

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

[2:09 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll officially declare the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries meeting being held here in Rocky Mountain House now open. I'd like to begin by apologizing to those of you who have been waiting the last 10 minutes for us. We had a miscommunication on travel arrangements, and therefore we were held up needlessly. But we are pleased to be here. As you know, this hearing was originally scheduled for late June. We were forced to postpone that because the Legislature sat until early July. We know that this is a difficult time of year for people, and we're so pleased that as many of you have turned out as were able to. We're anxious to hear the recommendations that come from this particular area.

As you know, our select committee of the Legislature will have completed the hearing process by this Friday, and by that time we will have had 39 hearings across the province. It's the most extensive hearing process that a select committee of the Legislature has undertaken as far as we are aware. In a moment I'm going to introduce the committee members, but I do want to say at the outset that we don't want anyone to feel inhibited by the microphones. They are here because all of these proceedings are recorded and there's a written transcript, so that if you would like to obtain a copy of what has been said while we're in Rocky Mountain House or if you'd like to receive transcripts of other hearings, you are able to do so. Those are available to the public. So the recording equipment is here for *Hansard's* convenience and for our written record.

We try to keep our meetings as informal and open as possible. The process we follow is that we invite a couple of presenters forward, we go through the first presentation, and then give the members of the committee an opportunity to ask any questions they may have. Then we throw it open to those of you in the public, if you have a comment you'd like to add and supplement or if you wish to take issue with the presentation which has just been made. Then we proceed on to the second presentation and so on. If you have a lengthy brief and would rather not read it, you may summarize the brief. We take the briefs at the end that were not read in their entirety and read them into our official record.

As well - we think we have good memories, but they are getting shorter as we get older - we are keeping a list of all the points made in the briefs through the use of a computer, so that when we sit down to deliberate and try to develop a report we can pull key information out of the various briefs. We can determine the most important recommendation made in each brief and the second most important point; we can determine how many people talked about distance as a factor, how many said that you should focus primarily on population. That's important for us.

If any of you have ideas on boundaries between your constituency and a neighbouring constituency, as you know, we're not the committee that's actually drawing the lines. That will be done by a commission. We're fortunate in that one of the members of our committee, Mr. Pat Ledgerwood, is the Chief Electoral Officer for the province. He will be sitting on the commission. So we've given the assurance to all those who have come forward with ideas on the lines between constituencies that that information would be passed on to the commission once it's been struck.

I'd like to pause, then, for a moment and introduce our panel members. We then have two presentations that we wish to give you, and we'll proceed with the briefs.

If I could begin, then, with the panel members present. On my left. I've already mentioned Pat Ledgerwood, the Chief Electoral Officer of the province, by name. We're delighted that he was able to join us in an ex officio capacity. He does come with a wealth of experience both as our Chief Electoral Officer and as a former member of the federal redistribution commission which worked on boundaries for the federal constituencies here in the province of Alberta.

Pat Black. Pat represents the constituency of Calgary-North West. This is her first term in the Alberta Legislature. She's a Conservative member of the Legislature. [interjection] I'm sorry. Calgary-Foothills. We do have a Calgary-North West on our panel, and I'll come to him in a few moments. They are neighbours, and I know she won't forgive me for introducing her and identifying the wrong constituency. Calgary-Foothills.

Tom Sigurdson. Tom represents . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: How about Taber-Warner?

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . Edmonton-Belmont. He's a New Democratic member of the Assembly, and this is Tom's second term in the Assembly. Tom served as executive assistant to the late Grant Notley, and as you know, Mr. Notley had a rural riding of Spirit River-Fairview. Mr. Notley also served on the Electoral Boundaries Commission some years ago while Tom was with him, so he does have some firsthand knowledge of that process.

On my immediate right, Mike Cardinal. Mike is a Conservative member of the Assembly and represents the constituency of Athabasca-Lac La Biche. This is Mike's first term in the Assembly. And now we'll come to Calgary-North West: Frank Bruseker. Frank is a Liberal member of our Assembly, and as mentioned, this is his first term. He's no stranger to rural Alberta in that his wife's family comes from the southeast corner of the province, but we're all getting an education in terms of traveling around the province.

We're delighted that our host MLA, your MLA, Ty Lund is with us today. As has been the case in the past, we've invited the local MLA to join us and participate in the panel in this way. Of course, Ty may wish to make some comments at the very end. By the way, my name is Bob Bogle. I'm the MLA for Taber-Warner, and I am a Conservative.

We're also joined by some staff members today. Bob Pritchard is the senior administrator. He's the gentleman you've written letters to and so on. We like to tease Bob. We tell him that when things go well, we take the credit for it. The reason we're 10 minutes late has to be Bob's fault. I haven't figured out how we'll blame that on him yet, but we'll figure out a way.

MR. PRITCHARD: You'll find a way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll find a way. He's joined by Ted Edwards. Ted was at the door and registered you when you came in. I mentioned *Hansard* earlier, that all the proceedings are recorded, and we're pleased to have with us Doug and Paula from *Hansard* in that capacity.

We have two short presentations to give before we get into the actual hearings. The first is going to be given by Pat Ledgerwood, and he's going to lead us through the reasons that our committee was struck. It all stems from a British Columbia court case. So we'll proceed with that first, please, Pat.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Normally, under conditions that prevail because of the legislation, a

commission would have been struck immediately following the 1989 general election in that there's a requirement for a boundaries review after every second general election. The current boundaries were used at the 1986 general election and the 1989 general election. However, the B.C. situation that the chairman referred to has impacted on us.

In the situation in British Columbia, they had a disparity in the total population: their smallest riding at 5,500 population, their largest at over 68,000. The B.C. government formed a commission headed by a Justice Fisher appointed in April of 1987, and they reported in December of 1988. Three main points: they eliminated the dual-member ridings in British Columbia; they also increased the number of MLAs from 69 to 75, which doesn't really impact on us; however, they did decide that each voter should have equal weight. They checked with the Charter, of course – we'll hear more about this later – and with other jurisdictions, divided the total population of British Columbia by 75, and then determined that all the populations would be within plus or minus 25 percent of that average.

When they tabled their report, the government didn't appear to do anything, so a Professor Dixon took the B.C. government to court. It was heard before the Chief Justice of the B.C. Supreme Court, Chief Justice Madam McLachlin. Basically, she agreed that the average plus or minus 25 percent was reasonable. There was no appeal to that particular decision. Madam Justice McLachlin is now one of our nine chief justices in the Supreme Court of Canada.

The professor and his associates were not happy that the government still was not doing anything, so they went to court again, and the case was heard before a Justice Meredith. Although he agreed that the current B.C. boundaries violated the Constitution contained in the Charter, the courts were not to act as governments; they were not about to dissolve the Legislature and have the court act as government; the courts were not to legislate. They left it at that.

The B.C. government struck a commission in 1989. They completed their work, and basically they accepted the recommendations in the Fisher commission and made minor changes to the boundaries. But the point that we're interested in is that they had the one average and all electoral divisions were within plus or minus 25 percent of that. As you'll hear later on, about half of our electoral divisions do not meet that plus or minus 25 percent criterion. So the new boundaries in British Columbia are effective as of January this year, and their next election will be fought on those 75 new boundaries.

So this particular committee is out to receive input from Albertans on just how you think our Legislature should be struck: the number of seats, representation from urban members, rural members, or maybe a new description of what we should be labeling ourselves.

With that, Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much. Any questions of Pat before we move on to the slides? Yes, sir.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: What's the percentage? You say 25 percent more or less. What's the percentage then? Is it 50 percent, 40 percent, 30 percent, 20 percent, or whatever, more or less?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Well, what happened in British Columbia, they took the average. The average was about 38,500.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: No, I'm sorry. In Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think you'll see that when we get into the slides.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Oh, okay. All right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's fine. All right.

Frank, would you like to lead us through the slides then, please?

MR. BRUSEKER: Sure. When you came in the door you probably picked up a package of information which contains a number of coloured maps inside of it and also some charts that we're going to go through right now. In addition, we have some extra information that is not included in your package towards the end of this slide presentation. The transparency before you right now is a list of the 83 constituencies in the province, simply listed in alphabetical order, showing all of them that exist today.

This next transparency again is the 83 constituencies, but now it is arranged in order from largest to smallest. So in answer to your question, sir, there really is no average. You see that the largest constituency is Edmonton-Whitemud with just over 31,000; the smallest constituency is Cardston with 8,100. Cardston also has an additional about 1,800 members of the Blood Indian tribe that are on a reservation that chose not to be enumerated that probably should be added to that 8,100 total. So we have quite a range, as you can see.

Now, if you were to add all of those together, you would get a total figure of just one and a half million electors in the province, based upon our last enumeration that was taken before the 1989 election. If you divide that one and a half million by the 83 constituencies that currently exist, you would get an average figure of 18,685. If we apply the 25 percent rule to Alberta, as was done in British Columbia, we would then have an upper allowable end of some 23,356. That would be the largest constituency. Using a minus 25 percent variation, the smallest constituency would be just over 14,000 electors.

