwise, should be based? Certainly basic principles and values ought always to occupy a prominent place in the thinking of public men and women to find concrete expression in any public policy. Also, it is imperative that a continuing effort be made by those in positions of government authority to arrive at a clearer understanding of fundamental political principles.

It is our village's strong belief that any changes considered by your committee as to constituent representation be based on these three principles.

Individual human beings are of supreme value and importance. It is the responsibility of governments to give first consideration to human beings as individuals rather than to human beings in the aggregate. Governments should exist to serve individuals and enhance the greatest possible development of freedom and creativity in every human being.

Second principle: freedom of thought and action for every individual in every sphere of human endeavour is of supreme value and importance. Governments should strive to ensure the continued development and conservation of cultural, intellectual, economic, political, and judicial freedom and responsibility for individuals and associations of individuals.

In a free society the institution of government is both a product and an instrument of freedom and human development. In a free society people are responsible for the kind of government they receive, and governments are responsible to the people they serve.

Mr. Chairman and members of your committee, the citizens of the village of Delburne have some serious reservations about any proposed boundary changes to Alberta's 83 provincial constituencies. We recognize that at present the representation is made up of 42 urban and 41 rural constituencies. We also recognize that there is a great variation in the population makeup of those 83 constituencies, ranging from Cardston at 8,105, or perhaps Cypress-Redcliff at 8,935, to Edmonton-Whitemud at 31,536. However, we also believe that certain given assumptions should not always be the sole basis for any proposed changes. Several assumptions particularly cause us some grave concern: representation by population; face-to-face personal contact is fundamental to effective representation; taxation based on property is subservient to taxation based on income. Let's consider each one more closely.

Representation by population has always been democratically popular, but evidence is available which suggests that it hasn't always been truly effective. For example, in Alberta our Municipal Government Act suggests that as municipalities - corporate communities - grow, more persons should be placed on local municipal councils and on school boards, to name only two examples. Yet, on the other hand, in our province our County Act stipulates that regardless of growth, committees such as boards of education and committees to county councils, which form a part of a county council, cannot outnumber, for voting purposes, the preset number of county councillors on those committees. It seems rather evident that representation by population isn't always practised in our province. It goes without saying that if representation by population is to be the decreed assumption, then those provincial Acts will also have to

be changed.

A second concern is the matter of taxation. Is one individual who owns 2,000 acres of land, and is thus taxed on real property, any more or less valuable as a voter than 2,000 persons living in a high-density living facility on one acre of land who are taxed on the income they earn? This becomes an important corollary to the earlier concern of representation by population, for surely both are important voters and both must be represented.

Further, we must concern ourselves with face-to-face contact in terms of representation. Is political representation more or less effective if a representative appears on a television screen, on a radio broadcast, or in print rather than actually meeting with his or her constituents face to face? It is difficult, if not impossible, to bring 8,105 Cardston voters together at one gathering within one hour. It is easier to assemble 31,536 voters in Edmonton-Whitemud in that same time frame. These are salient questions to ponder and to attempt to find answers for.

As your letter of information states, several options are available. The first option suggests that the present Legislative Assembly stand at 42 urban and 41 rural and that no changes need to be made. The second option states that a percentage factor of some numerical quantity be used to establish the provincial constituency boundaries. In this regard it would appear that some boundary changes would be necessary. The letter suggests the possibility of further options. Hopefully this will occur as a result of these public hearings.

Mr. Chairman and members of the panel, the citizens on whose behalf I present this submission reside in an incorporated community. Delburne is an urban municipality through provincial legislation, but it is primarily rural in its philosophy and its life-style. As a matter of fact, the village's economic, social, and cultural viability is dependent as much on the rural population surrounding it as it is on its incorporated populace. We have a trading area of over 1,300 people.

Based upon what you've just heard from my fellow citizens, the village of Delburne would be opposed strongly to any significant reduction of the rural voice in the Alberta Legislature. The rural voice must not be diminished simply because of unreasonable differences in the population of various constituencies. It is difficult enough now for rural MLAs to meet their respective constituents. To increase the geographic area simply to make the numbers match more evenly is not prudent nor politically effective. It reduces this face-to-face contact. It increases the frustration, the isolation, and may polarize voters even more.

In conclusion, this submission does not suggest any effective or miraculous solutions to a grave problem, but hopefully it does indicate how the citizens of one corporate municipality of 600 feel, and after all, this is what this public hearing is all about.

I have a quote, but I'm sure it's not necessary to be read, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: If you want to read that into the record, you can feel free to do that, Ray.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: All right; I will then. Thank you.

Finally, the village of Delburne thanks you most graciously for the opportunity to hear its comments. I close with this quotation:

Nothing in the World can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.  
Persistence and determination [alone] are omnipotent.  
The slogan "press on" has solved and always will solve the  
problems of the human race.

Anonymous  
Thank you again.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ray.  
Panel members, any questions? Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you. On the second last page, page 5 of your presentation, in the second last paragraph you talk about "significant reduction of the rural voice in the Alberta Legislature" and that the village of Delburne is strongly opposed to that, but yet you seem to recognize that there has to be some adjustment in our boundaries and perhaps the ratio between urban and rural constituencies. Have you got either a number that you would call significant, or have you got a percentage, a variance, that differs from Madam Justice McLachlin?

MR. RECKSEIDLER: Mr. Sigurdson, I'm not a man of statistics. I don't teach mathematics; I'm an English teacher. Statistics have always fooled me in many ways. Whether we select 25 percent, whether we select 20 percent, from a judicial point of view as long as it's based on some principle and it's equitable, then I guess it can be accepted. When you consider that on any particular election day the number of people who actually vote can vary, and yet the outcome is always official regardless of numbers.

