

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

[7:05 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, it's my pleasure to officially call to order the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries meeting being held here in Stettler. In a moment I'm going to introduce the members of the select special committee who are with us today, but I would like to say at the outset how pleased we are that you are coming out on a beautiful August late afternoon to share some thoughts and ideas with us on this most challenging issue.

As you know, when the Legislature established our committee just over one year ago, our task was to go out and listen to Albertans and then to sit down, prepare a report, and make recommendations back to the Legislative Assembly. In order to do that, we've traveled very extensively across the province. We've held nine public hearings in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. We've held meetings in this area, particularly in Hanna and in Red Deer, where we had two meetings each, and we've been in all other corners of the province, from the far north, where we were in High Level, to Cardston, in the south.

By Friday of this week we will have completed the hearings portion of our task. We will have had 39 hearings. We believe, based on limited research, that it's the most extensive hearing process the Legislative Assembly in Alberta has ever undertaken, but then, on the other hand, I can't think of an issue of greater importance to the residents of Alberta than the makeup of their Legislative Assembly.

I'm going to introduce the members of our committee, and after that we're going to have two brief presentations to give you some background material before we proceed on to the briefs themselves. When we proceed into the briefs, we will try to keep that portion of our meeting as unstructured as possible. We do not want these microphones to in any way inhibit the free flow of information back and forth. They're here so that we can, through *Hansard*, keep an accurate record of our proceedings, and that record is available to you the public. You can receive the proceedings for tonight's meeting being held here in Stettler; you can receive the proceedings from all the communities across the province where we've held hearings. So we need the microphones for that purpose, but we don't want them in any way to cause any lessening of the flow of information back and forth.

The committee members who are with us, who I am pleased to introduce: starting on my far left, Mr. Pat Ledgerwood. Pat is the Chief Electoral Officer for the province of Alberta. He was not one of the members of the committee when it was initially struck, as we were all members of the Assembly, but we unanimously requested of the leaders of the three political parties represented in the Assembly that Mr. Ledgerwood be made an *ex officio* member of our committee. He has, as you know, an extensive background in our own election process. In addition to that, he served on the federal redistribution commission here in Alberta recently. So we felt that that wealth of knowledge should be tapped and made available to us, and we're really pleased that Pat's been able to do that.

On my immediate left, Tom Sigurdson. Tom is the New Democrat member of the Assembly for Edmonton-Belmont. He is serving in his second term in the Assembly. He was an executive assistant to the late Grant Notley, and you know that Mr. Notley served on a previous Electoral Boundaries Commission. So Tom has had some experience with the electoral boundaries process, and we welcome him to this process too. On my immediate right is Mike Cardinal. Mike is the Progres-

sive Conservative MLA for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. Mike is a first-time member of our Assembly, working very hard in his constituency, and we know the distances that he travels. Then we have Frank Bruseker. Frank is a Liberal member of the Assembly and represents the constituency of Calgary-North West. This is his first term in our Assembly. He's no stranger to rural Alberta, he assures us on the committee, in that his wife's family have their farming roots in the southeastern part of the province. And Pat Black. Pat is the Progressive Conservative member of the Assembly representing the constituency of Calgary-Foothills. This is Pat's first term in the Legislature, and she's very active not only on this committee but on a number of committees. My name is Bob Bogle. I'm the MLA for Taber-Warner.

In addition to the committee members I've introduced, we have Bob Pritchard. Bob is the senior administrator for our committee. The correspondence that you've had, the phone calls, were in all likelihood with Bob. He's the kind of guy who takes credit for things when they go well, and when they don't, he usually blames that fellow at the back of the room who took your name and address: that's Ted Edwards. We're really pleased that Ted is back on the ground. He and his wife had a baby not long ago, so for a time you couldn't talk to him, but he's come back to earth more recently.

Okay. Let's proceed, then, with our introductions and then our briefs. Pat, would you like to begin, please, with the British Columbia court case?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Alberta legislation is such that a boundaries commission is struck after every second general election. The last boundaries commission was 1983-84, and we had a general election in 1986 and another general election in 1989. So normally a commission would have been struck at the first sitting of the Assembly after the 1989 general election. However, what we refer to as the McLachlin decision has had an impact on, I think, all Legislatures when reviewing boundaries.

The B.C. situation was such that their lowest electoral division had just over 5,500 population; their highest had over 68,000. They appointed Judge Fisher to review this. He was appointed in April of 1987 and completed his report in December of 1988. He made three basic recommendations. One is that they eliminate the dual-member ridings; the second one, that they increase the number of members in the Legislature from 69 to 75. That doesn't really impact on us. What he also recommended was that electors have an equal vote. He checked with the Charter and also with other jurisdictions. Most jurisdictions have a plus or minus 25 percent from the average. So he recommended that they take the population of British Columbia, divide it by 75, which established an average, and then all 75 electoral divisions be within plus or minus 25 percent of that figure.

Professor Dixon and some of his associates challenged the B.C. government for not reacting to this particular report. The case was heard before the Chief Justice of the B.C. Supreme Court, Chief Justice Madam McLachlin. She said that the report of the Fisher commission, the plus or minus 25 percent, was reasonable. There was no appeal to this particular court decision.

The B.C. government still didn't react, so Professor Dixon and his associates again went to court trying to force the B.C. government to do something about the unequal ridings. The case was heard before Justice Meredith, and what Justice

Meredith basically said was that he supported the McLachlin decision of plus or minus 25 percent but that the courts were not there to govern, he could not dissolve the Legislature, and the court was not to legislate. So he left it with the B.C. government. They formed a commission in 1989, and they reviewed the boundaries and basically accepted the Fisher commission report and made minor changes to it, but they accepted the plus or minus 25 percent rule.

Now, in Alberta the last commission used plus or minus 25 percent for urban ridings, but there was no figure established for a minimum or maximum number of electors in the rural ridings. What this committee is doing is traveling throughout the province and getting feedback from interested citizens such as yourselves on how the commission should be structured and what the redistribution rules should be.

So does anyone have any questions on the Meredith decision or the McLachlin decision? Yes, sir.

MR. SCHORAK: Yes, Mr. Ledgerwood, a question. Do the decisions made act as any precedent as to what is going to happen in Alberta?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Well, one of the problems was that there was not an appeal to the McLachlin decision, and Madam Justice McLachlin has now been elevated to the Supreme Court of Canada. So there was no precedent other than in British Columbia. Most jurisdictions have a plus or minus 25 percent from an average. There are exceptions to that. British Columbia has a plus or minus 25 percent. Saskatchewan has plus or minus 25 percent except for two rural ridings. Manitoba has plus or minus 10 percent. Most of them have a plus or minus 25 percent from the basic average, but there's been no appeal to the McLachlin decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll move on then. Tom Sigurdson will give the slide overview.

MR. SIGURDSON: If you can just get the lights so that we can see the slides here. Can everybody in the back row see the slide? Is that clear enough? No, I see people squinting and frowning already. Is that better? Okay.

The first slide is of all 83 provincial constituencies listed in their alphabetical order. I'll just point out right now that there is a footnote to the Cardston constituency. Cardston in the last enumeration had a voters list of 8,105. However, there was the Blood Indian Band, which is wholly contained inside the boundaries of the Cardston constituency. The Blood Indians chose not to participate in the electoral process, so none of them were enumerated, and there are approximately 1,800 people estimated as missing off that list. So that's a bit of an anomaly in our list.

The second slide is a list of all 83 constituencies, this time in order of voter population. The highest, of course, is Edmonton-Whitemud at 31,500, and the lowest is Cardston. I pointed out the anomaly, so let's take the second lowest, Cypress-Redcliff, at 8,900.

In order to come up with an average as was suggested by Justice McLachlin in British Columbia, we've taken all of the voter population, added it together. You get approximately one and a half million eligible voters in our province. Divide that by the 83 constituencies we have, and you get an average of 18,685. If you add in the variance that the justice suggested of 25

percent plus or minus, you get a high end of approximately 23,300 and a low end of 14,000 voters per electoral division.

Going back to our slide of constituencies by voter number, we've highlighted those constituencies in pink that are over the 25 percent variance, and those constituencies that are under the 25 percent variance we've highlighted in green. So you can see there are a good number of constituencies that are well outside the suggested variance.

Putting that onto a map of our province, you can see that we've got a good portion of our province where the constituencies are well below the suggested permitted variance. There are two little green dots on there that show constituencies that are over the 25 percent; those are the city of Medicine Hat and the city of St. Albert.

Just to run through the cities, in Calgary there are nine constituencies that are currently over the 25 percent suggested variance. Edmonton has eight constituencies that are over and may need some readjusting.

The Lethbridge map is perfectly fine, has been for quite some time, and continues to be permissible in terms of the decision that was handed down by Justice McLachlin.

There's the city of Medicine Hat. It's the fourth highest in the province in terms of voter population in its constituency.

In the 1983-84 redistribution the city of Red Deer had one constituency. It was quite large in terms of its voter population, and the legislation that was passed by the Legislative Assembly instructed the commission to go out and create two constituencies for the city. If you divided the city in half, there was not a sufficient number of voters to really justify two constituencies for the city. So what happened was that - the brown lines are the lines of the city of Red Deer - in order to bring up the population, the commission went into the county of Red Deer and gathered in enough voters to justify having two constituencies, both Red Deer-North and Red Deer-South.

This is a map of the city of St. Albert, well above the 25 percent.

The next couple of slides will show you just how drastic the population shifts are between constituencies in our province. These purple constituencies are showing you those constituencies that have a voter population that is 35 percent below the average. The next map shows those constituencies, all in southern Alberta, that have a voter population 50 percent below the average.

We're at hearing 34, I believe, today. These are the additional hearings that we've had since the session ended in July. We're to get down to Wainwright on Friday. But this is hearing 34, and if you like tonight's presentation, you might want to join us Thursday in Brooks or Rockyford or perhaps even Friday in Wainwright, if you're so moved. You can see by the blue dots on the map of our province that we've got a good deal of travel behind us. We've gone into most every constituency or we've made ourselves available for most every Albertan interested in this issue to get to us. We've certainly not adopted the line that where angels fear to tread, fools go. We've gone into those parts of the province that may be most affected by whatever decisions we make. Here we've got those areas highlighted in purple that are below 35 percent. We've gone into those areas to hear representations from those Albertans.

One of the matters that first came up when we met as a committee was whether or not we should consider only having voters and voter population as a factor in our considerations. There are a number of Albertans - as we pointed out first, the Blood Indians - that chose not to participate in the last enumer-

ation. That somewhat skewed the numbers in Cardston. There are religious communities that choose not to participate in enumeration. There are a great number of individuals that are under the age of 18 that we spend a fair chunk of our provincial budget on every year, and they're not on the voters list. Every member of the Legislature represents landed immigrants, students, religious communities. If they've got a problem, they come to their member of the Legislature, so should we include, then, those people that are not on the voters list when we determine the size of constituencies? In that determination we took the total population of our province, approximately 2 and a half million, again divided it by the 83 constituencies, and came out with an average of 28,000 approximately. If you take into account the 25 percent plus or minus variance, you get a high end of 35,000 and a low end of 21,000. It may not seem like very much until we start looking at some of the maps.

This is again the list of constituencies in numerical order, this time with all of the population factored in. You'll note that where Cardston was the bottom constituency when we only took into account voter population, it has now moved up into the middle of the pack in the list of constituencies that are below average. So it does make some degree of difference.