Showing this on the chart, the constituencies which are highlighted in green are those constituencies that are more than 25 percent above; in other words, higher than 23,000 electors. The constituencies highlighted in pink are more than 25 percent below the average; in other words, less than 14,000. The ones that are not highlighted fall within the acceptable range.

If we show that on a map of Alberta, the constituencies which you see here highlighted in pink are those constituencies which are below the minus 25 percent; in other words, smaller than 14,000 electors. You can see it spreads right across the province from almost the very north end to the south end, right from east to west. You can also note that Rocky Mountain House with 13,733 electors, this constituency here, is just below the bottom end of the acceptable range.

This transparency is the city of Calgary. There are some constituencies highlighted in green. All of the constituencies which exceed the 25 percent upper end are urban. The next transparency is the city of Edmonton: again some constituencies highlighted in green showing they're exceeding it. The ones that were more than 25 percent below were the pink ones, and they're all what we consider generally to be the rural constituencies.

This is the city of Lethbridge. Lethbridge is divided into Lethbridge-East and Lethbridge-West. It is not coloured, so these two particular constituencies do fall within the guidelines of 25 percent plus or minus.

This is the city of Medicine Hat. The lines you see in there are polling stations. This is all one constituency, and currently it exceeds the 25 percent guideline.

At the last redistribution which took place, the city of Red Deer was in the position of being considered too large in terms of population for one constituency and yet really too small to be formed into two constituencies. So a relatively novel approach was taken. You'll notice there are two different colours of lines. There's a brown line that represents the actual city limits of Red Deer; the black line represents the two electoral divisions we have now of Red Deer-North and Red Deer-South. To solve the problem, what they did in Red Deer was take some of the rural countryside around the city and add it to the city in order to come up with enough population to justify two electoral divisions.

This is the city of St. Albert located to the northwest of Edmonton, bordering right up against the city of Edmonton. Again, it is all one constituency and currently exceeds the 25 percent guideline as well.

In reviewing some of the constituencies, we noticed that some of them were in fact quite small and seemed to be quite far from the average. These constituencies which you see highlighted in purple are those constituencies that are more than 35 percent away from the average of 18,000; in other words, these constituencies have 12,000 electors or less per constituency. There are some that are quite small. You'll notice these are highlighted in yellow down at the bottom of the province. There are five constituencies, all in the southern part of the province, that are more than 50 percent away from the average; in other words, 10,000 electors or less.

This list represents the additional hearings that we've scheduled. We're going to wrap up our hearings process on Friday of this week. We have four more to go after today, including one later today in Stettler, so this is our 35th of 39 hearings, and we'll be wrapped up soon. The blue dots show where it is that we've traveled around the province or have yet to go to. This purple-coloured one shows you the constituencies that we noted were more than 35 percent away from the average, and the blue dots indicate those places where we have traveled. You can see that we've tried to go to those areas which are most likely to be affected by electoral redistribution.

Very early on in the process – and that's why it's not in this particular package that you have – one of the questions that was asked of our committee was: what about using the total population instead of electors? That would therefore include children: those Canadian citizens that are less than 18 years of age. It would also include non-Canadian citizens, landed immigrants. It would also take into account situations like we found down in Cardston where a particular group chose not to be enumerated. If we used the total population of the province – the latest figures we have are from the 1986 enumeration, and the province at that time had a population of just over 2.3 million in total – using the 83 constituencies, you would get an average constituency of 28,500. If we then applied that 25 percent variation like we talked about before, 25 percent above that gives you an upper end of about 35,600, and 25 percent below the average would give you a size of about 21,300. If we compare that using this chart, you can see that again the ones highlighted in green are those that exceed the 25 percent using population. The pink indicates those that are more than 25 percent away at the bottom end, once again using population.

This particular one, you'll notice, is again the same sort of thing. We are going to go through the same set of information. You'll notice this has some that are in both pink and green.

The green ones are those that exceed the 25 percent using population. The pink ones are below the minus 25 percent using population. Note in particular that Rocky Mountain House, if we use population statistics as opposed to electors, now falls within the acceptable range of plus or minus 25 percent. So any change that would occur to Rocky Mountain House would be certainly minimized using population.

Again this is the city of Calgary. We have some green-coloured constituencies. I want to point out two things to you here. First of all, you'll notice that in both this one and the one I showed you before, generally speaking it's the constituencies around the periphery of the city in both Calgary and Edmonton. On this particular one we have seven constituencies coloured in green. On the one before where we used electors, we had nine constituencies coloured in green.

This is the city of Edmonton. Again around the periphery of the city this particular map has seven coloured in green, indicating they exceed the guidelines. Before, with electors, we had eight coloured in green. So again a bit of a change there.

This one is quite significant. Again the purple colour indicates that it's more than 35 percent away from the average using provincial total population statistics. The interesting thing to note: this particular map that you have before you right now has 12 that are coloured in purple; the one before, using electors, had 16. So again quite a change. And quite dramatic here: we have only one constituency that is more than 50 percent away from the average if we use population, and that is the constituency of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest in the southeast corner, whereas before we had five constituencies, you may remember.

This is a list of the places we've been to. In order to be as up to date and current as possible, we've also traveled to the other three western provinces to find out what's happening there or what will be happening, as Mr. Ledgerwood said, in the next elections in those provinces. You can see that up until August 12 we'd had 29 hearings. We've got 10 more scheduled. We've been through six of those including today, so we're coming down to the end. We're now well over 700 people in attendance, and we're over 300 people in terms of presentations that we've had. So we've had a lot of input from a lot of different people.

I believe that's the last transparency. Are there any questions that people might have that I didn't explain things well enough? If not, I'll turn it back to you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much, Frank.

Well, if there are no questions, we're ready to proceed then. Bob, the first two presenters, please.

MR. PRITCHARD: If we could have Paul Jenson and Italo Pedrazzini come up, please.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: That's a Jewish name, by the way, in case you don't know what it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Paul, would you like to proceed?

MR. JENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, members of the committee, for coming to Rocky Mountain House. Of course, why shouldn't you come to Rocky Mountain House? It's a town with a long and distinguished history, a lot of it unpublished. There's a very active body of people who would be happy to tell you about the history of Rocky. There are organizations here which are supporting the museum, attracting interest in the fort, stirring up something in relation

to Nordegg, which fortunately the government never quite managed to bulldoze into the ground before it was too late. So Rocky is a pivotal place in western Canadian history. You will know that, I'm sure, from the history you were taught in school, even though our curriculum doesn't give very much importance in Alberta to either Alberta history or Canadian history. That's a subject which you may want to consider on another occasion than this, but it's probably a matter of at least equal importance, I would think.

The province, so far as I'm concerned – and I've lived here all of my 52 years, less two months. I came at the earliest possible opportunity when I had a vote on the family situation, but until two months I wasn't given the franchise. I came from Saskatchewan. My roots are those of the farm. So the tradition out of which I speak is essentially the farm tradition, which is a small "c" conservative tradition. I am not happy with you, Mr. Chairman, sir, when you identify the party which I've supported with my membership for many, many years as the Conservative Party; it's the Progressive Conservative Party. I don't chide you too seriously about that. However, it's important to recognize that certain values can be conserved, even though the way in which we approach conserving them may change, and that's why I think it's a happy amalgam of two useful words, one "progressive" and one "conservative."

So my basic view is that we are and have been a kind of rural province. The legacy of that reflects in a fairly conservative attitude of people in this province. It's not surprising that we find Albertans outspoken on various sorts of national issues. I think if you stick a needle in an Albertan you'll find a loyal Canadian, but you'll find a person whose background reflects the agrarian life-style, the basic – if I may say so – sort of Christian-Judaic attitudes toward family and work.

Now, we in the rural community are quite seriously concerned about what we see going on in cities. We think that in the city the people do not in general subscribe as fully as we do to, say, the work ethic or conventional life-styles and attitudes of thrift and various other basic pioneer, frontier values. So I see nothing wrong whatever with maintaining a distribution of seats in the province of Alberta which would unduly – if you want to use that word – reflect the rural constituency.

I mean, I think that the alternative to sort of social and moral disaster is that we stop this mad long rush into cities and stop this willingness on the part of people who live in the cities and on the part of people who sit as members of the Legislature and committees to accept wherever the general drift takes us. I mean, I think that we're in a serious moral jam in this country. It's not just Canada; it's Alberta, and I would summarize it this way. I think that we had better not simply wash our hands and say, "Okay, it doesn't matter whether we have a day of rest, it doesn't matter whether we have families of peculiar orientations, and it doesn't matter if this or that sort of peculiar behaviour is tolerated." So I would say that if we want a sort of civilized Alberta, we want to maintain the rural presence in our Legislature as fully as possible. We don't want to do anything by reason of changing the ridings, ridings that would lead people to go to the cities even more so than they are now.