I don't really feel that there's a specific number that is the right number. I think you have to feel the wishes of the people and perhaps try a number. If it works and they're satisfied, that's fine. If they're not satisfied, then obviously their voice isn't being heard, or if it is being heard, changes will occur. So to answer your question, I don't have a specific number. What I suppose I'm trying to say is that like anything else, historically or in terms of social interaction, what the people feel as being satisfactory is what in fact should occur, and I'm speaking on behalf of a number of people who are happy the way it is.

Thank you.

MR. SIGURDSON: Will those people be very unhappy, then, if there's change? Because, you know, what you've done, then, is returned the volley, I suppose, into that which is more subjective than objective. You're asking a group of people to make some subjective decisions.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: Again, Mr. Sigurdson, we were at one time in the federal riding of Red Deer. The boundary was the Red Deer River, which runs to the east of our community, and we felt comfortable there. Federally they decided to put us in the riding next to the riding of Red Deer. We seemed to look to Red Deer, and we were quite upset about that. As a result - I can't speak, but that small community . . . Mr. Malone is our MP now, and it's Crowfoot. Excuse me; I was thinking of the riding while I was speaking. We consider the river to be a natural boundary because there are very few bridges to cross it, and so we tend, naturally, to come this way to Red Deer. And, yes, the people have felt quite isolated because they were suddenly taken away. Perhaps they would feel the same if it were changed at this point.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you for your presentation. I guess my feeling is that we need to make some change, and I think there will be some change. The question I would like to ask you is: given that change needs to occur, I believe - and it needs to be in part based upon population, if not entirely - would you support the concept of increasing the total number of MLAs within the cities to keep the rural area where it's at right now? Or would you prefer to juggle within the 83 MLAs that we have right now and shift some perhaps from the rural to the urban area? Which, in your opinion, would be more amenable to the citizens in your area?

MR. RECKSEIDLER: I was listening to Lois' comment earlier about acreages, and the question was asked of her: where would you put them? I think Mr. Day asked that question. Even though you may be living on a small acreage, your purpose there, I think, is only to allow you to have a piece of the land, which is still very important to Albertans. Even though it may only be a couple of acres, it's yours and you can stretch your legs and you can drive your lawnmower around. But I think their values are urban, because they work in the city and they commute. They're prepared to pay the extra dollar for gasoline just for the peace of living with their family on a small . . . So I would be of the opinion, to answer your question, that if this were to occur and we have a shift of population, it should perhaps be an extension of the urban riding rather than, in fact, to enlarge the rural one. If in fact it would take another MLA to satisfy the needs, I personally - now, I'm not speaking on behalf of these citizens - would not necessarily be opposed.

But again I get back to the political picture. It's usually only about 1 percent of the population that become members of a political party, and that 1 percent makes all the decisions. It sets out the platforms; it sets out the issues and wants the other 99 percent to somehow support them. Does that mean, then, that the other 99 percent are necessarily going to be unhappy? They may or they may not be, but it's not a determining factor. If they are very upset, they may protest and vote for the opposition, or they may decide not to vote at all. So numbers don't mean a great deal to me in that sense.

But to answer your question, I would like to see the rural voice, personally, remain as it is, because I think Alberta still has a lot of rural roots; not necessarily rural in terms of making a living but rural in its life-style, rural in its thinking. And if it requires some additional seats to make the numbers a bit more amenable, I would not be opposed to that personally.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Ray, is there . . . Other than the incident of the federal boundary being moved, if you can kind of divorce that from this question, with the representation the way it is in the province in terms of numbers, is there a feeling of alienation now? I know you were alluding to the fact of alienation if we strictly go with the 25 percent factor and therefore lose some rural seats, but is there a feeling now in terms of - do the rural people feel there are too many MLAs in the cities voting against them, that there are two MLAs in Red Deer or there are 17 in Edmonton or whatever?

MR. RECKSEIDLER: Mr. Day, I have to go back to what His Worship Mayor McGhee said. My village is also a member of the Red Deer Regional Planning Commission. We have 41 members, 36 of which are urban and five of which are rural, and

yet I don't see that there's been any ganging up on one or the other. So, no, I wouldn't detect that there was any sense of alienation, that the urban MLAs are in fact telling the rural what to do; not at all. I think the concern is that if we want to have access to our MLA, it takes some time. Gary, and he's just a representative of an MLA in a rural situation, is a very busy individual and, as was said on February 5, it takes time. The factor of time isn't taken into this business of representation. If I need to have access, it may not always be at my convenience; I may have to defer to the MLA's convenience. Perhaps that's a concern that my constituents would have. I'm sure I could put that on public record, Mr. Day.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you.  
Any other comments or questions? Tom?

MR. SIGURDSON: One. In the matter of taxation, I just want some clarification. I'm not sure that I fully understand . . .

MR. RECKSEIDLER: I'm not sure that I do either. That's numbers again, but I'll try and answer your question, sir.

MR. SIGURDSON: If we're able to come to some kind of formula, are you suggesting that there might be some kind of consideration given to, or included in a formula, a provision for wealth?

MR. RECKSEIDLER: I wouldn't think so.