Again returning to the map of Alberta, if you recall, we only had two constituencies that were highlighted in green, both cities, St. Albert and Medicine Hat. Now we can add an additional couple of constituencies. Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie now have a total population over the 25 percent, and we've gone from 19 constituencies under to 18 constituencies under the 25 percent suggested variance.

With Calgary we've gone from nine constituencies over, by only using the enumerated population, to seven constituencies, so there's a significant change in Calgary. In Edmonton we had eight constituencies when we used only the voters list. We've dropped down to seven constituencies that have a total population over the 25 percent suggested variance.

You start to notice significant changes when we look at greater movement away from the average. This map shows those constituencies that are 35 percent below average. When we only used the voter enumeration base, we had 16 constituencies that were 35 percent below average. Using total population, we've moved it down to 12. Even more significant, perhaps, is that we had five constituencies that were 50 percent below using the voters list; using total population, we only have one constituency, that of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

This committee has traveled to three provinces that have had recent changes to their electoral divisions: Winnipeg, Regina, and British Columbia. As Mr. Ledgerwood pointed out, Manitoba adopted a policy of having plus or minus 10 percent; Saskatchewan plus or minus 25 percent except for the two northern constituencies, which have permission to go 50 percent below average; and British Columbia has plus or minus 25 percent. We've traveled throughout the province. We've now had well over 700 people attending public hearings, well over 300 people making presentations, and I think we've got enough reading material for the next little while. I think we've got about 125 written presentations.

Just as a final note, I should tell you that using total population figures, we used the 1986 census, the last year information was available to us.

So if there are no questions on the slide presentation, then I'll just turn it back to the chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Tom. It's my understanding that

we have 10 briefs to be presented this evening, and there are three maybes. I'm going to suggest that presenters hold themselves to about 10 minutes each. If you've got quite a lengthy brief, we will ensure that it's read into our transcript. We're also, by using computers, identifying the most important point that each brief makes as well as the second most important point. We're correlating other factors as well so that once we're trying to formulate our final ideas and draw conclusions, we can determine how many briefs recommended that consideration be given to a particular point when developing the formula so that we're not relying on our memories on what was said two, three, or five months ago. We've got that information readily at hand.

As well, if you've got recommendations about specific boundaries, we'd ask you to hold those because that's not something we as a committee are dealing with. A commission will, in due course, be dealing with the boundaries between ridings. We'll ensure that the information you have, the concerns that you've brought forward are passed on to the commission re boundaries.

So I think with that, Bob, we're ready to proceed with the first presenters.

MR. PRITCHARD: All right. If we could have the first two presenters come up, Bob Coutts and Paul Schorak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bob, would you like to lead off, please, and identify whether you're here on behalf of yourself or an organization, council, or group?

MR. COUTTS: Okay; thank you, Mr. Bogle.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's Bob.

MR. COUTTS: Bob. Thank you.

Okay. My name is Bob Coutts. I'm from the village of Forestburg. I am representing the village of Forestburg and the Forestburg Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture. I am the president of the chamber of commerce and also an owner of a Home Hardware store in the community. On behalf of the village of Forestburg and the Forestburg Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture I would like to present our views and concerns on the determination of electoral boundaries. I would also like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee. We appreciate the effort you have taken in attempting to get input from Albertans.

At present there are 42 urban and 41 rural constituencies. We believe that the status quo should be maintained. The following points support this position.

Voting population. The present voting population is just over 1.5 million. Eighty-three MLAs serving an average of 18,685 voters is adequate for this population. In this time of fiscal restraint the government should not be creating additional constituencies with their associated expenses.

Access to the MLA. We are very concerned with the proposal to limit the constituency population to a set percentage of variance above or below the average for all constituencies. If a rule like this is applied, many rural constituencies will be so large that the MLA would find it physically difficult to visit all of the municipalities in his or her constituency in under two days, not to mention effectively representing them. The average rural constituency contains nearly 10 municipalities. That means nearly 10 municipal councils, each with their own concerns, as well as the other groups in each municipality, that make

demands on the MLA's time. Contrast this with urban MLAs who, although they may represent more people, only have to deal with one city council and can drive the boundaries of a constituency in an hour.

Representation by population is not the only issue here, although the media would have you believe this. There has been considerable discussion about the unfairness of rural Alberta being overrepresented in the Legislature, but to strictly adhere to the principle of rep by pop, rural constituencies would be made so large that many rural residents would have to drive a hundred miles just to see their MLA. That would not be fair either. The present system is fair in that both rural and urban voters have difficulty with access to their MLA: the rural because he or she may have to drive 50 to 100 miles, and the urban because there are more voters trying to access the MLA. Because the situations in rural and urban constituencies are so different, there should be different criteria for determining the electoral boundaries. Certainly representation by population should be applied in the rural constituencies to a certain degree, but there should also be a provision regarding distance for access to the MLA.

Economic concerns. Two of the major sectors of Alberta's economy are agriculture and energy. Activity in these sectors is primarily carried on in the rural areas. If representation by population is the only criterion used to determine electoral boundaries, urban constituencies would greatly outnumber rural constituencies. Thus, the agriculture and energy sectors of the economy would be underrepresented to this Legislature.

In closing, we ask that you give equal consideration to access to the MLA and economic concerns when the committee makes its recommendations. Representation by population is a good principle, but when putting it into practice in rural areas, there are other issues that must be taken into account.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Bob.

Questions from the committee? Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Bob, for your presentation. Bob, you talk about keeping the same ratio, 41 rural seats to 42 urban seats, and yet what we're experiencing in Alberta, and not just unique to Alberta but throughout North American society, is an increased urbanization of our lands and rural depopulation. It's been suggested that Alberta is the most urbanized province in Canada. We've got currently, and I think I'm being generous if I were to say 60 percent of our population living in urban Alberta and 40 percent living in rural Alberta. Is there a point along that split between population that you would argue for a change in the ratio of seats? Would you always hold fast and true to a constant split?

MR. COUTTS: Obviously there comes a point where such a circumstance dictates that, but I think one of the problems that's facing rural communities, and quite frankly it scares me, is rural depopulation. I think that the additional problem of having larger boundaries and access to your MLA is definitely a detriment to rural life, to a person wanting to live in a rural area. They say: "Well, we don't get a vote for the amount of area that we have to cover. We have to get to our MLA. If they have a large area to cover, it's less chance for me to have input into that elected representative's decision-making."

MR. SIGURDSON: Just a supplementary then. If it's 60-40 right now, at what point would you suggest that we start

changing the ratio?

MR. COUTTS: I can't answer that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.
Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: I just have a question. You mentioned economics should be considered when you're doing the boundary redistribution. I just wondered if you'd give me some more information that's specific as to what you really mean when you mention the economics. Does that mean the standard of living as an example between rural Alberta and urban Alberta, or what is it? What are some of the economic concerns?

MR. COUTTS: I think what was mentioned in the brief more implied that a great percentage - I believe there would be the two biggest industries, agriculture and energy, both of which have their major presence outside an urban area. I think that is what is trying to be indicated in the brief, that those concerns, energy and agriculture being some of the major industries, there needs to be some weight thrown in their favour to give them representation.

MR. CARDINAL: Would that mean, then, that the two major incomes from resources in Alberta would come from rural Alberta? That's basically what . . .

MR. COUTTS: As far as I understand it, those are the two biggest industries. So yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Anyone from the audience with a brief question or comment? Okay, Bob. Thank you very much.
Paul.

MR. SCHORAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Paul Schorak. I do believe it helps to have a bit of a personal background, Alberta background, to understand where I'm coming from. Just briefly, I presently reside at Forestburg. I'm a retired government employee that went farming. Can you imagine a government employee retiring and going farming? Well, that's what I did. The first 20 years of my life were spent in rural Alberta in Forestburg, and that includes my childhood, youth education, and career seeking. I did seek a career, and I found one with the government of Alberta and spent 35 years with the government of Alberta. So, Mr. Chairman, I'll find it difficult to keep to the 10 minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I won't find it difficult reminding you.

MR. SCHORAK: Okay. In those 35 years, 15 years were spent in Edmonton, two years in Stony Plain, 10 years in Calgary - and yes, Patricia, Calgary is a beautiful city; mind you, Alberta is a beautiful province too - and eight years in St. Albert. The last five years I've been in Forestburg retired as a farmer, but I'll talk about this retirement a little later on towards the end where it's more appropriate. So you could say I've spent 35 years in urban Alberta and 25 years in rural Alberta, Mr. Chairman, and that should help a bit.

In my presentation I first of all want to talk briefly about MLA representation, and in order to better understand how an MLA may best represent the citizens of any constituency, it is

necessary to consider the needs of the province in total rather than dwelling on the needs of any individual constituency. It is suggested that the overall needs for the province of Alberta include, number one, the economy. Bob talked about that briefly, and there were some good questions on that. I've broken that into two segments, and those are the primary motivators and then secondary. Under primary you have agriculture – there isn't much argument – and you have energy, tourism, and construction. That sort of fits in with all those activities, but it's very definitely a primary motivator. Secondary you have manufacturing, retail sales, technology, financial institutions, professions, recreation, and utilities. Utilities is getting bigger all the time; maybe one of these days it'll be up in a primary.

Then in addition to the economy – and these are factors that should be considered in addition to population – you have people-services. The primary areas are, number one, education, health, and social services. It really doesn't matter what the size of the population is, those are vital people-services; that little school that's got 30 pupils is just as important to the parents in those schools as the big Calgary and Edmonton schools. Those are the vital primary people-services. Secondary, and some may disagree with this, you have rehabilitation, senior citizen institutions, efforts with the handicapped, recreation, multiculturalism, and career development.

Then the next factor that should be considered for constituencies is controls, and every government is responsible for controls. They sometimes wish they weren't, but they are. They result in enforcement. The primary ones I see are the environment, law, consumer and corporate affairs, and labour. Secondary ones would be highway traffic – but the fellow that gets a speeding ticket may not consider it secondary – the ALCB, planning, and wildlife.

The final consideration that should be part of consideration as to constituency boundaries is public works. Here the primary ones would be the department of highways and all the road construction that takes place, the administrative buildings that exist across Alberta, parks, and then communication, which is AGT, which is a pretty hot subject right now as a matter of fact.

When one considers this very brief summary of the needs in Alberta, it is very evident that such needs exist in all provincial constituencies regardless of the population size. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that population and/or area size are not sufficient as total criteria in establishing provincial constituency boundaries.

Now, the second part of my presentation – I may get challenged on this, but I did talk to about 16 people across Alberta from a total cross section of our society and asked them the question: how do you feel about the MLA representation in our province? I'm going to share those opinions with you, and I might get a hard time. In order for the average Albertan to more fully and accurately understand what is happening and whether that activity is in Alberta's best interests, it is necessary for one to have a very keen and unbiased analytical mind. Some traits and practices of the past and present political systems tend to confuse and at times are even deceitful. Some examples are that the government and the opposition always tend to be in adversary positions. You might feel, "What's this got to do with boundaries?" but I've got some recommendations. The media seems to love this, as it surely enhances their bottom line, which is making a dollar, but the public gets the message of doom and gloom and mismanagement and sometimes must wonder about the quality of representation.

Secondly – I'm running out of time – the opposition tends to confuse this by always stating that they could do almost anything: the money is available; it's just a matter of managing it properly. But I don't think Albertans are that easily fooled. They know there's no such thing as a free lunch, and actually what happens is a practice of robbing Peter to pay Paul. I'm Paul, and I get uncomfortable with that.