Now, if somebody wants to live in Edmonton and if he, therefore, wants to be in a riding where he's got 60,000 other people in the riding, that's his choice. I don't see any inherent right of a person to sit wherever he wants to in the province and say, "Well, there's got to be some mathematical formula which guarantees that I am one sixty-thousandth as good as anybody else," or something of that sort. I mean, this whole business that there should be some 25 percent number plus or minus which is

acceptable begs the question. There's nothing inherently right about that. Okay? The practical problems of representing rural areas are considerably more than they are on the cities, I would think.

Now, we in this constituency are fortunate in having an extremely competent and energetic member, and he follows a line of four of them that I've known personally. So Rocky Mountain House deserves to be preserved on the electoral boundaries map for no other reason than that we've been represented by very distinguished members of the Legislature, back through Mr. Campbell, back through Her Honour Miss Hunley, as she now is, and back through the great venerable old gentleman A.J. Hooke. Okay?

Now, just as an aside, I can say to you Conservative members that I was one of the last to fall in terms of supporting the previous government, and I will probably be the most loyal adherent to this government. But I want to see it as a government which reflects what really were its roots, and I think that was rural Alberta and our traditional conservative values. I think that members of the Legislature in the city are really sitting ducks for visible minorities. I can't prove this scientifically, of course, and I don't say that there's any scientific proof that would be important anyway, but the way I see legislation occurring is that city members really, quite irregardless of political party, resemble each other. They are able to do their polling very efficiently; they know who will support them, who they can get out, and everything else, and the members in the cities are more open to suasion by opinion and polls and all kinds of things.

So I'm not saying that the members who sit for cities are spineless. I'm just saying that they have a slightly different view of the political process than I would. I would rather have them say: "Fine. I don't favour this particular peculiar behaviour or that, and if that means I get booted out because I don't happen to have some sort of bandwagon of visible minorities, well, that's fine. That's the price I'm prepared to pay for taking my stand."

I may be going on a little too fast, but you can all read the transcript, and I'm sure it will be lucid and clear.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: I'll keep mine short.

MR. JENSON: The day that you keep yours short will be a frosty Friday, *Italo*.

So I'm a bit concerned when, for example, Member Bruseker talks about 25 percent as the acceptable range. Just even to use that figure of 25 percent I think is to give away the ball game, or whatever metaphor you want to use. Why don't we take a factor where we say: okay, population is 50 percent of the factor; size is 50 percent of the factor. When you weight those in, then you can take 25 percent or 30 percent or something or other.

My training is that of the law. I don't want to analyze the B.C. court cases, but I would certainly hope that you people sitting in Alberta would not be inclined simply to follow what you think is some kind of line laid down by the B.C. court cases. I don't really see any serious challenge to anything in this province either. There will be people who will challenge of course. There will be people who will challenge whatever you say, I suppose. But for good heaven's sake, don't feel yourself tied down to what one or the other judges, however eminent – and all judges are eminent, because they used to be lawyers. But don't feel obliged, please, to follow any 25 percent schedule. Okay?

I said a while ago that if somebody wants to go live in Edmonton and in a sense disenfranchise himself, that's fine. I mean, that's his God given prerogative. There's nothing inherent in the system of things that because Edmonton increases in population for a variety of reasons, therefore the boundaries have got to change. We in Alberta have, almost with all the parties I guess, supported, for example, the idea of the Triple E Senate. Now, there's a clear, logical discrepancy between supporting that notion of the Senate and supporting some kind of proposition that we've got to give increased representation to people in the cities. Okay? If we can say as Albertans that we want Senate representation based upon provinces, then we can say as Albertans, in our own House where we are in charge, that we can have representation based upon at least some consideration of space.

I think what we should do is be sure that the riding of Rocky Mountain House never disappears and be sure that the riding of Cardston never disappears and similarly with the other ridings. I don't see that these ridings should ever need to be carved up. If we want to put a limit, put a limit of 100 seats, and start carving up the boundaries of the cities. Boundaries mean something in the rural areas. They go along rivers; they go along highways. People understand what boundaries mean in the rural areas, but boundaries don't mean a particle in the cities. I lived in the city of Edmonton for many, many years, and whether I was in Edmonton-Parkallen or Edmonton-Whitemud didn't really much matter, because one block is the same as any other block. With the exception of a few of the old, special areas like Strathcona or something, there really isn't any history in the city of Edmonton which would lead one to believe that there should be any particular boundary. The boundaries in the cities can be perfectly flexible, and that's where the adjustment can come.

My basic suggestion is that we should freeze the rural areas. Get this whole business of redrawing boundaries off the table. Let's freeze the rural areas, freeze the total number of seats at 100, and that still gives a lot of ridings in the cities. Then you can juggle the cities where the boundary lines don't really matter anyway. Now, we don't want to go on forever solving our problems by having more and more members. I think 100 would be quite enough. Some people would say 100 might be perhaps more than enough. But suppose we said: let there be 100 members. Fix the rural areas. Let us be done with it once and for all, and make up the difference in the way in which we draw the boundaries of the various cities.

So far as I'm concerned, the most inspired program of the government after 1971 was its attempt to decentralize government functions into the countryside. So instead of just waving our hands in desperation and saying that the big cities are going to grow forever, however wicked and deviant the life-styles in them may be at times, we should go back to those programs and say, "What is there that can be done to ensure that the benefits of living in Alberta are open to people in the rural area?" Since government itself is a large employer, we have to go back and start looking at government agencies that can be moved out of the cities of Edmonton and Calgary.

I recognize that there's some disruption in the lives of various provincial employees, but that's fine. It's nobody's inherent right to work for the provincial government. I mean, if he doesn't like working for the provincial government in Westlock or Rimbey, well, then he undoubtedly will make a marvelous contribution to our free enterprise system by going out and finding a job or going out and establishing a business. I mean, it was an inspired piece of thinking that led the government in

1971 to say, "Let's see what we could put in the rural areas so we have something in Stettler, something in Lacombe, something in Rocky, and something in various places." Our situation would be much worse were it not for those programs, so let's . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, Paul. Can I get you to sum up, please?

MR. JENSON: Okay. Well, tell me in advance how long you want me to speak and then I'll . . . When are you going to cut me off?

MR. CHAIRMAN: In two minutes.

MR. JENSON: Oh, I see. Okay.

So I would ask you to give some thought to how to redress what seems to be an inherent tendency for people to drift off to the cities. We don't want Alberta essentially to be two major cities plus a few little ones plus some people who also happen to count in the rural outbacks, you know. What we need is an historic perspective which recognizes, as I said in the beginning, our rural roots. Even though some may find my rambling a bit sort of curious, I'm saying to you that I'm reflecting what I believe is the general sentiment of rural Alberta, that we are facing a kind of moral dilemma in a great many of our social issues, and that we better not continue just saying, "Oh, well; everything will be marvelous." We better consider what happens in major cities in terms of crime and other measures of deviance. Big cities aren't necessarily the best places to be, and we shouldn't necessarily tailor our boundaries to accommodate just willy-nilly growth to big cities.

Okay. I don't want to raise any horrible spectre like "If you're not nice to us in the rural countryside, we'll withdraw from the province and you can have the Legislature and we'll have all the land on which the oil is found," or something like that. But, I mean, you want to keep clearly in mind where the fundamental sources of income for this province are, and I don't think you want to be dealing a slap on the cheeks of the people who happen to live in the larger open areas where the fundamental sources of wealth are generated. The fundamental sources of wealth are not generated in the large population enclaves. They are places where it's convenient for people and businesses to go and operate, because there's so many people there that the whole thing is self-stimulating. But the cities are neither the ultimate repository of good human values nor are they the ultimate generators of economic growth.

Thank you, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Questions from the panel?

Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Jenson, when you talk about raising the number of seats to 100, you don't talk about changing the ratio between the urban and rural split. Would that be your preference? Maintain the 41 rural constituencies and increase the number of urban constituencies?

MR. JENSON: Well, my proposition was that we could start with the rural map, and if we started with the rural map, we'd have a whole series of constituencies. We've had two elections to adapt to them. They have some basic sense. There aren't really obvious flaws that I can see in the current distribution of rural seats, so let's start with the basic proposition that the rural

seats are there. I wouldn't want us to go immediately to 100. I would think that if we phase up a little bit each time there's an election or redistribution after two elections and get to 100 in 30 years, that would be quite fine with me. But I wouldn't want to see the total number exceed 100, I wouldn't want to see the rural ridings be reduced in number from what they are, so the only position I can take, therefore, is that I have to concede that the cities get the increase. That will unfortunately, from my point of view, lead to an urban dominance, but it won't lead to an urban dominance, I think, as fast as just the willy-nilly application of some 25 percent rule might.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other brief questions and brief responses?

Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: I just have a quick one. You sounded this point in a number of areas, that you feel we should plan the growth of our province to determine where economic growth should take place. Is that what I hear, kind of, that we should be looking at that in the future?