MR. SIGURDSON: No? Okay.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: I only alluded to that fact because of what had been said about the famous Boston Tea Party, that there is to be no taxation without representation. I'm saying that we have two corporate bodies. We have the provincial government which deals primarily with income taxation and we have municipal authority to deal primarily with property taxation, and yet there is no revenue sharing. In some sense there is; certainly through conditional/unconditional grants on one hand. But I'm saying: do you really make a distinction? They are both as important. One man who owns 2,000 acres, is he any less important than 2,000 people on one acre? It's a - what's the word? - syllogism or a false argument. I just raise that point as a matter of discussion.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Thank you for clarification.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Well, to Mayor McGhee, Lois, Rudy, and Ray, thank you very much for your time and your presentations. We appreciate the effort you've taken.

We invite the next four individuals to come.

MR. PRITCHARD: We have next Brian Mazza, Ron Moore, and Gary Severtson.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Well, Brian, it looks like the two political representatives are deferring to the individual.

MR. MAZZA: Well, I'm glad to be in very good company here tonight.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Our feelings are mutual.

MR. MAZZA: I'm representing the Rocky Mountain House & District Chamber of Commerce. I'm a director of that organization. Our past president was to have made the presentation the last time the hearing came to Red Deer, and she's unable to be here tonight. I did have a hand in drawing up our document, and therefore I'm to read the page and a half that I have.

The Rocky Mountain House & District Chamber of Commerce wishes to voice a number of concerns arising from the need to see constituency boundaries changed. Should the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries recommend a 25 percent factor be used in determining riding size, the decision will have a number of serious implications for rural Alberta.

Representation by population. While the concept of one person, one vote is the system that seems to be preferred by Canadians, it is not in fact the case. There is already a recognition that urban populations can be represented by fewer MLAs than the equivalent populations in rural areas. Although the 25 percent factor is aimed at addressing this, it is much too simplistic an answer to address the difficulties of just representation.

Political differences in rural and urban ridings. Within the cities of Edmonton and Calgary representation by population is conducted on a caucus basis. Government party and opposition party caucuses can deal with the city councils, hospital boards, and school boards as a group and can then represent the concerns on the floor of the Legislature as a group. Increasing the sizes of these caucuses does not serve to improve the quality of this representation. Ridings are geographically small. It should be remembered that constituents can call on nearly any member of the caucus with their concerns, especially since several city MLAs . . . I should have double spaced this.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: No, that's fine. You're doing just fine there.

MR. MAZZA: . . . hold either cabinet portfolios or have critic responsibilities, making some city MLAs better qualified to deal with specific concerns than others.

Rural populations consist of small communities and agricultural and acreage populations, and involve greater distances. By the very nature of these communities the demand for access to their MLA is significantly higher. It is not unusual for major political parties to draw more than 10 percent of the voting population of the riding to nomination meetings. A couple of nominations ago we had actually 15 percent of the riding population of Rocky Mountain House come to a nomination meeting.

In the Rocky Mountain House constituency there are 70 locally elected officials representing towns, villages, a summer village, a municipal district, counties, hospital boards, and public and separate school boards. Each of these boards or councils is a creature of the provincial government which sets their mandates and provides funding. It is critical that these local governments have access to the MLA who, in turn, is expected to speak on their behalf with as much force and authority as entire city caucuses.

The representation of resources. A large part of the provincial government's responsibility is to set regulatory policy for the major economic sectors of the province. Energy, agriculture, and forestry by their very nature are based outside of urban centres. It is these sectors which provide the greatest economic support of the province, and this is not likely to change in the next generation. It is important that these sectors be repre-



sented with strong voices in the Legislature. Many of the issues critical to these sectors are issues of importance to rural Alberta. Urban populations tend to be less knowledgeable about these issues, and the province would risk serious policy mistakes if urban constituencies were to gain a dominance in the Legislature.

A historical perspective. From 1921 to 1935 the United Farmers of Alberta ruled the province, with their legislative majority obtained without ever fielding a candidate in Edmonton or Calgary. Surely the urban voters felt the situation was intolerable at the time. Impending redistribution would move Alberta closer to a situation where Edmonton and Calgary could command a majority in the Legislature, making it possible for rural areas to be left entirely without a voice in government.

In conclusion, the Rocky Mountain House & District Chamber of Commerce recognizes the current population distribution is not adequately represented in the Alberta Legislature. Some changes are required. However, allowing only 25 percent variance from the average constituency population would have a disastrous effect on the productive rural areas of the province. Rural Alberta does not need nor should it have half of all the seats in the Legislature. But if the number of seats in the Legislature stays the same, rural Alberta risks losing as many as 10 seats, and this loss would be unacceptable because of the concerns we have outlined.

We would urge the committee to recommend only a small drop in the amount of rural representation. We would urge the committee to ensure that Edmonton and Calgary never command a majority in the Legislature at the expense of rural areas and smaller urban centres. The committee should resist the trend set by other western provinces to severely restrict the variance of constituency voting populations. Alberta must find its own way of ensuring fair representation of population.

Respectfully submitted.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Brian, for the presentation.

Panel members?

MR. SIGURDSON: Thanks, Brian.

You note again with your presentation, as with some of the previous ones, that there's probably going to be some change. Again, I guess the same question I have to you is the one I had earlier: what do you perceive as an acceptable number?

MR. MAZZA: Well, of course, it was suggested a change in 10 seats, which I understand, if we were to strictly adhere to the plus or minus 25 percent, would be a likely mathematical outcome. In talking to Mr. Bruseker earlier this month, he suggested that it might be possible to see a change from 41 rural ridings to 35 rural ridings, and while this is still somewhat alarming, I'd be more comfortable with that number. Our concern at this point in time is not so much this electoral boundary redistribution but the principles that are set up at this point in time and will apply to subsequent ones. I don't want to see a major shift – we recognize a shift has to come – so 35 or 36 rural ridings, in that neighbourhood, I would see as being quite acceptable. I understand that's not shared.