I'll skip some of these because I am running out of time, but the one that really bothers me and bothers a lot of Albertans is that there seems to be a barrier developing between urban and rural constituencies in Alberta. This is very alarming, and every effort must be put into eliminating this growing barrier entirely. Surely it is evident that the total needs of both urban and rural constituencies are forever totally integrated in Alberta. The sooner all Albertans learn to accept and to cope with this condition, the quicker success will follow. It is only by working together that we will enhance and develop our economy, provide an effective and accountable level of people-services, gain support for the majority of the people's attitudes towards controls, and have effective and frugal and meaningful public works programs.

Now I get into the recommendations, if you'll allow me to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very briefly, please.

MR. SCHORAK: Okay. Number one, leave the number of electoral divisions, 83 at present, as is – this is very adequate MLA representation – until the electors list exceeds at least two and a half million, and leave the balance of 42 urban and 41 rural divisions as is. The argument of representation by population does not fit the need of an effective criteria for Alberta. What is needed are the criteria I mentioned, the total one: population, area size, economic motivators, people-services, control issues, and public works.

Then, number three. When realignments are required either to the 42 urban or the 41 rural divisions, based on the added dimensions, such realignments should be based on recommendations from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association in the instance of urban divisions and the Alberta Association of MDs and Counties in the instance of rural divisions. However, the balance of 42-41 should remain.

Number four. There is much at stake for Albertans regarding the recommendations of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. It is noted that at present the committee is made up of seven sitting MLAs. It would seem reasonable that better representation for Albertans would occur if the two municipal bodies which are very much involved in Alberta affairs – that is, AUMA and AAMD and C – were also to serve on this committee. I see a good balance to be a committee made up of three sitting MLAs, three members from AUMA, and three members from the Alberta Association of MDs and Counties, for a total of nine members. The same members of AUMA and AAMD and C could serve on the realignment I mentioned in the other condition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Paul, I really must ask you to wrap up.

MR. SCHORAK: Okay. I'll miss number five, which is twinning of urbans and rurals, and there's a lot to be said for it. But the one I really want to talk about is population and how you're arriving at averages. At present you take all 83 constituencies, divide that into the number of voters, and come up with an average. Well, to me, Mr. Chairman, it's like racing a

Volkswagen against a Cadillac when you take Cardston and Chinook against Edmonton-Whitemud. What would be much better is if you took the 42 urban divisions, added up their population, divided by 42, and came up with an urban average, and then took the 41 rural divisions, added up their population, divided by 41, and came up with a rural average. I think that formula would support the continuance of the 42-41 balance.

Now, I'll just wrap it up there. I could explain some of the involvement I've had in Alberta . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Thank you, Paul. We'll wait and see if there are any questions. You've given us a lot of food for thought.

MR. SCHORAK: Right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any points that you've missed in your brief we'll ensure are read into the record and become part of our record.

MR. SCHORAK: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions from panel members first. I think I saw a couple of hands up. First Frank and then Pat and Tom.

MR. BRUSEKER: Paul, a very well-thought-out presentation. I liked your six factors that you included, which is a very idealistic way of looking at it. It's good to have ideals, but we also have to be practical, and I was wondering if you had any consideration as to how we could actually implement those six factors that you talked about. First of all, with my first question, how would you implement it and what weighting would you give to those six things? Do they all have equal weighting or are some higher than others? How would you implement that?

MR. SCHORAK: In the instance of the economy, let's have a look at Cardston, which is the lowest population rural constituency. Naturally they have some agricultural activity, but you'd have a look at the gross agricultural activity taking place there, energy, and any other economic motivator that generates a need for political representation. In the instance of people-services, even though the numbers will differ, you still have to look at the people-services that exist in each constituency. In the instance of controls, if you don't have a pulp mill or if you don't have a power-generating station – there are some constituencies that don't have a great deal of control, so that reduces the amount of political representation they require. Public works is sort of in the same ballpark.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Yes. Paul, partway through your presentation you said you wanted to get away from the divisiveness between urban and rural, and yet at the end of your presentation you talked about having one mean factor established for the rural and one for the urban, and then based on that, distribution be equated to urban and rural. In essence, are you talking about two formulas, one for urban and one for rural?

MR. SCHORAK: Yes.

MRS. BLACK: You are. Thank you.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, one of the reasons this committee is here is because we now have something called the Charter of Rights. Prior to the Charter of Rights it was permissible for a Legislature to hand down rules that said you would have 42 urban constituencies and 41. It allowed for a great variance between constituencies, and that was the problem that was found to be in British Columbia. Are you advising this committee that we ignore the Charter of Rights?

MR. SCHORAK: Not at all. As a matter of fact, I missed one of my recommendations, and that was to enhance the relationship between urban and rural. It would go a long way towards enforcing human rights rather than ignoring them, and that is to twin the urbans and the rurals so that we learn to understand each other. At first you could say, "Heaven forbid; the MLA has too much to do already," but maybe there needs to be a close examination as to what is on your plate and what is important. By twinning – I'll say this with tongue in cheek – let's twin Stettler with Edmonton-Whitemud, and let's learn about each other so that we don't have this barrier getting bigger all the time.

MR. SIGURDSON: So, then, your recommendations are an entire package and not to be taken one alone?

MR. SCHORAK: Actually, they're an entire package.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions from the panel? Ladies and gentlemen? Okay; thank you, Paul.

MR. PRITCHARD: Could we have the next two presenters come up, please: Bill Kirtley and Bob Greig. I hope I said your names correctly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems to be a good night for the Bobs, doesn't it?

Bob, would you like to proceed, please.

MR. GREIG: It's a good name.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what I said.

MR. GREIG: Yes, Mr. Chairman and fellow members of the committee. I am Bob Greig from the Big Valley area. My address is Big Valley. I am here to submit a brief on behalf of the East Parkland Community Futures Association of which I am chairman. The East Parkland Community Futures Association is a nonprofit association committed to promoting economic development within an area that includes parts of the counties of Camrose, divisions 1 and 2; Lacombe, divisions 1 and 2; Red Deer, division 1; Stettler, divisions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9; plus 11 villages and towns within this area. The nine members on our committees are appointed in the various councils within the area. Included in our area are parts of the ridings of Camrose, Lacombe, Innisfail, and Stettler.

Our association is greatly concerned about the possible reduction in the number of rural ridings in Alberta, which would result in an increase in the size of rural ridings. The following issues need to be carefully considered by the review committee in their deliberations.

The number of elected councils and boards. While most of the urban constituencies have only one city council, two school boards, and one hospital board, a rural constituency can include

several municipal and county councils, school boards, and hospital boards. To meet with the boards and represent them fairly requires far more time than their urban counterparts.

Physical size. Most urban ridings, although containing more people than rural ridings, cover only a few square kilometres and, in some cases, only a few city blocks. In contrast, MLAs for a rural riding may have to travel several hundred kilometres to cover their ridings.

Accessibility. Most urban ridings have daily or even hourly airline service to and from Edmonton, enabling the MLAs to fly home regularly. In contrast, rural MLAs have to travel by car or by airplane and by car. This travel time reduces the time the MLA can spend in his or her riding.

Resource distribution. The natural resources – farmland, oil, gas, coal, timber, et cetera – that have enabled Alberta and its urban centres to grow and prosper are located in the rural ridings. If the representation for rural Alberta is reduced, a few large cities could control the income from these resources. For decades the population and businesses in rural Alberta have been declining. To further reduce the representation rural residents have in the Legislative Assembly will only help to erode the economic viability of rural Alberta. All of Alberta is dependent on a strong rural population.

We strongly urge the committee to recommend that the current distribution between urban seats, 42, and rural seats, 41, be maintained.

Respectfully submitted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bob, do you subscribe to the principle of majority rule, sir?

MR. GREIG: To a certain extent, but if I may make a point without creating too much havoc and say it is actually political. If we create a situation here in Alberta the same as we have in the dominion, where Quebec and Ontario because of their population control what goes on in Canada, then the cities of Alberta will control what goes on in Alberta.

MR. SIGURDSON: So if 600,000 Albertans voted one way and 400,000 voted another way, it might be acceptable to you to have the will of the 400,000 people govern the will of 600,000?

MR. GREIG: Well, I know what you are trying to say, but by the same token we are not saying that the vote shouldn't be there. We are trying to tell you that the MLAs have a hard enough time now in the rural area covering their areas without making the constituencies larger or by decreasing the number of rural constituencies to accommodate the urban setup.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Yes. I'll be very brief. Bob, do you believe in the Triple E Senate?

MR. GREIG: Most definitely, because if we could have a Triple E Senate, we in western Canada and in the maritimes might have a little bit of a voice as to what goes on in Canada.

MRS. BLACK: Therefore, do you feel that regional representation is more appropriate than, necessarily, a strict rule of representation by population?

MR. GREIG: Do you not agree? Maybe we are . . .

MRS. BLACK: I agree in Triple E Senate, but I'm asking you.

MR. GREIG: Maybe I shouldn't get political, but our neighbours across the line to the south – I think each state has a lot better status quo, because they have two representatives to control what goes on, more so than what we have so far as our provinces are concerned. Not that I don't prefer to be a Canadian.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions from the panel? Ladies and gentlemen? Thank you, Bob.
Bill.

MR. KIRTLEY: Mr. Chairman, panel and guests, my name is Bill Kirtley. I am reeve of the county of Stettler, and I make this presentation on behalf of the council.

The county of Stettler No. 6 is presently represented by one of the 41 rural seats. The Stettler population is 11,345 for provincial elections. The matter of using population for representation would require that the Stettler riding be eliminated or increased in size to accommodate the proposal. This proposal would devastate rural Alberta by significantly reducing the number of MLAs in the Legislature, thereby reducing the rural voice in government decisions. The Alberta Association of MDs and Cs supports the need to maintain the present urban/rural balance in the Alberta Legislature. The committee must take into consideration the geographic economics of the rural areas. While change is often necessary, change for change's sake is not needed in this situation. Representation by population in the rural areas will not work. Even the proposed Senate reform, which has a great deal of support in Alberta, does not propose representation by population.

It is the county of Stettler's opinion that Alberta retain the present 41 rural seats and 42 urban seats.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, sir. Questions from the committee? Yes, Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thanks for your presentation, Bill. Just a real quick question then. Are you saying we should leave it as it is or that there should be some – even within the 41 rural seats that currently exist there are quite a number of inequities. Do you think there should be some realignment between the rural seats the way they are now, or just leave everything as it is?

MR. KIRTLEY: Preferably leave it as it is. Realign the urban ones if you must, but at least give us 41 out of 83.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the question, Bill, was: of the 41 rural seats, should there be any realignment between the larger of the rural seats and the smaller? Was that the essence of your question?

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. If you look at the rural constituencies, some are small in number and small in area. Some are large in number and large in area, even just amongst the rural

constituencies. Do you think we should do some realigning there?

MR. KIRTLEY: Certainly do some realigning, but, as I stated, representation by population for the rural areas will not work.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We understand your point. Any other questions from the committee? Yes, Tom?

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah, I'm just going to throw one out. Bill, if what you're concerned about is the size of a rural constituency - that seems to be a primary factor of your presentation, yes?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, he said to maintain the current balance.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I'm going to give him his druthers. Okay?

MR. KIRTLEY: All right.

MR. SIGURDSON: It's going to help me out, maybe, later on when we get down to hitting some nails.

If your concern is the size of a constituency that a rural MLA has to represent and you also take into account some population factors, would it be permissible in your view to have an increase in the number of urban seats to reflect the population of the urban centres so that you don't increase the size of the rural constituencies?

MR. KIRTLEY: No, I don't think we need any more urban seats.

MR. SIGURDSON: None at all?

MR. KIRTLEY: No.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right. Anyone else? Ladies and gentlemen? Thanks very much, Bill.