MR. JENSON: No. I don't want to get into some philosophic debate with political overtones as to what planning means, but I'm saying that if there's a provincial institution that can be located somewhere other than Edmonton and Calgary, good heaven's sake, let's get it somewhere other than Edmonton and Calgary. To the extent that the government is a large employer and spender of money, whatever the government does tends to set the pattern for other people. But, no, I don't think we'd want to say, "You can live here, and you can live there," which would be an extreme notion of what planning would mean.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? In the audience? Thank you. Italo. Now, am I pronouncing that right?

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Italo. It's Italy with an "o."

MR. JENSON: You get only an hour.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Quit hitting me. He's after me all the time.

Mr. Chairman, thank you. Today I'm going to be a mugwump. I don't know if you see that commercial on TV, the Kokanee beer. I looked it up in the dictionary. Mugwump: it means neutral. Since I'm already part wop, it fits right in, I guess.

I don't come from Saskatchewan like Paul does. I come from the northern part of Italy, and I have a farm background right from day one. I have a couple of comments here. I'm a little disappointed to see that the members of the panel here – there are five urban and two rural. I thought they should be a little more divided up to start with right here. Anyway, I guess that's how it is.

MR. CARDINAL: Bob and I can manage well.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Okay.

I have a little speech here. It's about access to the MLA, and this goes with whatever MLAs happen to be in power at that certain time – like I said, I'm neutral today – NDP, Liberal, whatever. I have found out that our MLA has to deal with 71 local elected people in our constituency. This represents parts of two counties, a municipal district, three towns, one village,

four summer villages, four sets of school trustees, either the entirety or part of seven hospital boards. A city MLA might have to deal with two or three local elected officials. When you add to this the many appointed boards, community associations, and so on, what chance does an ordinary citizen have to get his MLA's time?

Physically large constituencies are also a problem. Hours spent driving in the constituency could be better spent. I've been to many functions where the MLA had to send a representative because he had to be at the other end of the constituency. Had they been closer together, he could have made an appearance in both places. Telephone access is another problem. There is no one place in the constituency to have an office where someone doesn't have to call long distance.

Balance. Any kind of decision made by any government with regard to rural areas will have a great impact on the province or country as a whole. Do urban voters have the knowledge, background, or inclination to choose someone who can best make the decisions? Do they even care? Rural people, even though they are fewer, need to have balance in power to keep development from becoming one-sided. Since there is no political setup like a U.S. Senate to achieve this, it can only be done through sizes of electoral districts. If you look at any country in the world, you can see that the well-being of urban areas depends on the well-being of rural areas. How else can rural areas maintain their well-being but by being a balance of power? After all – I'll say it again, and Paul has said it before – wasn't that what Senate reform was all about?

Now, I'm telling you – I was neutral a while ago – maybe we should leave political games out of this issue. That's all I have to say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Italo. Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Italo, do you believe in majority rule?

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Yeah.

MR. SIGURDSON: You do. So if you had 100,000 people in the province voting one way and 50,000 people in the province voting another way, which party do you think should form a government?

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Well, the majority of course.

MR. SIGURDSON: The majority. So in the cities, where you've got one constituency of Edmonton-Whitemud that has 31,000 people – and I'm just going to take four constituencies – and those 31,000 people voted one way, and you take three constituencies in southern Alberta that have less than 30,000 people together and they vote and they elect three different MLAs but still their voter population isn't as great, who is being well served there?

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Yeah, I can see your point. Do you believe in Senate reform? Come on; answer my question.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, okay. I can give you a real quick answer, and the answer is yes. Now, I probably don't believe in the same kind of Senate reform as you might.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: And that is much the same.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I don't want to get into a philosophical discourse, Mr. Chairman, but let me tell you that what you've got with Senate reform is different political jurisdictions operating inside a federal setting, and what we've got here is one province, one political jurisdiction, that we're trying to find some form of balance to.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Okay. You say equal representation in numbers. I am looking for equal representation in area. The numbers are fewer, but we don't have access to our MLA – even if it happened to be you – remember, as much, probably, as a person in the city. You heard what I said here.

MR. SIGURDSON: The candidate in the last election, 1989, that had the fourth highest vote in the entire province was defeated in his constituency, and that was the Premier. Now, that person had the fourth highest vote in the province. Other members of the Legislature had many fewer votes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to intercede. You both have a point of view, and I don't see any movement away from the position. Both points have been expressed well.
Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Just a quick question, Mr. Chairman. Italo, do you feel that there should be a mean or a criterion that is used for rural ridings and another criterion that is used for urban ridings?

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Well, I haven't thought about it that deep. I can understand what he's saying: the majority should rule. Now I have to go back to – what's his name?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, this is Tom, but I don't want to get into that debate.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: I don't quite understand the question a hundred percent. Would you explain it a little bit?

MRS. BLACK: You've talked about differences between urban people and rural people and things such as the accessibility to your MLA and the area that he has to cover as far as distance and the councils that he deals with as opposed to an urban MLA. So my question that comes back to you is: do you feel, then, that there should be two sets of criteria for distribution, one that pertains to rural and one that pertains to urban?

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Perhaps. If that's a good thing, by all means.

MRS. BLACK: That's what I'm asking you, if you think that should . . .

MR. PEDRAZZINI: I'm not really knowledgeable enough about the city to say either way; I have to admit that. But this is the way I feel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's why we're here, to hear your views and others'.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: I feel that the rural is the roots of the province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you.

Any other questions from the panel? The audience?
Thanks, Italo.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bob, the next two, please.

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes. If I could ask Margaret Karlo and Laverne Ahlstrom to come up, please.

MRS. KARLO: Hello. Thank you for letting me express my opinions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're here for yourself, or an organization?

MRS. KARLO: No, for me. I would like to read what I wrote, because I'll probably forget if I don't.

Let me begin by introducing myself. I am a farmer, and I have an 18-year-old son who would like to become a farmer, but this is next to impossible the way things are going. I am really concerned about the number of farmers steadily decreasing in western Canada and especially in Alberta. Do you realize that one-third of the work force is directly related to agriculture? The farmer is the base of this, and as the numbers decrease, if we follow the theory one person, one vote, the voice of the base is diminished and eventually totally eradicated.

The way I understand it, the urban ridings would like 10 more seats. This means taking away 10 seats from the rural ridings. I feel that it is very important for the rural areas to have a voice in government policy and regulations, but if we have 10 seats taken away, this voice will be severely affected.

Now, if you'll bear with me, I'm repeating what Mr. Pedrazzini said. I wonder if each one of you could tell me where you're from? I realize you did at the beginning of this, but I'd like to know again, please.

MRS. BLACK: I'm from Calgary.

MR. SIGURDSON: Edmonton.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Taber-Warner constituency. I live on a farm just eight miles north of the American border.

MR. CARDINAL: Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. BRUSEKER: Calgary.

MRS. KARLO: Okay. And there are two members missing, I understand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct. Stockwell Day, from Red Deer-North, is a Conservative member on the committee, and Pam Barrett, a New Democratic member from Edmonton-Highlands.

MRS. KARLO: Okay. So it boils down, then, that there are two rural people on this committee, and the rest are city. This is a perfect example of your concern for rural Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let me explain, and I was going to do that at the end because of the concern raised earlier. When a select special committee is formed, each caucus determines who should sit on that committee for its caucus. In this particular

committee there are seven members. There's one Liberal, there are two New Democrats, and there are four Conservatives. So each caucus selected its membership. The government, because of majority, determined the chairman and the vice-chairman of the committee. So in the case of the Liberal caucus Frank was selected to represent that caucus, in the case of the New Democrats both Pam and Tom were selected, and in the case of the Conservative caucus Pat and Stockwell were selected, and Mike and I.

MRS. KARLO: I can see this, and I understand that. But as far as I'm concerned, it's the recommendations of this committee that are going to shape the next Legislature, and if there are just two rural members, it's not exactly fair.

MR. CARDINAL: Two tough guys.

MRS. KARLO: Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against the urban people, and I don't believe they are . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a second. I think Tom wants to supplement what I'd said.

MR. SIGURDSON: I just want to supplement one of the things that came out at one of the very first meetings that this committee had, and that's the difference between total population and elector population. I, as an urban member of Alberta who happens to have a great deal of concern about rural Alberta, made the recommendation that total population be considered when we look at realignment of boundaries, because I know there are larger families on the farms than there are in urban centres. So as an urban member I was the individual that made that proposal, and that's one of our considerations. It didn't come from any of the rural members in my caucus or from what was bandied about in the Legislature. That's something that I have a great deal of concern about, and I guess I get a little upset when somebody tells me that maybe I don't have your best interests at heart. Maybe I don't understand entirely the interests that you try and convey all the time, but as an Albertan I try and focus your concerns and balance those out so that I am taking your interests at heart.

MRS. KARLO: All right. That refers to my next statement, where I say: don't get me wrong; I have nothing against the urban people, and I don't believe they are trying to hurt us. I just believe it is a lack of understanding on their part, or maybe it's on our part.