MR. SIGURDSON: Just for the sake of clarification – and correct me if I'm wrong, Stock – my understanding of the McLachlin decision in British Columbia is that because it's not been challenged to a higher court, it has set a precedent for all

electoral boundaries or for all political jurisdictions. So while the decision was made in British Columbia, it has an application throughout Canada. So I don't know if we're going to be able to find that made-in-Alberta formula that some might suggest. Until there's some direction from a higher court – and we've been told that if we don't have something close to McLachlin in Alberta, there is a very great likelihood that we're going to have a challenge here, and then maybe we're going to test the waters once again. We may very well end up having the courts impose a decision with respect to electoral boundaries and the validity of them, as was the possibility in British Columbia. So I think the role of the committee is to try and find that which is going to survive a challenge.

MR. MAZZA: I think it's the role of the committee to try to come up with the best possible workable situation, and if there is to be a challenge, let there be a challenge. If the work of the committee can justify a smaller change, as I'm sure many of the representations that the committee is receiving in rural Alberta . . . If it can't find that route, then there will also be the justifications for it, and it's very likely that that could stand in a court.

Is it my understanding that there was only the one decision, and that that was not an appeal to that court but rather a ruling of that court that has not been challenged in any way, shape, or form?

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: If I can just elaborate further. It was the Supreme Court of British Columbia, and in a strict legal sense, though it would have persuasive power on the mind of a judge in another jurisdiction, it is not a strict legal precedent. If it had occurred here in Alberta and then a judge ruled contrary to it, you could have an appeal based on the fact that the judge had made a significant departure from precedent. So my understanding of the precedence factor is that it's not a strict legal precedent but has persuasive power should another judge want to be persuaded by it.

MR. MAZZA: Then it is merely one factor that the committee has to consider.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: It's a factor.  
Frank?

MR. BRUSEKER: No. That's fine, thanks very much.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Just a comment, and, Brian, I'd appreciate your thoughts here. You said 35 to 36 rural constituencies would be acceptable, and then you added that you understand that's not shared. Could you broaden that?

MR. MAZZA: I've heard a number of groups. What I was told of the previous hearing – there were a number of groups that really didn't want to see any change whatsoever, and I think I've heard that at least once tonight.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see. Okay. Fine.

MR. MAZZA: Yeah. That's what I'm saying in terms of representations.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That's great.  
Any other comments or questions? Ray.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: This may not be the right time, Mr. Chairman, but in view of what has just gone on in dialogue between Brian and Mr. Sigurdson – may I call you Brian? It's Mr. Mazza? Okay.

In reference to the challenge to the representation in British Columbia, I had occasion to read an interpretation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms just recently, and there was a distinction made between the two. I've just quickly jotted it down; it's not word for word, but I think my intent is the same. I would ask, if you will allow me, on what basis would this challenge be made, whether it's in British Columbia or whether it's in Alberta?

The interpretation is by Ian Green\*, who is a professor at the University of Toronto and has done some work in this regard. I'm paraphrasing. A right is recognition by a state which gives an individual equal recognition among his peers. An example of that would be the right to legal counsel. A freedom: an individual is free to speak up as he or she believes. An example of that would be the freedom of speech. Now, what would the challenge be based on here: a right or a freedom?

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: If there were a challenge, that would be up to the individual making the challenge, Ray. As I understand it, in British Columbia the challenge was based on a person feeling inequality of their right to equal representation. That's what it was based on in B.C., but an individual . . .

MR. RECKSEIDLER: Is that stated in the Charter, that there is a right to equal representation?

MR. BRUSEKER: Section 3.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: Okay. I just ask the question, then, whether it would be a right or a freedom.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Yeah, and then when the individual makes the challenge, whatever they want to base it on, it's up to the judge, of course, to rule whether they feel they have a right that is being violated.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: Right. So it's not a given if it happens in one area that it necessarily will happen.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: It is not a given.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: It's a potential that it may.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Correct.

MR. RECKSEIDLER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

Thank you, Brian, and to the folks in Rocky Mountain House you are representing here. I appreciate that.

Ron Moore, MLA for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My submission is there. I won't read my submission in. I know the committee will have lots of time to go over all these submissions and pick out the important points. A lot of it is repetitious, as you people well know on the panel here. You've heard them before. So I'd

just like to speak for about three or four minutes related to this electoral boundaries consideration.

I feel that we're dealing here with democracy. Democracy I don't think is spelled out as strictly representation by population in any way, shape, or form. There are other meanings to it. Just because over time we've heard this, right from the Boston Tea Party – somebody brought it up here: representation by population – we take that as being that that is the sole purpose and all that democracy stands for, and the rights of the individual. I believe that democracy is more than representation by population. The cornerstone of democracy is fair and equitable representation to the individual. Fair and equitable representation to that individual. And if you go on one narrow thing, representation by population, you knock the cornerstone right out of democracy. You just have to think about it. I think the learned judge in her rulings went on one little narrow thing, and looked at it and said, "That's fine." And that's fair; I have no argument with the judge: another human being no more intelligent than the ones sitting around here. I respect everybody's feelings and their opinions, and I respect her opinion. But it's one opinion based on one narrow interpretation: representation by population.