MR. PRITCHARD: Could I have the next two presenters come up, please? Gloria Bergman and Doug Johnson.

MRS. BERGMAN: I didn't come prepared for 20 questions, so here goes.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for this opportunity to address my concerns about the changing electoral boundaries. I probably will be repeating many things you have already heard in your hearings, but these are concerns for the Stettler constituency and many areas of rural Alberta.

One of the primary concerns, of course, is the enlarging of rural constituencies to the point where they are too large, ineffective, and unmanageable for one MLA to represent properly. It is more difficult for the MLA to communicate with electors and meet face to face when electors are scattered over hundreds of miles. Increasing the geographical size of rural constituencies to allow for exact representation by population

would also increase the problem in rural Alberta. Also, the number of town councils, school boards, hospital boards, et cetera, that one MLA would have to deal with would be unreasonable and ineffective.

I know the philosophical basis for representation by population is part of the democratic system. However, our boundaries at present deter from this but still remain manageable considering the vast areas some cover. In urban centres, where the population is greater, it is still much easier for an MLA to serve the electorate, mainly due to the close proximity they have to each other. Communication on a one-to-one basis can exist, travel time to meetings is less, and often the constituency is more homogeneous in its needs and concerns. Some of the essential services such as transportation and utilities are shared by large, sophisticated municipal governments which are not seen in rural Alberta. Often in an urban constituency there is no school or hospital to even be concerned about.

MLAs particularly representing northern Alberta have great distances to contend with as well as many problems. Some are the concerns of native people; others the development and conservation of natural resources such as oil, gas, and forestry, as well as the environmental issues. Some of their constituencies are highly productive, representing a large cash flow and tax dollars. Other areas are deprived and underdeveloped. It takes the time and skill of an MLA to be able to recognize the problems and seek the solutions that affect the diversity of their areas. This could not be handled by one MLA if the boundary should be enlarged.

We have to take into consideration that the natural resources of this province are located in rural Alberta and these are the tax dollars that operate the government. The responsibility for development, conservation, and transportation often become the responsibility of the MLA for that area, to make a clear representation with a good knowledge base. Decisions affecting these industries and the people working in them must be made with an understanding of rural Alberta.

If rural representation is decreased because of the depopulation of rural Alberta, a lack of understanding of and empathy for rural issues and concerns in government must result. If representation is skewed towards the larger cities, then the negative effects will be felt in such things as the financing of hospitals, social services, and education, and the benefits will go to the city where the tax base is already greater and representation in government will also be greater. Evidence is already apparent in the lack of resources in education and health services in rural Alberta. Professionals doing the same job as their counterparts in cities do not have access to the same resources and funds. If urban representation is greater in government, then there will likely be a tendency for hospitals to become large regional institutions operated by regional boards, thus removing the autonomy of local boards and therefore reducing the decision-making further of the rural constituent. The quality of life in rural Alberta can only be maintained by having a voice in the decision-making process.

A final consideration is that rural Alberta's representation must be maintained in order to ensure meaningful diversification and growth in rural Alberta. The promotion of decentralization of services and continued diversification of industries such as forestry and agriculture may help to stem the immigration to the cities and depopulation of the rural areas.

When deciding electoral boundaries, it seems necessary to have a complete overview of the constituency and consider the problems, the needs, and the development taking place rather

than just the total population. Many constituencies have larger populations than indicated on the ballot sheets as some people such as Hutterite colonies, native people on reserves, and transient people choose not to be enumerated, but their needs and concerns are still the responsibility of the MLA for that area.

If it is necessary that the boundaries must be changed, then consideration should be made to the following. Number one, have MLAs represent part of an urban and part of a rural constituency so that they can understand the needs and problems of both areas. This may be done by having the constituencies divided in a pie shape that includes both urban and rural. Therefore, when decisions are made for such things as graveling or paving secondary roads, it can be seen as a parallel for the need of a rapid transit service in a city. Secondly, increase the urban representation by a total of five members in the two large cities to satisfy the concerns of the large populations. This may be more costly and would increase the bureaucracy in the government. However, this is bound to happen anyway if rural constituencies increase in size, as these MLAs will need aides to help them serve their vast areas. Three, a final suggestion would be to leave the boundaries as they exist, as representation by population in the true sense has not been effective in the Senate. It's not effective in our federal government if you believe the large populations in central Canada are dominating western Canada and the east, and this is causing a tremendous amount of distrust and division among the electorate. This is a possibility for Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. BRUSEKER: Gloria, thank you for your presentation. You mentioned as a possibility urban and rural constituencies similar to what's happening in Red Deer. That has happened in Red Deer, by the way. I'm not sure if you were aware of that. Would you advocate those kinds of constituencies for the cities of Edmonton and Calgary as well?

MRS. BERGMAN: Definitely. I mean, the same thing is going to happen. We're going to have two large populations. Two urban centres are going to dominate the rest of Alberta, exactly what Quebec and Ontario have done ever since Confederation, and I think we've got to look at that. Not everything in Alberta happens in Edmonton and Calgary. They can't even get along, so how in the heck are they going to look after us. My question to you as urban MLAs is: what is your problem by serving a few more people? What do you see as your problems, you people that do come from a large population? You have the experience. Why do you think it's so difficult to handle?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Tom is next, and he may try to answer that.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I'm here to try and get some answers, and in getting answers, I'll have to pose questions. Gloria, I've got two constituencies, and what I've tried to do is highlight in pen a couple of highways that go through those constituencies. I've got the constituency of Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, which has a very low voter population. That's Highway 3. I've got the constituency of Peace River, and that's Highway 2. I'm sure if Boomer Adair saw me draw these lines, he'd be very upset with me, because they probably don't accurately reflect where the highways go. But on these two constituencies we have major population centres. In Pincher

Creek and the municipality of the Crowsnest Pass there's a population of a few hundred under 10,000 voters in this constituency. Along this ribbon of highway we've got a number of population centres: Peace River, Grimshaw, High Level. They have a voter population of over 15,000, and they have a pretty much similar economic makeup in the constituencies. Are you suggesting that these constituencies not be realigned to reflect population in Alberta?

MRS. BERGMAN: No. That's entirely my point. What is the magic formula, 60-40? You can come up with any formula you like. What is the magic formula for dividing up our constituencies? Is it only population, or are you going to look at need? Are you going to look at problems? Are you going to look at the resources and what tax base that brings into the province?

MR. SIGURDSON: So you're saying not to realign these boundaries at all.

MRS. BERGMAN: Preferably not.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? The audience?

Gloria, I'm not sure if Doug had influenced you ahead of time, but he's made presentation at previous hearings and talked about the hub and the spokes concept. It sounded very similar to your part urban, part rural constituency. So if he hasn't influenced you, it's fantastic luck, Doug, and what a lead-in for you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah. I haven't.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you and your panel for coming, and I'd like to thank you for the chance to appear before you again. I'd like to thank anybody for being here today, I'll tell you. I just had the opportunity to try out our health care system, and I didn't find it wanting at all. I did note that St. Peter and the devil had an argument over me and neither one wanted me, so that's why I'm here.

I appeared before you in Viking and Hanna and put forward my ideas on boundaries then. I believe I had mentioned that about 75 MLAs could pretty well handle that under the system whether they used spokes of a wagon wheel or the pizza pies or whatever you want to do. But tonight I thought I would not dwell on that so much as reinforce the idea of the pitfalls that are involved with shaping electoral boundaries with just population alone. I might add before I go any further that I'm more than satisfied with the representation we receive here in this constituency. As you probably noticed, we have gold flecks on the streets and money falling off the trees and all that sort of thing, so we're doing quite well that way.

I would like to use as an example the way agriculture has been treated under our federal system with the votes naturally being in Ontario and Quebec. During the 1960s every time we as farmers turned around there was another marketing board chewing away at us, and most of them were given quota powers. Since those boards were established, the powers that be, the bureaucrats that set these programs up, naturally eventually all migrated to Ottawa, and if there was any excess quota at all, it was moved into those provinces of Ontario and Quebec. I would like to just point out that we no longer produce food where it's cheapest to do so in Canada. We produce food where it's politically - I don't know what you'd call it - wise to do so,

or the politicians tell us where we produce food. I'll use just this one example. We would naturally assume because of the feed grain situation, because of transportation that either Ontario or Manitoba or perhaps Alberta would be the biggest hog producing province in Canada. It just ain't so. The province that produces calls them le porcs. They produce the most hogs in Canada today, and they're produced because of subsidies, because of the problem we face with representation by population where the marketing boards, the provincial governments have lost powers to federal agencies that have transferred powers from one area to others.

I would also like to use as an example, too, something that probably is not a true example but is a pretty good one here in rural Alberta. We look at the Saddledome here in Calgary. It was built for the Olympics, I'll grant you that much, but I'm going to use it as an example anyway. The \$88 million or whatever that was spent on it roughly would have built 80 arenas out in the rural areas, in the small town populations. We'd roughly maybe have a thousand to twelve hundred teams playing out of those buildings. Today the Saddledome – it's debatable whether they have a team or not. There's some discussion over whether the Flames are . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: Depends on what year it is.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, I know. . . . capable of coming back. It's just another example of how the tax dollars and how representation by population – maybe we've just got to have a little bit longer look at how we set things up.

I also would like to point out to the committee – you probably realize it already but I'd like to reinforce it – that it came to light under the Meech Lake agreement, or the negotiations and everything or the disagreement or whatever it was called, that very few Canadians understand what kind of governments they've got. We have what we call the federal system where the provinces have to have the powers to balance out the federal government and vice versa, yet we heard people talking about more power for federal centralists, less power for provinces. It seems that to further cloud the issue Quebec has a completely different way of governing themselves anyway. It seems like even in this area where we draw in electoral boundaries we need to have more education or people have to understand better what is at stake here.

I would just like to close by saying that in your deliberations, when you finally get behind closed doors, arguing and shouting and throwing stuff at one another, you take into account the fact that representation by population has to be balanced with representation by area, by resources, and by distance and time too.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Doug. Questions? Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: I just want to throw out one thing when you talk about representation by area and representation by resources. At an earlier hearing – again it was in a rural area and we were told pretty much the same thing, that the resources are here – it was pointed out that a particular area in that constituency had been developed by \$35 million worth of investment that came out of people that lived in Calgary. Should those people that made the investment from Calgary, that put in that \$35 million to develop the resource in that area,

have some kind of voice? I mean, I'm wondering about how large you take the equation, how great you make it. Do those people that put shares into the company, that developed the resource that was developed in a particular area, have some say?

MR. JOHNSON: There's no doubt they do have, Tom, in the fact that they developed it and put the money up and whatever. They were probably not dealing directly with their MLAs where they live, but they were directly dealing with an MLA that represented that area or whatever. But yeah, there's no doubt that they do have a say and they should have rights, you know, in that type of situation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The gentleman at the back has a supplement.

MR. PEACOCK: My question is: what percentage of the city population put that \$35 million into that rural development?

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I suppose I can only respond by saying that from the information I had there was nobody from the rural constituency that put in any money. All the money came in from one urban area, so I don't know how many people were there.

MR. PEACOCK: From a select group.

MR. SIGURDSON: It could very well be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. NORTH: I would imagine that probably 75 percent of the money that goes into 30 percent of the companies in Calgary comes from the east. Should they have the same sort of representation?