Now I will go to something a little bit different. I feel that the universities are warping the minds of most politicians. I say this because their priorities are different than ours. For an example, big business and professionals are concerned with holidays, et cetera. When does a farmer or a small businessperson get a holiday? Professional people only work a certain number of hours in a week and then need time off. There is talk of having a 34-hour work week. Teachers only work 200 days out of the year. I feel that we need people in government that have gone through tough times in order to understand the needs of the general public. For an example, going back to the number of hours urban people work in a week in comparison to rural people, where would the farmer be if he worked 40 hours a week and that's it? Myself, I had three hours of sleep last night. If I had the attitude that I only work X number of hours, I would have a dead cow and a dead calf this morning. I know you're probably not interested in hearing this story, but stop and

think: every bit of food you put in your mouth comes from some sort of a farm.

I do believe that according to the Charter of Rights, individuals have the right to access to their MLA. If the rural riding is made larger, it is impossible for the MLA to do a good job. In the rural areas of a large constituency the driving time from his or her office to the other end is at least one and a half hours. In the urban areas the MLA can get to any point of his constituency in a matter of 20 minutes. The proportion of locally elected persons is, I think, 90 rural and three urban. This makes for a pretty heavy workload for the rural MLA.

Another point I would like to make is that if rural people want to talk to their MLA, half of the constituents have to call long distance. This can become rather expensive. And I know I'm repeating what Mr. Pedrazzini said again.

Now, my final comment is directed to Mr. Bruseker. I believe that you made a comment - I think it was in Calgary - that the cities had to have more seats. I think you said that the urban area needed six to eight more seats. Where would these seats come from? The rural area. This would make a great difference to the rural ridings. I would like to know how someone sitting at this hearing can make a statement like this and still sit on this committee, because your mind is already made up. Could it be that you're interested in the extra dollars that it puts in your pocket?

In conclusion, I would like you to know that I firmly believe in the democratic process, but because of major differences between rural and urban areas, I strongly suggest that the proportion or distribution of seats remains the same, 41 rural and 42 urban. This would continue to assure the rural voice.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Margaret. Questions or comments from the committee?

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I might brave one. Margaret, you talk about, and I'm fully aware of, the number of jobs that are related to agricultural industry, whether it's a person that works in the Calder yards fixing the railcars that are transporting grain out to terminals in Prince Rupert or off to Vancouver. I guess that your well-being sort of depends on their being able to go to work, wouldn't it?

MRS. KARLO: Oh, definitely.

MR. SIGURDSON: So it's sort of a relationship that is one where you have to appreciate what those folk do.

MRS. KARLO: I appreciate both sides of it. I've lived in the city as well as on the farm.

MR. SIGURDSON: I'm just wondering if you think a town of a couple thousand people would be able to host the kind of industry that, say, the size of Edmonton does, where they've got large rail yards that repair cars. The reason I ask that question is that I'm trying to point out the fact that in this association that rural and urban Albertans have, in this association that we call Alberta, there's an awful lot of reliance on each other.

MRS. KARLO: I agree.

MR. SIGURDSON: So those people in urban Alberta that are contributing to your income as well, whether they're servicing

machinery or transporting some of the goods that you produce, if they're feeling underrepresented, what should they do?

MRS. KARLO: Well, I don't know what they should do. But, okay, like you just said, whether a small town could do the same as a large town, why have they taken out all the railroads and taken out access to the small places?

MR. SIGURDSON: I don't disagree with that. I see elevators shutting down and the post offices that are being shut down. I'm very cognizant of what's going on in the rural life-style and how that's affecting the number of rural communities that are turning . . . You know, we talked about Nordegg earlier. There are a number of modern Nordeggs out there as well. And believe me, when I see the rush and when I talk about rural depopulation, I as an urban member of the Legislature am very much aware of the people that come into rural Alberta, because you know what happens? When they leave the farm and come into Edmonton, they bring their problems. They don't leave their problems on the farm that went bankrupt or was foreclosed upon. Those people come into the communities where there's maybe not sufficient infrastructure for them to survive. I as an urban member of the Legislature have to respond to their needs that may have been compounded in terms of problems by a rural environment. But their needs are very real.

I appreciate, or at least I think I appreciate, the presentation you try and make, but I'm wondering if you have a similar appreciation for people that are leaving rural Alberta and coming into the cities and bringing problems with them and their need to access their members of the Legislature as well.

MRS. KARLO: Oh, I can appreciate it, but they're literally being forced off of the farms.

MR. SIGURDSON: Whether or not they're being forced and where they choose to go, whether they move into communities in Edmonton or move into communities of smaller population centres, they still need to access their members of the Legislature, and they have a new set of problems. Maybe they're no longer dealing with hail and crop insurance; maybe for the first time in their lives they're having to deal with psychiatrists, psychologists, and welfare.

MRS. KARLO: Well, I understand, as I told you.

MR. SIGURDSON: And members of the Legislature have to deal with that regardless of whether they're representing a largely urban or largely rural or combination constituency. That's just a concern I want to make you aware of, that we're trying to modify that.

MRS. KARLO: As long as you're trying.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Okay, Frank and then Pat.

MR. BRUSEKER: I just have one quick question. Margaret, you were concerned about access to your MLA. Do you think a 1-800 line into your MLA's office, so that anyone in the constituency could access their MLA by phone without having to pay long-distance charges, would be an asset, that it's something we should be considering?

MRS. KARLO: Yes. That would help considerably. Yes. And you didn't reply to what I accused you of here, that you've got your mind made up and yet you're still sitting on this committee.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, certainly I'm happy to reply to your comment. First of all, I think I should point out to you that (a) whenever you read something in the newspaper, you should be aware of what it is that you read, because not necessarily everything that is said in a particular meeting is reported in the newspaper. For example, pages and pages of *Hansard* have been recorded from this particular meeting. What I said in total – but you weren't there at the meeting when it was said – was that if the 25 percent rule were applied, what that would mean would be a shift from rural to urban. That's what would happen if you crunched the numbers as we have done. As we showed you on the slides up here, that's what would happen.

MRS. KARLO: I see. Okay. I'll direct this to our local MLA now. As a constituent of yours, I have the right to know the result of how Mr. Bruseker votes, do I not?

MR. LUND: Yes, you do.

MRS. KARLO: Are you going to let me know, as one of your constituents? Are you going to get on the phone and tell me what he votes, or is it going to be kept a secret?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I can give you the assurance that one of the reasons we asked for your name and address when you came in is so we can mail each of you a copy of our final report. So each and every person will receive the final report. All right?

MRS. KARLO: Okay; that's fine. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pat has a question, and I think we're ready to move on.

MRS. BLACK: I'll try to be brief, Mr. Chairman. Margaret, as you know, this committee's been charged with a task that we are legislated; we have to review our electoral boundaries. It's not something any of us really chose to be part of. Our laws say we have to do this. As we've traveled throughout the province, we've heard a lot of different ideas, and one of the things we have to come up with is something that is going to be constitutionally sound that addresses the issue of our electoral boundaries. I guess what I'm looking at from you is: how do you think we should address the problem? We know we have to address them, but in what fashion? We can't leave Edmonton-Whitemud with 31,000 and Cardston with 8,100. Those are facts of life. Now, how do we equate? Do we do it through factoring in other things, or how do we equate that? We know we have to do it so it's constitutionally sound, and I guess what I'm looking for from you is: what would you suggest we do?

MRS. KARLO: Well, as I said in my final statement, I would suggest that you leave it the way it is: 41 rural and 42 urban. That's my personal opinion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And redistribute within those numbers.

MRS. KARLO: Yes.

MRS. BLACK: So have one set of criteria for urban and one set of criteria for rural?

MRS. KARLO: I suppose if that's what it boils down to.

MRS. BLACK: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions from the panel? Ladies and gentlemen? Thanks, Margaret.

MRS. KARLO: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Laverne.

MR. AHLSTROM: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, Ty Lund, and ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief to present to you on behalf of the Rocky Agricultural Society today. It's not long, so I'll read it and perhaps make a comment or two.

The Rocky Agricultural Society is concerned about the possibility of electoral boundaries being changed to create a balance of power in the city constituencies, about the impossibility of an MLA of a rural riding reaching all his constituents if his riding is made too large, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for electoral boundaries should be changed to better reflect the changing world of today. There is a great deal about rural life that is not known or understood by the city population. Therefore, if the government is made up of a majority of persons without this knowledge, the rural constituents will not have a voice in matters that greatly concern them. By enlarging the size of rural constituencies and decreasing the size of city constituencies, there will be more MLAs representing city constituents and less MLAs representing rural constituents. The rural voice will shrink considerably.

While it is understandable that there are more people represented by each city MLA, these city MLAs can reach all their constituents in a short time by traveling a short distance, and the constituents can know their MLA. Because of the size of a rural constituency, a rural MLA must travel a great distance and may not have time to visit all the constituents within his boundaries. Many rural constituents are represented by MLAs that they have never met personally through no fault of their own or the MLAs'. If these boundaries are to be made larger, this problem will become even more extensive.