I think when you people are dealing with this question, before you start making decisions, you get a fair basis to start drawing your conclusions from. Just going on one narrow little deal, representation by population – we're going to work from that and try and cut off and that, and take away – I say is not right for Albertans. It's not fair to Albertans. I believe that in a democracy we all have a vote. That is a known thing. We have that in elections, and we all vote. But then to have an appointed individual, no matter whether it's the Supreme Court or a district judge or anyone else, come along after the people have spoken and said, "Here is what we want," and say, "We're going to draw lines so this group, no matter how they voted" – they could have voted for all three parties that are sitting on your committee, Mr. Chairman – "by my decision will not have their fair voice in the proceedings in the Legislature," is not acceptable. I think you should think about that.

Democracy has been demonstrated in the elections that elected. But then to say we're going to take that area there to Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge, and we're going to draw lines around that to make sure they have all the voice, the outweighing voice, without any consideration to the voters . . . They spoke and put a government in. Now we have appointed people saying, "We're going to do this, and give the power to these people." That is what I am talking about tonight. I'm talking about fair, equitable representation to every individual, whether they live in the Peace River country or downtown Calgary, so that they feel their voice is being heard and their voice means something. Once you give majority representation in a group, that one in the minority has not really got that fair voice. They went through democracy and elected the government, and then suddenly they have another little circle drawn in here that takes that voice where they expressed their democratic right through the elections, and suddenly we have it changed. And that's not right.

I think that today's basis – the 41-42 split, whatever it is – that type of keeping an equal balance between rural and urban areas, makes sure that everybody has an equal say no matter where they live. They have a choice to kick the government out if he doesn't do right when he's in there. That comes back when the

\*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

elections come, every four years, and every one of us that are elected representatives fully realizes that. We must treat them fair. But to take the fairness away under this process is not just; it's not democratic. I think when we go back to the Boston Tea Party, Mr. Sigurdson – they didn't have a voice, and they kicked over the traces. It'll be the same thing, kicking over the traces, if they have a vote and their vote really doesn't mean anything. Because when those men and women get up in Edmonton, they can make their decision based on an urban thinking against a rural thinking, and we don't want that. And we haven't had it here; we haven't had it in Alberta. We haven't had that alienation. And to think that we sit here on the verge of talking about it even, to create that alienation in Alberta so that after we've left the scene, everyone of us who is a politician in this room – somebody's got to live with that split. It takes generations to get those splits worked out again.

Do you think an Albertan would trust central Canada ever again because of the situation that's created there? And they have a Senate to balance it out. We haven't anything here. In case any of you are going to ask me the question, am I in favour of a Senate in Alberta, I say, God, no; we've got too much government now; we don't need another Liberal bureaucracy. But this would create a demand and eventually the need of putting another layer of bureaucracy in there called a provincial Senate.

So when you're considering it – and I don't know how you're going to do it, really – I can tell you that you should really evaluate the basis you're starting on. I come back to my opening remarks: representation by population is carried out in the election. This should have no bearing on this area. We have to do fair representation for every individual Albertan, and that recognizes the geographic and the historic makeup of Alberta when you go on that basis.

Now it may need, in the final analysis, two bases of deciding how boundaries are set. There might be an urban basis and a rural basis. Think about it. There might be different criteria for rural matters, so they maintain the balance here. But how they arrive at the balance, geographic and population and so on – and I don't think the solution is adding more seats in the Legislature. We're running out of places to put them in the Legislature Building. That would mean having a new Legislature Building; Lord knows, we don't need that. If we need anything, we need less seats in the Legislature. I'll go on record on that. We certainly don't need more MLAs. At 83 we have enough MLAs. It's a matter of sitting down and realistically addressing the situation so that all Albertans feel they belong in Alberta, they aren't alienated against, their voice means something, and they can work through the democratic system. If they don't feel they are represented, then the democratic system we're so proud to stand up and have the courts make the decision for us on, will break down, and it will break down because somebody feels they haven't that voice in their government. To proceed before an election and set up boundaries that eliminate those voices out there is not a way to keep Alberta the way we've had it, the way we've grown up over the years, and the expectations of Albertans today.

So I think we have to look at it on a basis that maintains an equal balance, whatever criteria come out. I don't profess to have the answers, but there has to be a reasonable answer to keep that balance in there. I don't think it has anything to do with depriving anybody of rights. They have their rights under the democratic process, when they had their one vote, to get out there and vote. They have it. Now this just shows whether their

voice is going to be treated – the voice of the individual.

If we go basically on representation by population, gentlemen, the rural voice will not have that fair representation. I don't think we should be too concerned about the courts. I think the courts should look at law; politicians should look at the political matters. I'm not too shook up by one judge saying this. I think that as Albertans we're clear-thinking; we can think for ourselves, and we'll take it to the courts. I'd like to see every Albertan say, "Let's go to the courts." We're fair, rational-thinking people and responsible people, and I'm sure the courts will look at it that way.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ron. Committee members, comments? Questions?

MR. SIGURDSON: Sure, why not?

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Remembering that this is a presentation by an individual member and is not a debate, but we certainly invite questions.

MR. SIGURDSON: No, I don't propose to get into a debate.

Ron, I'm sure you'll understand that I don't appreciate all the arguments you made. I appreciate some of them. I appreciate the ones where you talked about equitable representation whether a person lives in Peace River or in downtown Calgary. I want to try and isolate it a little closer to – let's just take an area that I want to use as an example. You talked about an individual having equitable rights. Now, of course, whatever happens, whatever boundaries are drawn – not by this committee, incidentally, but by a subsequent commission – you will still continue to represent those people who elected you as well as all other Albertans in the same way that every other member does.