MR. McARTHUR: I'm a little troubled with that question of Tom's because I think something ought to be understood here. The resources are the property of the province, and as the property of the province, the people that are putting the money in don't become owners of those resources. They are only investing, and they are making a very good investment when they start investing in the resources that belong to the province of Alberta and the citizens of the province. Somebody thinks that by making an investment with dollars they become owners. Don't ever think that the people of Alberta will stand for that interpretation.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I was just wondering out loud, sir, whether or not we were starting to represent people or we were starting to represent resources.

MR. McARTHUR: I think when you're representing people, Tom, one thing you tend to overlook is that representation is required for all the people. When the people go to their representative, they ought to be able to reach their representative in a reasonable way. Now, the needs of rural people are greater to meet that representative politically in the province of Alberta, or any province, than in an urban base. I have lived in both, but rural people have more need to meet their representative at the political level in the province at the Legislature. I'll explain that to you later. But the workload of each MLA is the thing we tend to be forgetting about here and, boy, we'd better

start looking at the workload. We don't want a bunch of urban MLAs with their feet up while the rural MLAs are working until 2 in the morning.

MRS. BLACK: Follow me around for a day. As an urbanite with 500 people out of a home after a flood in Calgary, I guarantee you, sir, that we have not been sitting with our feet up.

Anyway, my question, Mr. Johnson, is: do you believe in regional representation as opposed to representation by population?

MR. JOHNSON: You've got to balance it. Now, it is for you guys to decide how you're going to do it. It's got to be balanced somehow. We'll use Shirley McClellan's constituency for an example. It's so big that, no way, she just cannot cover it. Two or three days steady driving, and if she's going to be visiting many people, you know, this is the time she has to spend on it. Yet Tom's area: now, he's got a lot of voters, and he's got a lot of problems in there too. Yet, Tom, a lot of them come to you; you don't have to go to them. Somehow I feel that we've got to have a balance struck. I also feel that the urban MLAs have to become more involved in what happens outside their constituencies in rural Alberta. Now, whether that's done by committees, whether it's done by, you know, what this is doing . . . I know you've probably had a lot of ideas thrown at you that you've never even considered or thought of. Yet there have been urban ideas that some of you have brought forward that are good points too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Any other questions? Yes, sir.

MR. NORTH: I'm wondering if we're done with this presentation or the presentations?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we're not done with the presentations. Doug is presenter number six. You'll have an opportunity when we conclude. Thank you. All right.

MR. PRITCHARD: Would the next two presenters come up, please? Peter McArthur and Lloyd Peacock.

MR. McARTHUR: Chairman Bob, committee members, and fellow concerned citizens of Alberta, my name is Peter McArthur and as president and on behalf of the Alliance and district chamber of commerce, I submit this brief on electoral boundaries.

We feel that any altering of electoral boundaries in Alberta ought to be done with the aim of equalizing the workload for all MLAs in Alberta. The idea of representation by population does not achieve this goal. We are all too familiar with a similar problem on the national scene.

Our comparison of workload is this: in an urban riding an MLA may serve an area of approximately 600 city blocks which may be contained in six to 10 square miles, whereas a rural MLA serves an area at least 300 times this size in many cases. The urban MLA will deal with one civic administration or perhaps a group of several MLAs may share the load of dealing with one city's administration, such as in Calgary and Edmonton, whereas, for example, in the Stettler riding there are 13 mayors and five Reeves, all of whom look to one MLA for provincial services and answers to their broad array of all the questions one

can imagine. In addition to this, we have in this riding four hospital boards, seven school boards, several gas co-ops, and several rural electrification associations, all of which place certain workloads on an MLA.

We strongly feel that there can be no further erosion of the rural to urban mix of representation in the Alberta Legislature. When city folk leave work on Friday afternoon, vast numbers of them look to rural Alberta for their weekend of recreation and leisure. It is the rural MLA that must work with the rural recreation boards, chambers of commerce, local governments, and service groups that establish and maintain the vast network of roads and services for this regular invasion of city cousins looking for adventure in our great rural Alberta. In this way the rural MLA is working to provide the needs and recreational services of urban constituents.

We also make note of the MLA's role in dealing with exploration, development, and delivery to urban centres for processing our oil, forestry, farming, and natural resource products. This is the wealth of our province and it cannot be overstated, for herein lies our future.

While we see no reason to increase the number of MLAs in the province of Alberta, we do see the need for an increase - and I'll emphasize that: an increase - in rural representation. The benefit of such a change would be shared by all Albertans.

Thank you.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Currently we have 42 urban and 41 rural MLAs. Are you advocating a change in that ratio, and if so, how?

MR. McARTHUR: I think the percentage change would have to be decided by a very careful look at the workload of MLAs. If there was a way of analyzing what goes on in an MLA's work day, you would probably be able to analyze it closer. I came, for example, out of the Medicine Hat riding into the Stettler riding, and I served some years on a committee down there with the Deputy Premier, Mr. Horsman. So I'm quite familiar with the fact that down there on his committee they manage to get along quite well with a committee of approximately - well, it was 18. They boosted it up to 20; they may be up to 24 now. But we here in the Stettler riding require a committee of approximately 50 to serve our MLA, and we are kept busier, and I mean much busier, than in the city. I do know the difference, and I can assure you that Mr. Horsman out of Medicine Hat, your Hon. Jim Horsman, is not an MLA that is doing nothing; he is very busy. So making that comparison, I can assure you that there is a need for more representation in rural Alberta.

MR. BRUSEKER: What kind of committee are you talking about here? I'm not sure whether I understand what you're referring to.

MR. McARTHUR: All MLAs have an executive committee back home to help them organize and carry on their business in their constituency between elections. It gets to the point that the public come to their members in order to get in touch with their MLA; often they don't know how, you know. But for contact in a rural area - it is very tough compared to the city. See, in the city you can call the whole works up in an evening. Say, at 5, 5:30 call a meeting for 8:30, 9 o'clock that night, and

you can get them together. I absolutely defy you to do that in a rural riding.

MR. BRUSEKER: I defy you to do that in my riding too.

MR. McARTHUR: That's just one example. I'll give you another example of the kind of thing that is happening in Alberta. I mentioned recreation. I'll make a point here on recreation. I want you to tell me where the fairness is in this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Briefly, Peter.

MR. McARTHUR: Briefly.

When you tap the tourism grant from the province, set on a per capita basis: city of Edmonton, roughly \$1.4 million; village of Alliance, 200 population, \$400. All right. Within 15 miles of Alliance - we went for a drive in a four-by-four the other day - I'll tell you what we saw: a buffalo jump, teepee rings, a cabin that was built on a road allowance probably 50 years ago and should be preserved and it's still there, but it takes a lot of money to do these things. We saw a fault in the land, similar to the one you read about up north, where we've got a drop between two wedges probably 40 feet straight down. What kind of tourism potential have we got within 15 miles of Alliance, and what can we do with \$400? Within 15 miles of Edmonton, can you touch those for tourism resources? The biggest industry of the 21st century will be tourism. Shouldn't we be putting some money into that untapped tourism potential right there in the Battle River valley and throughout rural Alberta? That's why we need more MLAs in rural Alberta, one good reason.

MRS. BLACK: I'm going to get one of those committees, Peter, because that sounds like a dandy idea. I don't have one of those committees back home.

MR. McARTHUR: Maybe you don't need one.

MRS. BLACK: I think maybe I do need one. It sounds like a darn good idea.

Can you give me a concise definition of what representation is to you? Define that for me, please.

MR. McARTHUR: I sure can. Representation means that any constituent wanting to contact their MLA for a problem they may have can do so. Okay; let me tell you a difference in one example between rural and urban in that case now. In the city of Edmonton or Calgary your roads are taken care of by the city; you have no reason to contact them. The single biggest thing you have problems with in rural areas is probably your road. If you can't get your county to do something, you go after your MLA.

Second is your schools. Schools are all taken care of by the city of Medicine Hat. How often does a school become a problem for a city MLA? I'll say on rare, rare occasions. But out in the rural you can have several at once. In fact, we found ourselves just recently raising the money for a teacher for the next season. Try and get an MLA involved on the problem; it's very tough. Really it is a county problem, but it's still going to have to come to the Legislature at some point because we're not going to raise the money for a teacher next year. You see, the only change that will get us out of the pot we're now in is a change at the provincial level. Can you see how drastic the

MLA becomes to us? You won't run across that in Edmonton or Calgary.

MR. NORTH: Just a point of clarification for Pat. This committee that Peter's speaking of is actually our constituency association, which consists of approximately six members of the executive and a maximum of 50 directors. These directors are all used, and this is the committee Peter's talking about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Any questions of Peter? The audience? Thank you.
Lloyd.

MR. PEACOCK: I'm Lloyd Peacock from Alliance, Alberta. This presentation is made for Wayne Alton Stettler, who is unable to be here because of a town of Stettler council meeting this evening.

My home town is Alliance, and it has always been on the fringe of both federal and provincial constituencies. The boundaries over the past 20 years have changed several times. Each time we find ourselves in a different constituency. The late Henry Kroeger was guest speaker at one of our annual meetings; this was shortly after a change in boundaries. Henry said that he didn't know what was wrong with that man Peacock; nobody seemed to want him. So we're fed up with boundary changes. Although we're on the fringe both federally and provincially, we are satisfied in Alliance with what we have now.

So I'll proceed with Wayne Alton's submission. No questions, please, because I won't know the answers to Wayne's thinking. [interjections] It's not a bad statement. He's got terminology here I might not understand.

Further to my oral presentation in Red Deer on this matter, the writer would like the Committee to consider these further comments.

Firstly, upon a review of the debates out of the Manitoba Legislature, it was clear that all parties reviewing this matter indicated that their requirements were too onerous and have caused particular problems in the Winnipeg area. There appeared to be a general consensus from all parties that a discrepancy between various areas of the Province was justified.

In this regard, the writer would ask the Committee to refer to Section 1 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. Section 1 of the Charter has been used to justify infringements of our rights and inequalities.

Accordingly, it is the writer's position that to maintain a somewhat of an inequality between rural ridings and urban ridings, it could be justified in a free and democratic society from the very point of view that to maintain a free and democratic society and to balance the various distances and the number of elected bodies that a rural MLA has to deal with, will justify a reduced population base in those constituencies. Accordingly, one could argue, justifiably, in a free and democratic society, that inequalities between rural and urban constituencies in fact create a fair and reasonable balance considering the work load and distance and time requirements of a rural MLA.

The writer further suggests that due consideration be given to additional financial support for MLAs to cover the cost of full time office personnel in the rural constituency together with facsimile machines and unrestricted long distance calling at no cost to the MLAs as further steps to reduce the cost and increase the availability and contact to the MLAs.

The writer would suggest that only in the highest population constituencies in rural settings should consideration be given to division of those constituencies before an effort is made to maintain a minimal population base in the rural constituencies.

The writer would further suggest that the calculations in respect to deficiencies in the rural ridings should only be calculated after three to five urban constituencies have been created in the particular areas of Edmonton, Calgary and Medicine Hat. Once those three to five constituencies are created, it would be the writer's position that the negative deficiencies in the rural ridings would be somewhat less and more justifiable looking at all of the arguments for and against.

To conclude, the writer would suggest that the Attorney General department's legal counsel review and provide all parties with a legal opinion in respect to the previous Court challenge and, an opinion be obtained as to whether or not Section 1 of the Charter could withstand or could justify an unequal division in population between urban and rural ridings.

Having contested a nomination provincially, the writer speaks from experience in that the difficulty of holding meetings in the winter to gather the support within the large rural ridings would become even greater should the boundaries be increased or the rural constituencies be amalgamated.

The writer would ask that the Committee review these matters and further, allow the public to have an input into the realignment process after your recommendations are made public.