The employment trend today causes a shift in population to the city, taking away the rural population. This does not make it less important for the rural voice to be heard, but it does create a problem in fairness. With a relationship to area to population, this problem could be alleviated; therefore, a change in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for electoral boundaries may be the answer. The Rocky Agricultural Society recommends that if a change in the boundaries is necessary, the rural boundaries remain as they are now and any changes be made to the city boundaries.

This is respectfully submitted by the Rocky Agricultural Society.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. AHLSTROM: If I could just make a comment to that, I think we're asking that area be considered in relation to population when the decision is made. We're talking about people today, but we should also look at our province, I think. The great industries we have have to be looked after. With less MLAs, it makes it tougher for the rural MLAs to do their job.

We have an agricultural industry, which I'm actually representing today, which is in many respects number one in Canada, and if we're going to keep it that way, we've got to have some people to represent it in the Legislature. I think we can go on and talk about our forestry industry, our oil industry; it's much the same situation. That's all I have to say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Questions from the panel members? Yes, Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Laverne, just a quick comment. I appreciate your comment about the difficulty an MLA faces in trying to get to meet all of his constituents, and I guess I just wanted to touch on your comment about changing the cities. Are you advocating increasing the number of urban constituencies? I think it was Paul earlier on who suggested we increase up to maybe a hundred.

MR. AHLSTROM: Well, yes, if the change has to be made, I think I could agree with Mr. Jenson that perhaps the rural areas should be frozen more or less and the increase should come in the cities. I think it's reasonable that when the population becomes too great in a constituency in the urban centres, certainly there should be more representation, but for our representation to disappear in the rural areas simply because we're creating new constituencies in the city is not a very good situation. I think the last time redistribution took place, Sedgewick-Coronation, for example, disappeared, and certainly that does have quite an effect on the rural people.

MR. BRUSEKER: The reason I ask the question is that in my constituency . . . Looking at the list of numbers here, the pink-coloured constituencies, the largest of the small is Mike's here, Athabasca-Lac La Biche with just under 14,000 electors, and I've got 15,000 distinct residences with probably two. What I'm saying, I guess, is that I have a tremendously large constituency in terms of population, and the access becomes difficult in that regard too. Even though the next house is right next door, there's a heck of a pile of next doors.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank, how would the two compare in square miles?

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, there's no comparison in square miles, but I think we all have telephones.

MR. AHLSTROM: If I could go back and make my point, I think we should remember that we've got a province to represent as well. I mean, the tremendous industries that are in the rural areas - it takes people to look after those.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thanks very much for your presentation, Laverne. You suggest that we readjust urban boundaries, and I suppose that's trying to get a more equitable population distribution in the urban centres. I've tried to draw in pen in the Pincher Creek-Crowsnest constituency approximately where I think Highway 3 is, and in the Peace River constituency approximately where Highway 2 north is. Most of the population of the two constituencies lives along the highway, either in Pincher Creek or in the municipality of the Crowsnest Pass. Here we've got Grimshaw, Peace River, Manning, High Level. Here we've got a constituency that has 9,000 voters and 50 percent below average regardless of what we do, whether we take the enumerated voters or the total population. Here we've

got a constituency that falls within the mid-range and is perfectly acceptable. Would you suggest, sir, that there's no reason to redraw these boundaries to try and make the population differences a little more equitable?

MR. AHLSTROM: Well, perhaps there should be some change, but there again, I think you want to look at your area and look at the industry you've got in your area. Certainly the environmental issues today have to be looked after, addressed. I mean, that seems to be the issue of the '90s.

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah, we do that collectively in the Legislature. I'm just wondering about this area here. One of the reasons why I picked these two constituencies is simply based on population averages, but here in the Pincher Creek area you've got large gas finds. The same with the entrance to the park. Up here you've got gas and agriculture, more heavy industry. So these two constituencies in terms of their economics – there are a lot of similarities between the two. Indeed, the population settlements are pretty much the same, and that's why I ask the question. Would you not readjust these boundaries here to make it somewhat . . . I mean, 6,000 people in communities spread along the highway is a big difference.

MR. AHLSTROM: Well, there again, you know, I don't have all the answers, but I think there should be a formula to bring about a relationship between area and population. Certainly I don't have the answers – I'm sitting here today – but there should be a relationship, I believe.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Anyone else on the panel? Ladies and gentlemen? Thanks, Laverne.
Yes, sir.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: Can a person make a comment instead of a question, or does it have to be a direct question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Certainly. No, it can be a comment.

MR. PEDRAZZINI: I'd like to go back to what I said a while ago. If I came out as sounding like I'm against city people, don't get me wrong; I'm not. I'd like to see us working together. But maybe instead of – could we somehow, like Mr. Jensen said, discourage the people from going to the city so much and stay out. Wouldn't that be the best somehow? I can understand your problem, Mr. Sigurdson. Maybe we should encourage the population to quit going to the city and stay out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. WEBER: Could you tell me how close the population figures were the last time the boundaries were revised?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you go back two redistributions, the general rule of thumb was four rural voters equating to seven urban voters. When we had our last redistribution, the Legislature prescribed that there would be 42 urban ridings and also prescribed that there'd be a plus/minus 25 percent variation for the urban ridings. They went on to prescribe that there would be 41 rural ridings but did not give the same population guidance. All right? So I think – and correct me if you think

I'm wrong, Pat – part of the reason we're as out of whack today if you were looking at a percentage range stems from our last redistribution where we didn't have the same kind of guidelines for the rural constituencies that we did in . . . Was it '77 or thereabouts? Now, Pat, can you amplify on that, or if I'm wrong, make your points.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Possibly, Mr. Chairman, we could go back to the previous redistribution when we had 79 seats in the Legislature. We had 42 rural seats and 37 urban seats. That was for the 1979 and the 1982 general elections. There was redistribution in 1983-84 that increased the number of seats in the Legislature from 79 to 83, and as you know, the distribution was 41 rural and 42 urban. So that was the first time the number of urban members was more than the number of rural members. I think the Chairman explained it was four rural votes equated to seven urban votes.

MR. WEBER: What I am saying is: was the range of eligible voters 8,000 to 31,000?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: No. What we had at that time . . .

MR. WEBER: What was the number then? Can you tell us that?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: At that time we had several that were large.

MR. WEBER: What was the low and what was the high? Can you tell us that?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: No, but I can tell you that the urban average was an average and then was plus or minus 25 percent, so that we had in Calgary – Calgary-McCall was about 42,000 and we broke that in two: Calgary-McCall and Calgary-Montrose. Then down in the southern part of Calgary, in the southwest corner, we had Calgary-Fish Creek. So we took Calgary-Fish Creek, Calgary-Glenmore and created Calgary-Shaw and Calgary . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Created three from two.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Yeah. Three from two.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The short answer is that we can give you the precise numbers that were used in 1983-84 as to the population breakdown for each of the 83 ridings. Now, obviously since that time there has been growth in a number of ridings. Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, which has often been pointed out as a low-population riding, has suffered some severe economic setbacks since the last redistribution. They've lost a number of industries in the Crowsnest Pass. Their coal industry is down. So in fact I believe we'll find there's a correlation between the loss of industry between the last redistribution and what we're talking about today and their population.

MR. WEBER: My concern was just the numbers. We're talking numbers all the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct.

MR. WEBER: How far out are we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you can see the current numbers. The only thing that's a bit misleading about them – and we've had some presenters come forward and say, "I'm aghast to find that your spread is from 30,000 to 8,000." If it were not for the Charter of Rights we'd be going through a normal redistribution right now with a commission, so we'd be adjusting the numbers; we'd be adjusting the constituencies. So this is a normal process that occurs after every two general elections in the province.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Mr. Chairman, the number that has been increased – we had 115,115 more electors at the 1989 general election than when they did redistribution, so if you'd like to average that out, you'll have your figure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if I can ensure we have your name at the end, we will get you the specific answer to the total number of electors after the 1983-84 redistribution for all 83 ridings. Then you can see how close they were.

Okay, Bob. We'll move on to the last presenters, please.

MR. PRITCHARD: Okay. We have our final presenter. Rose May, if you'd come up please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there one or two?

MR. PRITCHARD: One.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One. All right.

MRS. MAY: Mr. Chairman, members of the select committee, and ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate the fact that the special select committee requested and obtained additional time for more presentations in regard to the distribution of the electoral boundaries.

I'm Rose May, and I'm representing the David Thompson Recreation Board as well as myself. There were three main points that the members of our board wanted presented. The board is opposed to changes in the electoral boundaries that would increase the size of rural constituencies. Our first concern was accessibility to the MLA because of time and distance required to cover the constituencies already. The rural MLA is confronted with diverse economies, regional needs, and many varied boards and sometimes several of each, as was mentioned before. You must get tired of all the repetition, but it seems like the rural people have a lot of common complaints. The rural ridings already overlap municipal districts, school divisions, telephone exchanges and are not coterminous, that is, with geographical boundaries in some places. I guess they are in a lot. The per capita grants for social amenities are smaller in our rural communities because of the lower population and thus more expensive. Rural MLAs are probably more familiar with their constituents and more aware of their problems and needs. If rural ridings become larger this would only dilute representation, creating more urban ridings to accommodate the number even with the 25 percent factor, which could be 30 or whatever. If feel this would be too costly to the taxpayers. We're already overgoverned. Someone suggested 100 members. Well, in 20 years' time somebody would say 125, and you know, I think there has to be a limit.