I want to take you down to the southeastern corner of our province and talk about four constituencies, keeping in mind the rights of an individual to have equal weight. I want to look at Medicine Hat, Cypress-Redcliff, Bow Valley, and Little Bow. Now, Little Bow, Bow Valley, and Cypress-Redcliff, if you add all of their voter population together, it's just a little bit over Medicine Hat. When you talk about a person having equitable rights, whether they live in Peace River or in my scenario, rural southeast as opposed to Medicine Hat, don't you think that there's some kind of a discrepancy in there?

MR. MOORE: Not necessarily; not necessarily. I think you've heard all the reasons, and if you want me to go into them with the dealings of an MLA . . . That's why I spoke about there being a difference not of the responsibilities but the type of work and the work demands on a rural MLA than there is on an urban MLA, and they have to be addressed differently somehow. The representative of Medicine Hat is dealing with one town council; it's very easy. You three are all urban MLAs, and you deal with one council. But those other ones – and I don't know how many councils there are in there, but I'll guarantee you that probably there are five, six, seven councils. If you've ever dealt with councils, they all come from different ways and have different problems. You deal with those. You can have anything in Medicine Hat, and you can contact anybody within an hour. You can't do that in any of those other ones.

MR. SIGURDSON: Can I just interject there, please? I want to try and follow through. Where do councils get their problems

from?

MR. MOORE: Their problems are with the provincial government. What else?

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay, but . . .

MR. MOORE: They get their funding and allotments from the provincial government, but the town councils have . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: . . . wouldn't also some of the problems be generated by their constituents?

MR. MOORE: Yeah, by constituents of them coming through, some. But a lot of it . . . I'm talking about roads and sewers, waste disposal deals. I just spent two weeks on a waste disposal deal for the one town.

MR. SIGURDSON: Caused by people.

MR. MOORE: I was at a meeting at 7 o'clock this morning with one council, and I've spent two weeks on it, which you don't run into. You never even talk sewer with your town hardly, until they call the Bow River a sewer, and then you get your . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, things are different, but anyway . . . No, again, I don't want to prolong debate. But the problems are generated by people.

MR. MOORE: Yes, that's right.

MR. SIGURDSON: So whether you're dealing with sewage in Lacombe or a dump in northeast Edmonton or an individual's problems, the generation of the problem comes from the individual. There might be buffer zones in between. There might be buffer zones such as the town councils that you've got or the hospital boards, the school divisions. When we were up in Donnelly, Walter Paszkowski came and said, "Gosh, you know, sometimes I feel guilty because I don't deal with my constituents because I'm spending so much time with my councils." From the urban perspective, again, it comes back to: sometimes I wish I had the buffer zone; I wish I had 64 other elected officials inside my constituency to help me deal with the problems of my constituents, because the problems are generated by the people.

MR. MOORE: Yes, but you've got to remember, too, that in the cities you're dealing with one council. In a city constituency in, well, let's say Calgary, you may only have one alderman in your area. But remember that politicians are great: they're great at passing the buck. You pass it; I pass it. Somebody comes in and says, "Well, this or that [inaudible] federal government's." You know, we can pass it on to the federal government. It's a problem that we didn't get the funding; we sure didn't get any transfer payments. We'll be saying that for a while. We all know that. We've got a problem because our transfer payments were cut back here just yesterday.

All those elected officials when talking to their constituents involve the MLA. Why don't you see your MLA? We can't do anything on that. We didn't get the money. You don't get them coming steadily to you as individuals. They don't go see their alderman. They aren't at your door knocking, like they do, in

delegations. There's a strike in your area - you don't have even the hog producers, when they are involved in a strike, at your door. These are things about being a rural MLA. Those people are at the door of the MLA right now. They know who your MLA is, rural people, because they depend on it as a communication link between them and the government. I can go into any city constituency - I've got friends there - and I say, "Who's your MLA?" "Well, Lord, I don't know." "Didn't you vote in the election?" I'll guarantee that if you go into any rural and say, "Who's your MLA?": "Well, that's that son of a B over there." And he will, because he knows you and he's there at you. He doesn't even know who the urban one is because there are so many thousand people in that six by six square miles of land that this one represents. They have not got that personal contact or that traditional reliance on their MLA. In rural Alberta they depend on the MLA as their contact in government. The town councils depend on it.

And you know why town councils do? I want to go back to that. Let's go to the cities of Medicine Hat, Calgary, or Edmonton. They have the expertise and the funding. They've got planning departments; they've got legal departments; they've got accounting departments. All these rural jurisdictions haven't got that expertise. They rely on their MLA to sit down and explain all the programs they can go into. The planning department doesn't get all those programs right away and the lawyers look at it: "We'll get this much here and there; this is where you apply," and it goes through. They come to their MLA. They want you to sit in on the council meeting and explain that program that came out. That is a necessary thing, because these councils need that. That's what government is: to give them a fair representation. The city people have the expertise and the funding to provide all that to their council members. So that is the difference in dealing with councils.

But getting back to individuals, I'm just saying that the rural MLA knows every one of his constituents, or they know him. In the city that is not so. I would have to say I would disagree if you said that if you walked down the street and asked at 20 houses who your MLA was in your constituency, you would get more than 50 percent who would give your name. Some of them might even give . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah, but that's not bad. If I only had 50 percent of my constituents giving them my name, it would equal your population. So that's not too bad.

MR. MOORE: That's all right. But I tell you percentagewise they know who you are. When you're in a little area only six miles by six miles instead of one 80 miles long . . .

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Well, I appreciate the obvious differences and also the different realities that are being brought forth by Mr. Moore and Mr. Sigurdson, the complexities of each area. I'd like to make just from the Chair a comment or observation.