The writer thanks the Committee for a further opportunity to be heard on this matter and apologizes for not being present in person; however, I will be out of the country during the course of the hearings and again, thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

Yours very truly,
Wayne L. Alton, QC.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Questions from the committee?

MR. SIGURDSON: Just a quick note – it's not a question – that he might want to take back: this committee has had legal advice from a number of law firms that have provided us with an interpretation of the Charter.

MR. PEACOCK: All right. Yeah. Wayne should be able to fight with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you very much.

Bob, we're ready for the next two, please.

MR. PRITCHARD: The next two presenters are Diane Conibear and Sandra Rairdan.

MRS. CONIBEAR: Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the review process to establish a basis for Albertans to be best represented by their MLAs.

Historically, democratic societies have been based on a representative government. Ideally, each citizen should have a say in government, but because this is impossible, we have representation. The form of this representation has generally been by population, with attempts at using a specific formula to make the system work. If it is decided by the committee to pursue the plus or minus 25 percent formula that is presently used in British Columbia, there will still be a wide variance of numbers, possibly up to a difference of 10,000 electors per constituency. Would this be much of an improvement over the

present divisions? If the present boundaries are changed, surely a more equitable formula could be used.

One possibility might be to set a maximum number of electors that a constituency could have in an urban area and a minimum in a rural area. All the arguments seem to indicate that it is more difficult for rural MLAs to adequately look after their constituents and easier for urban MLAs because of such factors as time and distance.

Another possibility would be to redraw constituencies so that each one has an urban and a rural population. An MLA would have to represent both urban and rural, and as a result it might be a way to mend fences between these two forces in Alberta.

If the large rural constituencies remain, then constituency funding should be amended to include a per-square-mile allowance as well as the present per-person allowance, which greatly favours urban constituencies who, in reality, have fewer expenses. It would make more sense to have constituency boundaries coterminous with those of counties, MDs, et cetera, as much as possible. This would eliminate situations such as three MLAs representing one county or one MLA having to serve bits and pieces of over 20 jurisdictions. The same goes for lines drawn within jurisdictions. Perhaps more care could be taken to see that an entire village or town be contained in one constituency rather than a line dividing a village down main street, which we have. Other considerations should be such factors as trade areas, cultural pockets, and natural geographic features.

In summary, it is essential that Albertans have adequate representation, but in acquiring that representation, we must ensure that it is not at the expense of rural constituencies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Questions? Yes, Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Diane. That was a well-thought-out presentation. Just let me pose a hypothetical situation. Let's suppose that we decided to go with this urban/rural constituency, combining a little bit of urban, a little bit of rural together. When you made your opening comments, you expressed some concern about the variation that might occur, with a low of 14,000 and a high of 23,000. If we went with these urban/rural combined constituencies, would you like to see all of those constituencies as close to one another in size, both geographically and in population, as possible?

MRS. CONIBEAR: Probably. If it could be worked out.

MR. BRUSEKER: You know, it can't always be exactly equal, but as much as possible.

MRS. CONIBEAR: Generally size and population, if possible. But I don't think I'd do it like a pie. I think I'd do it like ribbons. Okay?

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: If you do it like ribbons, I don't want to have Highway 16.

I do want to ask you one question. You spoke of perhaps

establishing something along the lines of having a minimum number of electors for a rural constituency and a maximum number of electors for an urban constituency.

MRS. CONIBEAR: I know what you're going to say.

MR. SIGURDSON: You do?

MRS. CONIBEAR: So when it got over a certain number . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: No, no, no. I want to know where the starting point is.

MRS. CONIBEAR: Oh, that's not up to me. That's up to you. Okay? But when it got too large . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: She's obviously been watching question period and our proceedings in the House, answering like a politician.

MRS. CONIBEAR: If it got too large, then you would have to increase the numbers, and if it got too small, then you would have to amalgamate and realign.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Let's try this one; you always get one supplementary. Do you think, then, that it might be fairer to try and take something that's been established along the Charter, in that we have to operate within the Charter, as a starting point and then use the criteria that you suggest for future redistribution?

MRS. CONIBEAR: Well, what criteria?

MR. SIGURDSON: Currently what we're looking at is the British Columbia decision that set the variance at plus or minus 25 percent. Would that be a starting point?

MRS. CONIBEAR: Well, it could be.

MR. SIGURDSON: It could be. Okay.

MRS. CONIBEAR: I'm all for gray-shaded areas.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Thanks, Diane.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Anyone else? Pat.

MRS. BLACK: I'm quite keen on your presentation, Diane. It was very well thought out, and I appreciate your coming forward with it. In many of the other hearings we've heard people who were adamantly opposed to combining urban and rural settings, and I'm quite interested in your thoughts. I guess we have to factor in there not only size and population but also road systems and things. You wouldn't mind if that was adjusted to bring all those things into play, would you? Bridges and . . .

MRS. CONIBEAR: That's why the pie doesn't work.

MRS. BLACK: But even in the ribbon it could be up or down a bit just to justify the availability of transportation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tom wants to follow on Pat's point.

MR. SIGURDSON: I just want to follow up on Pat's point again. It goes back to your rural/urban population. Again, much of the concern that seems to be expressed is that – and I don't share the view – perhaps rural matters may be left out by having boundary redistribution or a significant shift in the ratio. If you were to have that urban/rural split where each member would represent a certain number of people, obviously at some point there's going to be more urban Albertans left over than there are remaining rural Albertans to pair up with.

MRS. CONIBEAR: There's your 60-40.

MR. SIGURDSON: So if you have that 60-40, and in every constituency let's suppose you had 12,000 urban voters and 8,000 rural voters, do you not feel that there might be a concern if the MLA says, "Well, I've got 12,000 urbanites; I'd better pay attention to them because there's my majority," and is not really too concerned about the 8,000 rural folk?

MRS. CONIBEAR: Well, I don't know. I think that happens now. Like, in the cities 50 percent of the people don't even turn out to vote, so I don't know what happens to them. Maybe they're happy.

MR. SIGURDSON: You never know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Peter.

MR. McARTHUR: I'd just like to make a comment on the urban/rural mix thing. It is an interesting concept, but one thing we don't want to forget is the fact that where the wheel goes, the hub drives the wheel, and there's a fear of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MR. McARTHUR: The 60-40 idea would be some insurance against that, only a low insurance, but remember, too, that what happens with rural voters is that if they're too much neglected under that consideration, they will come out in high numbers, and a good example of that, I think, Chairman Bob, is when you were first elected. Remember?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not endorsing this point, but when we were in Medicine Hat, there was a brief presented which suggested that in a city like Medicine Hat or, I presume, a Red Deer or a Lethbridge or a Grande Prairie, where you want a mix of an urban and a rural setting, you should ensure that if we are adding part of Medicine Hat to Cypress-Redcliff, for instance, not more than 25 percent of the new riding would be Medicine Hat. In that way, no one area would dominate. You still have towns within the rural riding and you have a part of the city. In other words, it wasn't the same concept that has been advocated by Doug and others, but it was to address those situations where you've got more people than one member could adequately represent in a city but not enough for two. So the thought was: all right; if you're going to look at a joint urban/rural split, try to protect the integrity of both parts by ensuring that no one area would dominate the other.

MR. McARTHUR: Chairman Bob, I think there is a lack of understanding of rural Alberta by those within the urban areas. I would think it would be better, if you're going to go to a mix,

to try to mix as many as you can but on the basis of a 40-60 or 35-65 sort of thing. If they start forgetting about the farmer, they're going to be in trouble, I can assure you. It does give some input, then, to the urban representative from farm people, and I believe getting an understanding directly from the electorate in that way would greatly help all members of the Legislature.

MRS. BLACK: On that point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, could I just ask – it's Peter, isn't it? You mentioned that you felt there was a clear lack of understanding of the rural situation by urban members. Do you also feel there is a lack of understanding of urban issues by rural members?

MR. McARTHUR: Yes, I definitely do, and I guess I see myself, having lived in large cities too – besides Medicine Hat, I did live some years in Edmonton and in smaller communities, so I think I do have a fair mix. I've also farmed, so I guess where I'm coming from is with a relative understanding of the overall picture. But there is quite a misunderstanding all right, and I don't know how you can get it to the farm population. It's very hard for a farmer to understand the urban, but on the other hand, I don't think the importance of understanding the urban is as high as the importance of understanding the farmer because the farmer is so heavily dependent on legislative decisions. You see, decisions made in the Legislature do not affect the average person in the urban centres like Edmonton and Calgary nearly to the extent that they affect a farmer. I guess that's the important thing we ought to come to understand.

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

MRS. RAIRDAN: Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I just have a couple of comments. I agree with so many things that are being said tonight, and I'm sure you've heard them many times before.

You're looking at a B.C. court decision. I would urge you to remember that this is Alberta. We are entirely different from B.C. or Manitoba or Nova Scotia or whoever. We have had many problems, whatever party, with central government and what has happened with total representation by population. Dare to be different and find a different way to make representation equal and positive. There are many factors that need to be discussed and considered to do this. I really believe the load on an MLA will become very great. When the people of Alberta can afford a helicopter for every rural MLA, maybe then they can have great big areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MRS. RAIRDAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Sandra, the decision that was made in the British Columbia Supreme Court was a Charter decision. I wish it had been appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, because it probably would have given us a clear indication of what all

provinces have to do. In that it wasn't, it's still a Charter decision. Would you suggest that we ignore the Charter or challenge the decision and end up in the Supreme Court?

MRS. RAIRDAN: Well, I would think maybe that would be the route to go. You've said that everybody is worried that it wasn't appealed. Maybe it needs to be appealed. Maybe it needs to be seen from a totally federal perspective; maybe B.C. doesn't have all the answers. Maybe that is what we need to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Anyone else? The audience?
Yes. Gloria.

MRS. BERGMAN: One question of Tom. Maybe you could enlighten us a little. I'm not quite sure what part of the Charter you keep referring to. Where does the Charter come in? Is it because you don't have representation by population?

MR. SIGURDSON: To a degree that's it. It says that every person shall have equal representation, and it's in determining that that numbers come into play. That's where we've got a different set of rules today than we've ever had previously.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, but I think we've got to give one reassurance here, Tom, and that is that if we intended to roll over and play dead, we wouldn't have spent the last year in this committee listening to Albertans, trying to find an Alberta answer. We're cognizant of the Charter; we know it's there. We're also aware that we've got a unique set of circumstances in our province. We're out listening, and we're going to develop a strategy, I presume, that we believe meets the needs of Albertans. Yes, we want to be as Charter-proof as possible, but if we wind up going all the way to the Supreme Court, so be it.

MRS. BERGMAN: Mr. Chairman, one other comment. I think the presentation that you've probably been hearing for the last 38 meetings or whatever you've had is that people are pointing out: has inequality been caused by representation by population, or are there other factors that would cause inequality? I have a little bit of trouble with this, and I hope you definitely pursue that. I would say by all means go to the Supreme Court.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

On this point. We're not on the wrap-up yet. We still have one or two people to hear from. Anyone else on this point? Okay. Thanks very much, Sandra.

Robert.

MR. PRITCHARD: Our final presenter this evening: Martin Burns.

MR. BURNS: Good evening. My name is Martin Burns, and I represent the Bashaw Economic Development Society. It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Bashaw Economic Development Society, to be able to address the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries on a matter we think is important, the rural community. I am extremely disappointed that this meeting, which was scheduled to be held at an earlier date, was not advertised in the *Bashaw Star*, which means that the voters in the northwest part of the constituency are not aware that this meeting is on tonight. In checking with the agency, Smith and Smith Associates in Edmonton, they advised me that you are

running out of money and you only choose select newspapers for advertising.