I would like to add that the resource revenue of this province is derived from outside urban areas: our gas and oil, forestry, primary food production, and even tourism. Our third largest industry is agriculture. Our cheap food policy and high input costs have forced many rural people into the cities. The

agricultural economy has dictated larger units, smaller rural population, resulting in less revenue and less services in small communities and little opportunity for our young people. The farm subsidies make great headlines. I think urbanites fail to realize that it is their cost of food that is being subsidized by these handouts. Rural people live hand in hand with natural resources of this province and therefore are more familiar and knowledgeable and able to protect from exploitation.

I see this electoral boundary controversy as a political power struggle for the larger urban centres. I think it is imperative that we allow disproportionate representation to compensate for the many varied boards, unique economies, and large areas in the rural ridings. The Charter's equal rights clause could be interpreted to mean equality of the quality of life for both urban and rural citizens.

That is all I've written. I could have gone on for pages. I did, however, read some of the *Hansard*, and I could quite agree with many of the things that were said in there. It would just be a repetition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Rose.

Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thanks, Rose. If rural depopulation continues and you have an increasingly urbanized society in our province – and I think the last statistics that came out said that Alberta is the most urbanized province in Canada – is there a point, if we were to get to 70-30, 75-25, where you would say, "All right, that ratio of 41-42 rural to urban seats has to change?"

MRS. MAY: Then you would have an imbalance of power. I would like to stress that a lot of our resources come from the rural area. I can certainly sympathize with some of the ridings in the cities that are very, very heavily populated. On the other hand, I think that maybe so many more of their problems are common to the ones you would find in a rural area in dealing with roads, natural resources, several villages, and so on. There has to be a formula, I think. You have to consider the fact of the area that the rural MLAs cover, I would think.

MR. SIGURDSON: So you would never see a change in the ratio between rural and urban seats.

Maybe I can just put it a different way. Mr. Ledgerwood referred earlier to the last redistribution. For the first time there were more urban members than rural members by one, yet that was sort of acknowledging a trend of depopulation. Prior to that, when there were more people living in rural Alberta than people living in urban Alberta, that was reflected in the makeup of the Legislature. There were more rural members of the Legislature.

MRS. MAY: Yes.

MR. SIGURDSON: Was that fair then?

MRS. MAY: Was it fair to have more rural members . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Was it fair to have more rural members of the Legislature when there were more rural Albertans than urban Albertans?

MRS. MAY: I guess I wasn't quite as interested in politics then, but the province has certainly progressed. I mean, our natural

resources and our primary food production and so on do have to be looked after, don't they?

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, one might argue, though, that investment is raised throughout the province as a shareholder in a company investing in stock. If resources are going to be developed that require a great deal of capital investment, while the resource may be located in one area, it's only going to be extracted if there's capital development, and that comes from a variety of people. So I guess my question comes back to: when we had a large rural population and it was represented by a majority of rural members of the Legislature, do you think that was fair?

MRS. MAY: Maybe it wasn't quite such an imbalance as it is now with the cities growing so fast.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Actually, Mr. Chairman, I think Tom briefly touched on my point. I was going to say that I keep hearing the resources are all in rural Alberta. I guess I spent 15 years in the oil patch in exploration and production. Actually, I drove by a plant out here that I was in charge of the construction of, coming from urban Calgary. I not only raised the funds to build to put into this community and drilled – we tied in about 14 wells out here and put a lot of people to work and invested. I think it worked out to about \$35 million one year that I raised in Calgary to invest in Rocky Mountain House. So I think there's co-operation between resource development. The funds maybe didn't come from Rocky Mountain House, but they certainly came into Rocky Mountain House from these nasty little urbanites. So I think resources are something that we all have to protect. I think I'd like to just tell you that in the government caucus I'm the vice-chairman of forestry and natural resources, and I'm an urban member and work very closely with your member. So urban and rurals quite often do blend and blend well.

MRS. MAY: I don't want to give you the idea that I'm antiurban, and I think that's part of our trouble. The lady that spoke before talked about the rural values and so did a couple of other speakers, and I think maybe that's where we should be looking, to consider people more than the dollars and cents. I think that's why we value our rural roots, because of the tradition of the farm families. I'm certain I don't have the answers, but this was just . . .

MRS. BLACK: Well, I appreciate you coming forward.

MRS. MAY: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Anyone else?
Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just one real quick question here. So are you suggesting that we just leave the map as it is, or that there should be some juggling and shifting around? Even comparing constituencies we call rural, Banff-Cochrane, Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, and Cardston, in terms of area Banff-Cochrane is equal to those other two, and in terms of population it's about equal to those other two. Should we look at those kinds of comparisons to equalize things a bit more?

MRS. MAY: I suppose they could be considered. Initially you started out your question with what? Pardon me.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, as I understood it, you were saying let's not shift things around too much, and I guess my question is: how much shifting would you consider to be too much, and how much would you consider to be okay? Because I see even amongst rural constituencies – comparing rural to other rural constituencies, comparing some urban to other urban – there is a whole variety of inequities both in terms of area and in terms of population.

MRS. MAY: Yes, and that's why we have an Electoral Boundaries Commission. Firstly, I would hate to see our Legislature grow too much. I mean, the cost of government is great; everybody has to admit that. If boundaries need to be shifted because of changing times, I can't see why not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Anyone from the audience?
Thanks, Rose.

There are no more presenters from the floor, Bob?

MR. PRITCHARD: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ty, any comments you'd like to make as a brief?

MR. LUND: I hadn't planned a brief, but I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to say a few words. First of all, I'd like to thank all of you for coming today and showing your interest in this very important matter and particularly to those folks who made presentations. I also want to thank the committee for finding the time to come out here and meet. Of course, the committee did go into Red Deer twice, and there were a number of people from this area that made presentations there, so I think our area has gotten their points across.

I don't mean to regurgitate what has been said today; I think the field has been pretty well covered. But I would like to emphasize a couple of points that have been brought out in pretty well all the briefs, and I find them extremely important. One is to do with the access to the MLA. Frank, you drove in today. The rest flew in. Pat drove in. When you're going out to the east, please note that when you're three miles east of Sylvan Lake, that's the edge of the Rocky Mountain House constituency. You're sitting about in the middle of it here, so just think of the distance. The Rocky constituency isn't one of the very largest. When you're talking about access to the MLA and the MLA's ability to get out to the various corners of the constituency, I think you always want to remember that tremendous amount of time which that individual has to spend driving, and apart from answering the mobile phone, it's very unproductive time. So this business of access is extremely important.

The other point that I really want to emphasize has to do with the differences between the urban and the rural life-style: the setting, the interests, and the needs. As long as we don't have a Senate – and heaven forbid that we would set one up in this province – we do not have, if you go strictly by population, any mechanism in place that's going to address these differences: size and the differences in needs, expectations, and desires of the two types of people.

I found it extremely interesting: I went through the Acts that are on the books and the ones that have been there since 1980, since the big revisions and amendments. I found that there were

485 of them, and of those 76 pertained just to rural and only one pertained just to urban. I think that has to really say something. If we go carving this thing up and base it strictly on the plus or minus 25 percent, as was mentioned in many of the presentations, we are simply going to end up with a situation where the rural voice is diminished and finally pretty well eliminated. I just shudder to think that we would end up in a situation where the government could have a majority and still not have one rural seat, and that scares me. I don't think any urban people are attempting to or have any desire to hurt rural people. I don't believe that. But there is a lack of understanding, just as we have some lack of understanding of what's going on in the cities. As a matter of fact, in our own caucus we have a buddy system, and I have been asked to be a buddy of an urban constituency, and that's for my benefit, because I feel that I need to have a better understanding of what's going on there.

So I just leave you with those two and would highly recommend that we don't increase the number of seats in the Legislature but that we do leave the proportion the same, the 42 and 41, and do our plus or minuses within that. There's no question in my mind that we have inequities out there that are too great, and we're going to have to address that, but I just cannot accept that we would go strictly on population. We've got to use a formula that would address the other things that are pertaining to the needs of the people.

Thanks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ty. Any questions from the panel to Ty?

Okay. Before the panel members conclude, are there comments or questions that anyone in the audience would like to make? Yes, sir.

MR. SCOTT: I would just have one. The comment was made that Mr. Bruseker has 15,000 homes in his riding, and I realize that's a lot, but it is just that. Their problems are probably way different than out in the rural. You know, you could have five blocks probably with the same problem whereas you could have two people out miles and miles away with the same problem. So it's sort of comparing apples to oranges, and I think that's the whole problem with the whole thing. Everybody figures his side is right, but I sure hope that the committee – and I commend them for taking the time – really looks at that when they make their final recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've heard throughout this province, in the urban areas and the rural areas: "We are unique. There's something here that makes us just a little bit unique." It's true, and thank God we are a little bit unique from our neighbours down the road or in the city or someplace else. That's part of what makes us different as Canadians.