Ron, you're challenging us, and the challenge we need to listen to. You said you don't know how we're going to decide. Well, frankly, neither do I. You've challenged us to think in terms of democracy and that democracy isn't just one narrow definition.

MR. MOORE: That's right.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Actually that's a correct statement.

If we look at what the Athenians over 2,000 years ago accepted as democratic, it would be totally unacceptable here today. But they had a definition of democracy that had validity to it.

What I want to emphasize is that this committee, because of the fact that we're holding public hearings and we are a select committee of the Legislature of different members – at this point in time it is not our mandate, until we've had all the hearings, to begin to draw conclusions. So I want to assure you that we haven't, or we are not supposed to by parliamentary procedure, arrived at preconceived decisions. Mr. Mazza made a comment which I want to address that I have some concern with: when you suggested that a member of this committee said to you that 35 or 36 seats would be acceptable. We are not to come to those conclusions at this point. I want to assure you that as a committee we have not, and we will not be suggesting until we've had all the hearings what we might be recommending. So I just wanted to assure people of that: that our mandate is to listen and, when the hearings are over and the people have spoken, then to try and get a consensus out of that.

Ron, I appreciate your challenge to us to be open-minded as we move in this whole area of defining what is democratic. It's the major challenge we face, and as we deliberate, we need all the encouragement and input we can get.

MR. MOORE: That's true. That's the whole sum of what I said: base it on democracy, not one little, narrow definition. Base it on what democracy really means to the individual.

MR. BRUSEKER: Ron, are you saying basically, then, that we should just leave it as it is pretty much?

MR. MOORE: I would leave the balance. There should be an equitable balance so that no one area has more than the others. The 41-40, 41-42, whatever, is a fair, equitable, historic balance that we've come to now, and it's working. If you ask all Albertans, they'll say they have good representation. I don't hear them saying they aren't getting represented fairly, unless they base it on politics, and then of course they would have quite an argument. If you weren't government politics, you'd say you were not fairly represented. That was the choice of the people in the election, where they utilized that part of democracy: representation by population. We have utilized that now, and the people have voted their one vote, representation by population.

Now we go to the next step: how we represent those is the boundaries around it. Do we segregate these no matter how they voted or for whatever political party and set them aside and say, "You don't have a voice, really, if it came right down to a quick vote, urban against rural"? That will develop in there. Whoever thought there'd be any alienation between Alberta and Ontario 40, 50 years ago that there is now? It developed because the voice of the individual feels they are not being heard. They have that election, representation by population, and the only thing we'd do if we go strictly on that, gentlemen, is we'd have to create a Senate down the road. Maybe not as we're sitting here, but the demand will come for something to ensure that the voice of those living in sparsely populated areas is heard. And that's just another growth in bureaucracy, and I don't think any political party wants to go that way.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Ron. Frank had another question.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. Just a question, then, about the process of electoral redistribution. Are you then saying that basically you're opposed to electoral redistribution because the voice of the people was heard at election time and redistribution should not occur?

MR. MOORE: No. No, that's not right. That isn't what I intended. Let me clarify. I'm saying that we're making such an emphasis, including Her Honour the judge, that we'll base it on population only. That's all; basically that's what she said. I said we've already had that process. That's what I'm saying. I'm saying that on the distribution we shouldn't have any more seats, but we should maintain this balance. That's why I'm thinking in the final analysis that if you're going to get fair and equitable representation, we may have to come out with two different criteria. Say there are 42 seats in the urban, and you will come up with a criterion that will maintain the 42 seats. You may change the boundaries, some to way down and some to way up, but it'll maintain those seats. Juggle those within that. And the rural would juggle theirs within their 41 or keep that at one or two difference. There may come a time when you have to add.

Now, you've heard all the arguments of how it should be done. I didn't think we came here to tell you how. Just to make sure there's a fair end result is what we're looking for. I don't think it's our responsibility to say how, but there was one good recommendation that came out. At the last hearing – I didn't hear it tonight – somebody said that around the urban areas part of the urban population could be taken into neighbouring rural constituencies to bring them up. The danger there is that you could water down the rural if you took too big a chunk of urban out there; actually you'd just take the rural voice away from that one. You would have to make sure that when you did a thing like that, it remained a rural constituency basically.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: So you're saying you wouldn't be opposed to that; just don't let the urban numbers overwhelm the . . .

MR. MOORE: Outnumber them, yeah. That just destroys what you're trying to accomplish.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Tom, you had one more question?

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah. Ron, I don't want you to tell me how, but I want you to tell me when, and I'll ask my perennial question. We know that rural depopulation is a fact of life currently. First you said that you didn't want to see any increase in seats, and then just a moment ago you said that maybe we can start adding some seats.

MR. MOORE: Well, I said there may be a change between the 41 and 42. I don't say more than the 83; no, not increasing the number.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Thanks for correcting that.

When, then, would you start making those changes? At what point in the population shift would you then start making changes?

MR. MOORE: Between the rural and the . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah.

MR. MOORE: I think that because of the geographic nature of Alberta it should never have to be addressed.

MR. SIGURDSON: I thought you said you'd have to do some . . .

MR. MOORE: I think the balance between rural and urban should always be as equal as we can keep it, at the present rate. Yeah.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay.

MR. MOORE: Did I contradict myself? If I did, I'll clarify it right now.

MR. SIGURDSON: I must have misunderstood.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ron, for your time and your presentation.