I'm wondering how this select committee on electoral boundaries was selected. According to the information passed on to me, this special select committee of seven MLAs is made up of two MLAs from Edmonton, two from Calgary, one from Red Deer, and two from the rural area. One gets the opinion that the committee has already made up its mind and that they're only going through the exercise. We don't even get equal representation on the committee.

I don't think members of the Legislature who are voted in as members of the urban area have any idea what a rural constituency is all about. Take any constituency in Calgary or Edmonton and their representative can get around the whole constituency in a good afternoon, while the MLA in the rural area can take up to a month to cover his constituency. Mayor Al Duerr of Calgary in his address to the committee said that Calgary should have nine more MLAs to be fairly represented in the Legislature. You can be sure that if Calgary wants nine more MLAs, Edmonton will want the same and to hell with the rest of the province. Each of the major areas is looking at representation by population. That's fine for them, but what about the rest of us, or do we matter?

The province of Alberta is hollering loud and clear to the federal government in Ottawa on the Triple E Senate. They want the government of Canada to set up a Senate so that each province has the same voice. They want as much say in the Senate as the big guns in the east. Alberta with its population of 2 million wants as much say in the affairs of state as Ontario with its 9 million population. Yet the people of Alberta who are asking for the Triple E Senate don't want to give the rural area of the province the same voice as the urban. They can't have their cake and eat it, or maybe they can. Does the one who wears the Gucci shoes think he's smarter than the one who wears the gum boots?

This is a very serious situation, especially for us in Bashaw. Before the 1986 election Bashaw was part of the Camrose constituency. Then we got moved to Stettler prior to the last election, and if our boundary change goes through, goodness knows where we'll be next.

As I pointed out at the beginning, this is a very serious matter for the rural area, and I hope this committee will give preferred consideration to our request.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Martin. First of all, with regard to the advertising, I don't know.

MR. PRITCHARD: I'll take your complaint up with Smith and Smith. We're not running out of money, and they were to cover thoroughly each constituency that we were going to, so I'll address that with them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you ensure that we respond to Martin? I'd like to see it before we do.

MR. PRITCHARD: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Secondly, the makeup of the committee. Because this is a select special committee of the Assembly and all three political parties are represented, each caucus selected its membership. Obviously the governing party, which has the majority, picked the chairman and the vice-chairman, but the

Liberal caucus selected Frank Bruseker as their member and the New Democratic caucus selected Tom Sigurdson and Pam Barrett as their members. All three of the opposition members are from the two metropolitan centres. The Progressive Conservative caucus selected one Calgary member, Pat Black; one northern rural member, Mike Cardinal; one Red Deer member, Stockwell Day; and another rural member, myself. So let me be clear. Each caucus selected the individual or individuals who would sit on the committee to represent their caucus. I don't know whether the other parties wish to comment or not, but that's the process.

Now, are there any other questions panel members have for Martin? Yes, Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Martin, further on Gloria's comments earlier about the Charter of Rights, when I go through these hearings I wrestle back and forth and end up at the same place at the end of the day. Could you define for me what representation is? Because I think that's the starting point.

MR. BURNS: It all depends on where you live, Pat, which word you call representation. You're talking about population because of . . .

MRS. BLACK: No, no. I'm just asking you: what is your definition of representation? Don't ask me.

MR. BURNS: Where every person in Alberta can get to his government person, where we all have one person we can go to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tom, on this point.

MR. SIGURDSON: Martin, do you see any difference, then, between a person who has to drive 60 kilometres – and I just took that as an arbitrary number – to get to see their member of the Legislature . . . That takes an hour. There's a constituency of 9,000 people. The other is an urban constituency where you've got 30,000. You've got two people waiting in line to see a member and they have to wait an hour. Is there a difference in that hour?

MR. BURNS: Yeah, there is.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay.

MRS. HANKINS: You should be able to make an appointment. You should be able to keep it on time.

MR. BURNS: We have to take the two hours to get there. We came 100 kilometres to get here tonight.

MR. KIRTLEY: Mr. Chairman, there is a difference to the extent that the two that are standing in line don't have to worry about traffic. They're not putting their lives in their hands every time somebody on the road does the wrong thing. For every kilometre you travel, you have to put up with that kind of thing.

MR. CARDINAL: I just have a comment for Martin in the area of representation which Pat brought forward. We can talk about numbers, we can talk about urban/rural, but from what I've heard in attending all the presentations, I think Albertans are asking for a good quality of life for all Albertans. We should try and set aside urban/rural. We should try and set

aside numbers and make sure that as a committee we design a system that will leave a good quality of life for all Albertans now and in the future. I think that if we keep that in mind and work together as Albertans, we can achieve it, but if we start to see urban/rural problems here and there, I don't think we'll ever get anywhere and we'll continue having problems. I think that's what I hear, and when we talk about representation, that's what we should look at.

MRS. BLACK: Martin, can I go back again? I'm trying to get a good feel for where you're coming from. Do you believe in Triple E Senate?

MR. BURNS: I believe in it. Yes, I do.

MRS. BLACK: So you would be in favour of regional representation?

MR. BURNS: No, no. You're going back to another way. We are talking about a Triple E Senate here in Alberta. We're the ones that have pushed it. We've got a population of 2 million people. Right? Again, we're talking about Ontario, which has a population of 9 million. We want the same voice. We want the same representation. What I'm saying is that the rural area wants the same representation as the urban. Don't give me population figures. I'm not interested in that, because that's not what Triple E Senate's all about.

MRS. BLACK: No, I wasn't. I was just asking if you'd be in favour of regional representation for distribution within Alberta that lines up with Triple E Senate.

MR. BURNS: No, not regional. I don't understand when you're talking about regional. There are regional governments that take in four counties, but that isn't an answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think he's saying that if Alberta's going to argue the case on the national scene for a Triple E Senate, then there should be the same consistency applied provincially. That's the way I read you.

MRS. BLACK: You agree with that?

MR. BURNS: That's what I'm saying. Yeah.

MR. SIGURDSON: I just want to follow up on Pat's question as well. We've argued that each political jurisdiction in Canada in the Triple E concept should have equal representation in the second House in the Houses of Parliament. Would you argue, sir, that every municipal district regardless of its size should have representation at a provincial level?

MR. BURNS: Yes.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions from the audience?

MR. McARTHUR: I'd just like to go back to Mike's comments. I think he hit the nail on the head. I rather liked his comments, because this is what it's all about: getting the services that are required to the people and sharing the workload amongst all the MLAs. In order to do that, you've got to determine where the workload is and share that workload amongst the MLAs. It is

very hard, I know, for one MLA to know what the workload of the other MLA is, but if they could just change positions and make or shift an operation or position after they are elected – maybe they should serve a portion of their term in one constituency and have a system where they are made to serve a different constituency for a portion of their term and then come back to their own. They would learn the other problems, and it would be for their betterment also. Really I think Mike is the guy who's got the thing figured out. You've got to ultimately try and serve all the population and even them out right across the province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Yes, sir.

MR. GUST: Yes. I'd just like to reinforce the last statement; that was basically what I was going to say. I liked that statement. Over and above that, I have an observation, and it's probably not relevant to this group; however, I think it has some varied relevancy in the total [inaudible]. I'm thinking of a different level entirely. I'm thinking of the world council where we have the type of rule and decision-making representation that is there. I'm thinking of two particular countries that both start with a capital "C" and end with "A." They have the same representation, yet the numbers are quite different as far as population. I'm referring to China and Canada. Just think of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Here first and then Gloria.

MR. NORTH: I have a little trouble with that in the fact that maybe one year you're going to be represented by a Progressive Conservative, and the next year you're going to be represented by a New Democrat, and the next year by a Liberal in the same constituency, if you're going to follow the lead of your MLAs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gloria.

MRS. BERGMAN: I would like to ask the urban MLAs: do you feel that when you are the representative, you are only the representative for your constituency, or do the 17 MLAs from Edmonton represent every person in Edmonton and therefore that city has 17 representatives, whereas a rural constituency has one?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pat.

MRS. BLACK: Could I answer that, Gloria? I'm an urban MLA, and I am in the government caucus. I am the vice-chairman of forestry and natural resources for the government caucus. I'm on the environment caucus, and I'm on economic affairs. So I see all three sides for the government caucus. I'm on 13 committees; four or five of them are House standing committees that have had public hearings. I have traveled rural Alberta, and it's been very beneficial for me. I've really enjoyed it, and it's been a tremendous education. But when I sit in forestry caucus or I sit in environment caucus or I sit in economic affairs, I'm not representing Calgary-Foothills. I'm representing the people of Alberta in the government caucus and in the government committees. That's my job.

When I'm chairing committees – I chair a standing committee in the House – I'm there to represent all people in the province; I can show no bias as an urban or rural person. These commit-

tees are made up of all three parties, and you have to work on behalf of everyone. It's not optional that you are working for Calgary-Foothills. If I was working for Calgary-Foothills, I could tell you the comments from my riding, but I haven't done that because I'm on a select committee. My responsibility is to report back to the Legislature as a member of this committee, and that's the obligation that we took on when we were assigned this task. So we don't serve just our own ridings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's let the other two respond if they wish. Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: I just want to underscore Pat's comments. I pretty much share her sentiments. There are specific occasions when, contrary to what you've heard tonight, there are issues that are strictly related to my constituency. At those points I do go out and I try and represent my constituents to the best of my ability on those specific matters. When I have matters that are provincially related and with respect to the caucus responsibilities that I have in the Legislature, I represent those matters on behalf of all Albertans. When I have certain other obligations as an Edmonton member, then I represent the city. So it depends on each issue, but at all times I am trying to be cognizant of the best interests of the province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. I guess when I got elected or when I chose to run to try and get elected and subsequently did win, I decided to run in Alberta as an MLA, as opposed to run federally as an MP, because I'm an Alberta boy, born and raised and proud of it, by the way. I decided that I wanted to run in the constituency where I happen to live, but I feel that I represent all Albertans. There are times when all MLAs in Calgary - for example, we already have an appointment for all of the MLAs in Calgary to go over to the University of Calgary to hear from the university what their concerns are. I have also spoken to people in rural constituencies who have concerns that they don't feel are being addressed by the government member, so sometimes they come to me as an opposition member and say, "Hey, can you rattle the cage a little bit, and maybe you'll get a response, because we don't get it from our MLA because our MLA is, maybe, a backbencher who doesn't seem to get the response." So I've had people from Olds-Didsbury ask me to raise issues about their constituency; I've had people from Cypress-Redcliff ask me to raise issues that are concerns in their constituency. It's all over the place.

The other thing that I want to mention, too, is that my constituency is primarily a residential constituency in that there's not much industry other than shopping, which Pat is an expert at.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank, your last comment is not unlike a member for Calgary-North West calling a government member for a response.

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that happens.

MR. BRUSEKER: The other thing I was going to say is that because my constituency is a residential constituency, when they get up in the morning and go off to work, probably 90 percent

of them don't live on their job as farmers do. Farmers live on the job. My constituents will take off and scatter across the city and in fact out of the city. I've had people say, "Listen, I want you to come and see what my job is all about." I had one guy call me and say: "I'm having a problem with getting some machinery into the province. Can you come and help me?" I had to travel across, so you go all over the place. You don't look just at your own constituency; you do what it is your constituents ask you to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Gloria.

MRS. BERGMAN: If I were living in Calgary, I could access myself to 17 people in a hurry, whereas if I were living in Mike's constituency and I wanted to get some information today and he's down here, I'd have to go to Fort McMurray or something and fly. You know, this is the accessibility factor that comes into play.