Anyone else? Okay, then.

In summation, Pat?

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Oh, Pat Ledgerwood?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was going to start at the end, yes.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to acknowledge the excellent presentations that were made and compliment the presenters on the manner in which they presented them and the research that they completed. I think we heard more about the Charter today than we have at the

majority of our hearings, so obviously you're cognizant of some of the problems the Charter has presented, particularly to this committee as they try and deliberate to come up with the new redistribution rules.

Thank you for your attendance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much.

Now the \$23-million Pat.

MRS. BLACK: No; \$35 million.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the people for coming out. I've always enjoyed coming to Rocky Mountain House. I've spent an awful lot of time in the last 10 years up in Rocky and the outlying areas, and I enjoy it. In fact, we were here at the Wilderness Village campground just outside of Rocky a couple of weeks ago. I brought my son up, and we stayed there and enjoyed it thoroughly, so I do enjoy coming back and forth to Rocky. Always the hospitality is there. I love the Walking Eagle. They've redecorated since I was last here, so it's very nice.

I, too, am pleased to see that the Charter was mentioned. I personally have a feeling of what I'd like to do with the Charter. However, I wouldn't want it on record or on tape, so I won't state it; I'm still trying to remain a lady. It is a problem, but it's a problem we have to deal with. I know what I would like to do with it, but I'm not able to do that. I do thank you for having us here today, and we'll try to do the best we can for you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: I, too, want to thank you for coming out and expressing your concerns. They've been well expressed. They've been well expressed across the province. We're going to have a very difficult job trying to find that thread of interest that I think is there in most every presentation. Everybody has talked about differences and the diversity of a community, and yet regardless of where we go, whether we're in communities of 500, 5,000, 50,000 or 500,000, almost every presenter has said, "We're different, and we need representation that reflects our diversity."

I have a constituency that has a number of farms in the north end, although it's wholly contained inside the city of Edmonton. I've got the meat packing plants in the south end of the constituency. I've got economic poverty in the south end of the constituency, and I've got a very comfortable upper middle class in the north end of the constituency. So I've got a constituency that is extraordinarily diverse, as diverse as any constituency in the province.

When we look at the kind of representation that people want, everybody wants to have their problem dealt with directly as soon as possible, and that's every Albertan's right. It's difficult, whether you have a constituency of 30,000 and you've got to keep people waiting because you've got your appointment book backed up, or whether you've got a constituency of 15,000 and you've got to drive for three, four, five, or six hours to get to your next appointment. The person that's waiting at the other end doesn't think you're doing a very good job until you're looking after their problem. Whether you're traveling or trying to serve somebody else, these are the problems that are very real to all of us, and they're the problems that we're trying to address.

So your presentations today have highlighted the problems, and when we get back after our final hearing in Wainwright on

Friday, we'll try and address them and address them as best we can. I thank you for your input.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: Okay, thank you very much. I guess a couple of new issues I've heard here – I've attended most of the meetings – but the 25 percent variance factor should not be used to determine the design of Alberta: I think that's a good one. I think we need to keep that in mind. The recommendation was also made for change in the Charter, specifically in electoral boundaries, and that's something new I haven't heard before. The government decentralization was said to be a good move, because that does sustain the population in rural Alberta where it's really, really important. The other one which I haven't heard very much of before was to leave political games out of the process, that we need to design a province that's reasonable for all the people in the province, not for urban or rural only.

There was a very strong concern, and that's the first time I've heard of it, that rural Alberta may be underrepresented on this committee. I'd like to counter that a bit, because I feel you have strong representation because we do have experience on how rural Alberta functions. Using my constituency for an example, and Mr. Bruseker briefly mentioned using his in comparison to mine, my constituency covers close to 29,000 square kilometres. I have about 6,000 homes. I have around 14,000 voters. You know, I have issues from forestry related and pulp mills to friends of this, friends of that – I've got friends of all kinds to deal with – tourism, agricultural, oil and gas, trapping, commercial fishing, land claims, Indian reserves, Metis settlements, roads, municipalities of all forms, school boards, economic development councils, hundreds of summer villages. The unemployment rate in some parts of my constituency is 90 percent, the highest rate per capita in the province. Access to government service is just not there because of distance. You know, everything is centralized in Calgary and Edmonton, generally, the high quality of services.

I guess in general I find that in rural Alberta the standard of living is probably considerably lower, and looking at all there is, as a rural member on this committee I would hope that when we design the final process of how Albertans are going to be represented, all of these factors are taken into consideration. Now, an urban member, of course, will tell you their problems in representing their constituents, and those we have to also look at as part of the overall process.

So with that, I'd like to thank you for your presentations. They're very good; they're very genuine, and that's the type we like to hear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, I'd like to also just thank everyone for coming out today. It's nice to see people expressing as much interest and involvement on a warm August harvest afternoon when they could be out doing other things.

I think – Mike has certainly touched on the point, and this gentleman earlier – that we're really trying to compare apples and oranges, and one of the things we have to try and do is make it all work out. You know, Mike has talked about his constituency. Mine is a different constituency; it's an urban constituency. It's different from Mike's. One thing, for example: I'm sure that probably most of Mike's constituents live

and work in the constituency, whereas the vast majority of mine leave the constituency and go elsewhere to find their employment, whether that's in town or out of town or across town or whatever. So it's a different kind of thing, because many of my concerns, in fact, take me out of my constituency to go find my constituents. So we can't just talk about the physical size of my constituency, because sometimes I've got to go find them somewhere else too, so it is a different kind of thing.

I guess one of the things that this group is committed to is coming up with something that's as fair as we can possibly make it for all the people across the province. I think that's something we're all going to work very hard at, so thanks once again for coming out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Frank.

Just in summation. Some of the key points that we heard today, starting with Paul, who challenged us with why the plus/minus 25 percent: because it's a figure which has been used in another jurisdiction, why do we have to apply it here in Alberta? We've heard that challenge before, and it's good, because it's challenging us to think and to be sure that whatever we come up with is something that's a made-in-Alberta formula for our own Alberta situation.

Paul went on to suggest that we might look at weighting our population with a 50 percent factor and the size of the constituency with a 50 percent factor and then apply a plus/minus 25 percent to that. Again, just challenging us to think. He reminded us, as did a number of others today and many others have in previous meetings, that on one hand Alberta is strongly in favour of a Triple E Senate to ensure that regional interests are protected, and that some consideration should certainly be given to that factor, and decentralization of services. Again, that's something which we've heard in a number of communities across the province, a recommitment to ensuring balanced growth across the province. I want to point out something: it's not just Calgary and Edmonton; we've got some rural communities that are growing very rapidly because of certain economic activities in those regions. So I think when we're talking about growth across the province, we should view it in terms of a balance rather than view it as taking something away from someone else, trying to ensure that we all enjoy the benefits.

Italo challenged us as to why there are five urban and two rural members on the committee. That came out in Barrhead very strongly when each of us was challenged, and I think it was raised in one of the other hearings as well.

We were reminded that rural members work with a large number of individuals on boards and local councils and agencies, and that is a factor. We were reminded that the well-being of urban areas depends to a great extent on the well-being in the rural areas, and again the Triple E Senate was raised.

Margaret began her brief by reminding us that a third of the work force in Alberta is directly related to agriculture. She indicated that the Charter of Rights is often held up as a reason for doing things. What about the right of access to an MLA, and how is that affected by the Charter? She suggested that we maintain the present 42 urban, 41 rural split within the province.

Laverne talked about the geographic size and that that must be a factor when determining the size of the constituencies. Rose suggested that we not increase the size of rural constituencies, that we should stay with the same number of seats. While several people today suggested that there might be an argument to be made for increasing the number of seats from 83, most presenters who have come before our committee across the

province have said: "Don't increase the size of the House. Eighty-three is enough, so keep that as an upper figure." Rose went on to suggest that we should allow some disproportionate representation between rural and urban areas, again taking into account geography and so on.

Then Ty, as your MLA, summed up by talking about what it's like to be the MLA of the constituency, reminded those who drove out today that when they get three miles past Sylvan Lake, they'll be on the edge of the constituency and that really the town of Rocky Mountain House is in the geographic centre. We need to be reminded of things like that from time to time, and that was helpful.

I want to reiterate what other colleagues on the panel have said by thanking you for coming out today. While it's important that we be here to share with you what we've heard in other areas, the prime reason we're here is to hear from you, to get input from you on how we can tackle this very large issue, and it is, I think most if not all of you recognize, a momentous task before us. We're trying to do it with sensitivity. We're trying to do it in a way that ensures, as Frank and others have said, that we exercise the utmost fairness in the process.

Thank you again for coming out.

[The committee adjourned at 4:01 p.m.]