We'll move to Gary Severtson, MLA for Innisfail.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, committee members. I've got some written briefs to hand out. Tom Whiting was here last time, and he couldn't come, so he asked me to present the brief. Rather than read it, I'll just submit this brief and maybe I would like to make some of my own comments. I have to say I agree with my colleague to my left here. I hate to use "left" sometimes.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: That's the first time I've heard that said about Ron Moore.

MR. MOORE: Tom likes to hear I'm moving left.

MR. SIGURDSON: I'd get worried.

MR. BRUSEKER: Sell him a membership, quick.

MR. SEVERTSON: The point, Mr. Chairman, that has bothered me in tonight's hearings to some extent and again on February 5 is that the court case in B.C. is always mentioned. I think, Tom, you mentioned we were told – and I don't know by whom; you never said – that we have to take this into account. I don't know who it is. It bothers me that we're out at a public forum to hear the wishes of people and statements are that we have to go with this court case. If that's the case, there's no point having hearings if we have to stay within the 25 plus or minus. I think the select committee has the power to recommend to the Legislature what they feel is fair and equitable, and I presently don't think the 25 plus or minus is fair and equitable for the province of Alberta.

All we have to do is look at the present situation in Canada, the discontent that has been growing because of representation by population. We can go back for quite a few years. It's been growing worse. Basically you might say that the CCF, which is now the New Democratic Party, and the Social Credit were formed because of that feeling of alienation, left out of the rest of central Canada. We sure have heard a lot of the Reform Party in the last year or two. That's strictly why they were formed, because they feel they are left out of the decision-making in central Canada. If we use the 25 plus or minus, it's a matter of time. The suggestion of five seats or six seats now doesn't bother me because that does not cause a problem. But

if we start on the basis of a decision of 25, it's a matter of time after we're gone from the Legislature. Maybe 50 years from now the two cities of Calgary and Edmonton could theoretically control 75 percent of the Legislature, and that's when the problem starts, and that's when we'll be in trouble.

Like my colleague said, we don't have a second body like the Senate. I agree with him that we don't need one in the province. I am of the same feeling as Mr. Moore; I like the balance of 42-41. I'll maybe pick up from – I haven't even discussed it with him, but I can see distributing the 42 urban seats equally. If you look at the chart – I don't have one in front of me – there's quite a variance between urban seats now. That balance could be equal among urbans and as much the same in the rural, but keep the balance of urban and rural at the 42-41. Because what decision we make, on the basis of maybe this hearing, will set it for the history of this province. If we start to divide like we have in the rest of Canada, I feel – and I think I'm not alone – that Canada as a nation is in trouble and could be in serious trouble in the next few years. I would hate to see the same thing happen in Alberta. I'm afraid that's what will happen if we go to that type of representation by population.

Thank you.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your comments, Gary. Questions from committee members?

MR. BRUSEKER: Just a sort of comment, question I guess. I just throw it out for input. Gentlemen, in both of your constituencies, Wetaskiwin-Leduc, Camrose, and in most of the rural constituencies, those that have been primarily designated as rural, probably the bulk of the population you have is in urban centres. I'm wondering if, in fact, a great part of the problem we're running into is in the designation of urban and rural. Because, for example, I don't know what the population of the city of Lacombe is, but it probably represents a large percentage of the total population of the constituency of Lacombe. So I'm wondering if the problem really lies in the designation of urban/rural as opposed to the idea of the people we're representing.

MR. SEVERTSON: Well, the only thing is, Frank . . . I'll use Innisfail; it's sort of the same as Lacombe. They're in touch with the rural people because the reason they're there is because of rural. They're attuned to the rural people and their needs and wants. They're hand in hand; one won't survive without the other. So I think they are more in tune with each other.

MR. MOORE: By rights the whole social fabric of the area is interlaced. Between your rural area, whether it's in sports, curling, or anything, they're all in together. The social clubs, the Lions Club, and all that area around: that whole service area is three-quarters rural, in all the service clubs. The churches are the same thing. They're all part of it, the rural and the towns. Now, we're talking towns, not cities, because we have no cities in our area. They're villages, you know, of 150, 200, 300 people. But they are basically rural people because they're part of that rural fabric in everything they do from churches to service clubs to ladies' groups or whatever and all their recreation: right down to anything you do. Bridge club: I belong to a bridge club, and I'm the only guy from town. We all consider ourselves rural. It's the way the makeup is. It's different than the city. You don't have that mix. There isn't a guy or a woman in the town of Lacombe who doesn't know how to milk a cow; there

are a whole lot in the city of Calgary who can't. You know, it's all part of the rural atmosphere.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: The committee will take note of that observation.

MR. SIGURDSON: And do a survey on cow-milkers in my constituency.

MR. MOORE: That's a good one for the commission, not a select committee though.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I have milked a cow. I want you to know that.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Any other comments or questions?

MR. SEVERTSON: I guess one other comment I'd like to make. If you had a map of Alberta and if we used these numbers, it'd be like putting a fairy . . . Well, I guess the way the light is behind you, the way the fixture is. The cities of Calgary and Edmonton would take about that much of the area of the province and govern the rest of the province if we

continue on this route of rep by population, if the trends continue. They've been continuing for hundreds of years to go off the farm to the urban centres.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you, Gary. Bob, does that conclude the presentations?

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes, it does.

MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Was there anybody else who had a verbal presentation?

I want to thank you, especially those of you who presented tonight. I know you were here when we were in Red Deer before and you've come back to make your presentations. As I said, the committee is approaching all this with an open mind, and the thoughts and comments tonight will certainly be taken into consideration. So thank you for your patience, your time, and your good presentations.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thanks very much.

[The committee adjourned at 8:56 p.m.]