MR. SIGURDSON: I just want to respond to that. When people come to my office, if they want to deal with me directly as a constituent, that's fine. If people come from outside the constituency, I'll ask them the reason why they're coming to me, and if it's because they don't like their MLA, then I'll deal with that matter. If it's because they don't know who their member of the Legislature is, and more often than not that's the case, then I refer that matter back to the member of the Legislature who properly represents them. I think that's important. I've got enough of a workload in my constituency without having to take on the load of other members, and I always try and make that point with those people that do cross over. If they've got something against another member, if they feel they can't work with that member, then I'm happy to work with them. If, however, it's just out of ignorance that they've crossed over a constituency boundary, I do try and refer them back to their member, because I believe that member has the right to represent that person.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other concluding comments anyone would like to make? Yes, sir.

MR. SCHORAK: Mr. Chairman, quite often tonight I heard the committee ask for a definition of MLA representation, and quite often I heard the response "accessibility." I just want to clarify that from my own point of view and that of a lot of people I've talked to. While accessibility is important, that's not representation. In the 35 years I had in urban Alberta, accessibility was always available even though they have larger ridings. Then getting into rural Alberta, accessibility was good until some by-election last May; after that it wasn't so great. But what's really important under representation is the kind of programs that your MLAs and your government implement, the kind of leadership they provide, and the direction they're going. That's what I look at when I look at my MLA and what he is doing for us in representation. That's a different side of the interpretation of representation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much, Paul. Yes.

MR. NORTH: Tom, I was wondering. When you were giving the figures on the size of the constituencies, were those eligible

voters? What I'm getting at is: in the constituency of Stettler, we have many Hutterite colonies. I think maybe all of them are enumerated, but very few of them vote. Were they included in the figures that you were giving?

MR. SIGURDSON: There were two sets of figures that I gave you. In the first set of figures we used just the enumeration list. For your information, with the enumeration for the constituency of Stettler there are 11,345 eligible voters. If we take it by the 1986 census, which is the best that we can do, there is a total population of 17,445. In both instances it falls below the suggested variance, but they are different figures.

MR. NORTH: Another question I was going to ask you, and it's been partially answered, I guess, was: when you questioned Paul as to whether he thought you should ignore the Charter of Rights, I wondered if you were referring to the Alberta human rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

MR. SIGURDSON: The Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

MR. NORTH: The other thing I would bring up is that we know all about concerns coming to our constituency office that really don't pertain to our constituency, having the Premier as our MLA.

MR. SIGURDSON: I'm sure you must.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else have a concluding comment they'd like to make? Yes, Doug.

MR. JOHNSON: I've just got a couple of comments to make, if it's okay. For one, I hope that the urban MLAs who are on this panel don't think that we belittle their job or think that they don't work, because I know you guys work damn hard. I know their caseloads, type of thing - I guess you could call it - in some instances get pretty hectic when you've got a whole bunch of rent increases or something like that. I know you guys do your part.

The other thing is that I hope you don't think rural Alberta is a bunch of whiners and criers. It may come across as that, but we're a little scared, and what scares us is when we pick up a newspaper or we listen to a radio report - and I use this one example: the city of Edmonton has got sewer problems. They just don't seem to want to deal with that themselves. They seem to be looking at the provincial government to bail them out. When you're sitting back in Endiang - and I'm looking after my own sewer, my own well - this type of thing gets a little scary when I think there are 17 MLAs there. Are they going to say, "Yeah, okay, we'll grant you a bunch of money." I think this is the part that a lot of us are scared of, the representation. If you increase the number of MLAs, what could happen is that the two major urban centres, Calgary and Edmonton, will be able to have the balance of power. If they choose to use it, they'll be able to say: "All right. We're going to fix this or that here, but the rest of you are out of luck."

MR. SIGURDSON: Doug, I really appreciate the point that you make. I thank you for that. Perhaps in a different way you've drawn a parallel to some of the concerns that have been expressed in urban Alberta as well. They feel, again through some of their presentations that have been made to our committee, that without having a different kind of reflection in

the electoral makeup of our province, maybe some of their concerns are going to be ignored. So that's the balance that we're trying to find. That's the tightrope that we're walking. But I do appreciate your comments. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Go ahead, Pat.

MRS. BLACK: To Doug's question. You sit sometimes and you feel that when you go out into rural Alberta, it would be really nice to be in rural Alberta because a rural MLA can go down the street and they know Fred and Ralph and Joe and everybody on the council.

MR. NORTH: Audrey.

MRS. BLACK: Audrey. The whole bit. An urban MLA can't do that because of the size and number of people. Frank has 14,000 households, and I have 13 and a half thousand, and it's house after house after house.

Who's on a municipal council? Anybody on a municipal council? How would you like to sit in the city of Calgary? You deal with one MLA. Our city council has to deal with 18 MLAs from three different political parties. Reverse it. Think how our council feels. Our school board has three political parties and 18 of us to deal with. You can call in one poor MLA and sit him on the hot seat and all of you go at him. We go in and we almost overshadow the council, and we have three distinct philosophies. Our poor council almost goes, "They're going to come." It's a different philosophy. Our school board's the same way.

MR. GUST: We're trying to prevent that situation.

MR. KIRTLEY: Perhaps if I might answer you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Go ahead, Bill.

MR. KIRTLEY: How many miles of road do you have in your division?

MRS. BLACK: How many miles of road? I don't know. I have 10 communities that are distinct; I have 12 schools in total; I have a university with 20,000 students in it eight to nine months of the year.

MR. KIRTLEY: My point is that we have 1,400 miles of gravel road and another couple of hundred miles of pavement.

MRS. BLACK: I don't have the roads.

MR. KIRTLEY: How would you like that problem?

MR. BRUSEKER: In all honesty we've probably got a couple of hundred miles in an urban constituency.

MR. KIRTLEY: A couple of hundred miles? I wish we only had a couple of hundred miles.

MRS. BLACK: My riding is small in area; it's large in population and diverse in the number of communities. Every riding is distinct in Calgary. My riding isn't like Frank's, and Frank's isn't like Bonnie Laing's. Every riding is unique.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Bill, start on your point, please. Let's get back to the topic.

MR. KIRTLEY: Okay. I liked the centre part of Gloria's presentation. I think we should all read very carefully where she talked about the rural people being in danger of losing their representation. They are, after all, the biggest contributors to Alberta. I think we should maybe read through that. I can't go by it word for word.

Also, I liked what Mr. Cardinal had to say. Let's set aside numbers and make it a secondary thing. Let's see if we can't solve this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Last call. Is there anyone else who'd like to make a comment before we wrap up? Yes. Go ahead.

MR. KIRTLEY: Mr. Chairman, going back to the Charter of Rights, have there not been some decisions that have been brought down to the effect that human rights only apply where it does not affect the majority or the overall party or people that are concerned?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There may or may not have been, but the important thing to recall in this case is that this has not been before the Supreme Court of Canada. It's also important to recognize that one of the nine justices sitting around the table now, Madam McLachlin, is the judge who rendered the decision in British Columbia. But as was stated earlier, the matter has not been dealt with by the Supreme Court.

Yes, Pat.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: We should tell you that there will be a Charter challenge in Saskatchewan sometime this fall. Saskatchewan used the plus or minus 25 percent; however, they arranged it so that all the rural ridings were very close to the minus 25 percent and all the urban ridings were at the plus 25 percent. So they're going to ask the court for two decisions. The first will be whether the plus or minus 25 percent is reasonable. The court may answer that one way or the other. They're also going to ask whether their distribution between urban, rural, and northern ridings is justifiable. They could get a yes to both, they could get a no to both, or they could get a combination of yes and no. So I think you may want to watch that case, which hopefully will be heard sometime next month.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. In conclusion, I'd like to try to summarize the 11 briefs which were presented tonight. Bob started by recommending that we maintain the status quo of 42 urban/41 rural seats in our Assembly and recommended that 83 seats remain the total number. I should mention that while some have suggested variations from that - I think that was mentioned by Gloria as a possibility and a few others have in other hearings - the vast majority of presenters have recommended that we not increase the size of the Assembly, that 83 is a large enough Assembly, and that we should find our solution within that number.

Paul went on to talk about MLA representation and spent some time describing factors which should be considered. It was interesting, Paul, when you mentioned the makeup of the commission, because that, of course, is one of the tasks we have as a committee: to recommend back to the Assembly what the commission should look like. In the past, as you know, the

commission's been chaired by a judge and has had the Chief Electoral Officer. In the most recent commission there were three government members and one opposition member - and that reflected the makeup of the House at the time - and one citizen at large. Paul has suggested that we may look to the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta MDs and Cs, and that recommendation has been made before as well. There's also the question of whether we should have current MLAs sitting on the commission or not. We've looked at our neighbouring provinces, and we've seen how they handle it. So that's a factor. Paul went on to suggest an urban average and a rural average, and that's something that some of our panel members have queried others on.

Bob talked about the number of council and board members that a rural MLA must work with in a constituency like this and talked about the physical size of the riding and how important it is that that be taken into consideration. MLA travel to the capital, the distance factor. He again recommended that we maintain the current 42-41 urban/rural split in the Assembly.

Bill went on to recommend that the current balance of 42-41 be maintained.

In Gloria's contributions she suggested that the size of the constituency is the main concern and said that while she favoured maintaining the current 42-41 split, if more seats needed to be added to Calgary and Edmonton, limit that to five, if I read you correctly. Gloria went on to suggest that we look at part urban, part rural constituencies, and that's a concept that we've heard in other quarters, as well, a mix of the two.

Doug cautioned us about the pitfalls of looking at the population alone. He used agriculture as an example of how Ontario and Quebec have managed to manipulate our production so that we no longer produce food where it's most economical; we're now doing it where it's most politically expedient. While he may have overly simplified the statement, I think that's something we can all understand in this room, that representation by population must be balanced by regional or area representation.

Peter spoke of equalizing the workload for all MLAs, finding a way to ensure that there is fairness and equity in that sense, and that there be no further erosion of the rural to urban mix in our Assembly.

Lloyd talked about justifying the distances and looking at distance factors and adding that to the population when developing any formula, looking at the urban/rural split.

Diane indicated that we might set a maximum number of constituents for an urban riding and a minimum number of constituents for a rural riding and that we redraw constituencies using an urban/rural mix.

Sandra reminded us that while there may have been a court case in British Columbia, this is Alberta, and we should dare to be different.

Martin concluded the presenters tonight by speaking of the makeup of this committee and questioning why it is made up the way it is and then went on to remind us that the Triple E Senate is something which we as a province have been striving for and asked how there can be consistency if we argue on one hand for regional representation protection at the federal level. What about the provincial level?

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the committee I want to sincerely thank you for coming out tonight. While it's true that many of the things you've said are not new to us, it's also true that you've put some new twists on things we've heard before. In each and every one of the hearings we've heard something

slightly new or slightly different. We've heard input from an area that's a little bit different from another area. One of the conclusions that we've drawn is that each community, each constituency feels it's unique. That's one of the very special things that separates us as Albertans from any others. We are unique; we are special. We do have our own characteristics, and we're mighty proud of them. We want to maintain them, and we want them protected and preserved.

So while we've been here to share with you input we've

received to date, the primary purpose of our visit was to gain your thoughts and your ideas. We know that our job, our task, is not an easy one. We're also determined to find a solution, a solution that's fair and equitable, that is a made-in-Alberta solution to this matter.

So thank you, again, so much for coming out and sharing your ideas with us tonight.

[The committee adjourned at 9:39 p.m.]

