

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

[2 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm pleased to officially open the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries meeting being held here in Brooks. I would like to introduce the committee members who are with us today. Before doing that, I'll mention that we are expecting Pam Barrett. She did let us know that she'd be a little bit late. She's driving into Brooks today and was detained. So when you see a flash come through the door and come up to the table, I'll pause at that point and introduce her to you as well.

On my immediate right is Frank Bruseker. Frank is a Liberal member of the Assembly and represents the constituency of Calgary-North West. This is Frank's first term in the Assembly. He keeps assuring the rest of us on the committee that he's no stranger to rural Alberta in that his wife is from the Manyberries area, so he does have an appreciation for rural concerns.

Moving on to my immediate left, in seating arrangements only, I assure you, is Pat Black. Pat is the Progressive Conservative MLA for Calgary-Foothills. This is her first term in the Assembly as well. In fact, Pat's and Frank's constituencies border one another. I made the mistake the other day of getting the constituencies mixed up, and that's something, as you know, that you don't do in this business. Pat's an active member of the committee as well.

Tom Sigurdson is a New Democratic member of the Assembly and represents the constituency of Edmonton-Belmont. This is Tom's second term as a member. He did have the distinction of serving as an executive assistant to the late Grant Notley, so he did travel in what was then called the Spirit River-Fairview constituency and, as well, served with Mr. Notley when he was on the Electoral Boundaries Commission, so he has some firsthand experience with this process.

We are delighted to have Pat Ledgerwood with us. Pat is the Chief Electoral Officer for the province of Alberta, and while he's not an official member of the committee, as select committees are made up of elected members only, the three political parties represented on the committee through their respective leaders asked Mr. Ledgerwood if he would join us in an *ex officio* capacity. He brings a wealth of experience not only in the provincial scene here but also in his capacity as a former commissioner when the federal government redistributed its boundaries in Alberta some years ago.

In addition to the panel members we are joined by Bob Pritchard, the senior administrator. He's the gentleman you've spoken with if you have phoned in or if you've, in all likelihood, corresponded by letter.

Ted Edwards was at the door, and you registered with Ted. By the way, the reason you registered is so that once we complete our report, we will have a mailing address so that we can send out a copy to each and every one of you in terms of process.

I'm also pleased that we have both Paula and Doug with us from *Hansard* today. As you know, we've got microphones at the table, and that's part of our recording process so that the meeting being held here in Brooks is fully recorded. Anyone who would like a copy of the transcript, we can ensure you'll receive that. We also have transcripts of the other meetings being held.

During the presentation of briefs, there's an opportunity for those of you from the audience to participate if you so desire. The only request I'd make is that you introduce yourself before you ask your question or make your comment so that *Hansard* can accurately record that. I forgot to do that the other evening

in Stettler, and poor Paula was chasing around after the meeting trying to get names for people who had spoken, so we'll try to avoid that today.

Even though there are microphones, we try hard to keep our meetings as informal as possible. The sole purpose of our being here today is to share with you some ideas we have and, more importantly, to gain from your input. We want to know what you think. We want your ideas on this important question of electoral boundaries, and that's why we're going through the hearing process. In a moment I'm going to ask Mr. Ledgerwood to lead us through a description of the British Columbia court case, the reason that our committee was struck, and that will be followed by a slide presentation giving you some of the background to these matters.

When Bob Pritchard calls you forward, and I think he will call two people at a time for presentations, the process or the procedure we follow is that the first presenter will give the report, I will then ask if committee members have any questions or comments they wish to raise, and after that has been done, then those of you in the audience have an opportunity to ask a question or make a further comment. Then we move on to the second presenter and so on through that part of the process. When we wrap up, there will be an opportunity for general comments as well.

As you know, we're leaving here so that we can go on to Rockyford for an evening meeting. We have one more meeting scheduled, and that's in Wainwright tomorrow morning. That will bring the hearing portion of this process to an end. We will by then have had 39 meetings. Nine of those meetings were in Edmonton and Calgary, two each in Red Deer and Hanna, and then one in each of a variety of other communities across the province. We've basically responded to requests where there have been a significant number of requests by individuals or organizations to come so that they could give us their briefs. We've done that. We know that there have been some briefs from this area presented both in Medicine Hat as well as in Hanna. We're also aware that because of the time of year — initially we had hoped to come in late June, and I think had we done so, there would have been more people out and possibly more briefs to be presented. So we understand that late August is not an ideal time to be going around the province to hold meetings.

I hope you will understand that from our point of view we must bring this part of our task to an end so that we may sit down and write our report. We had made a decision, a very conscientious decision, at the beginning that as a committee we would not discuss solutions until we had heard from everyone. It would hardly be fair to the people in Brooks if we already had our minds made up and had discussed and come to some consensus. So we will officially begin the task of trying to develop conclusions through a consensus on Friday; that's tomorrow. We expect that process will take us through the months of September and October. It may even take us into November, but we are committed, as you know, to a fall sitting of the Legislature so that our report may be debated, so that new legislation may be introduced and, hopefully, passed and a commission may be struck. Then the commission will spend much of 1991 developing the lines, or drawing lines, between the various constituencies in Alberta. As you know, our task is to develop the parameters to be used by the commission itself. We are to address the key issues relevant to constituencies, looking at the Charter of Rights, looking at our historical patterns in Alberta, and we'll get into that a little further when we get into the slide presentation.

Pat, would you like to proceed, please, with the British Columbia case?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Mr. Bogle has mentioned, the boundaries are controlled by legislation called the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, and that particular legislation requires that a commission be established to review the electoral boundaries after every second general election. The last commission sat in 1983-84. Since then, of course, we've had the 1986 general election and the 1989 general election. Normally, a commission would have been struck at the first sitting of the Legislature after the 1989 general election, but because of a court ruling in British Columbia, this committee was formed to receive input from Albertans.

The situation in British Columbia was that the smallest electoral division had just over 5,500 population, the largest had over 68,000, and that disparity – of course, a lot of people were aware of it and wanted something done about it. The government appointed a commission headed by Justice Fisher. It was appointed in April of 1987 and tabled a report in December of 1988. Three basic things out of that report: to eliminate the dual ridings in British Columbia, which doesn't affect us; to increase the number of MLAs from 69 to 75, which doesn't affect us; but what the Fisher commission determined was that there should be an equal vote for every elector. So they used the Charter of Rights and also checked with other jurisdictions and determined that the population of British Columbia should be divided by 75 to come up with an average, and all of the electoral divisions should be within plus or minus 25 percent of that average. The government didn't react to the Fisher commission report, and a Professor Dixon and his associates went to court. The case was heard before the chief justice of the superior court of British Columbia, Madam Chief Justice McLachlin. Her decision was that the average plus or minus 25 percent was reasonable. There was no appeal to this particular decision, and since then Justice McLachlin has been elevated to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Professor Dixon took the McLachlin decision and suggested that the B.C. government do something. They didn't do anything, so he went to court again, and the case was heard before Justice Meredith. Justice Meredith supported the McLachlin decision but said that the courts were not to govern. They could not dissolve the Legislature, and the court could not govern. They were not to legislate, and left it at that.

The British Columbia government formed a commission in 1989. The commission followed the Fisher report basically, with some minor changes, but the key point as far as we're concerned is that the population in each riding stayed within the average plus or minus 25 percent. Now, our current Act required the urban ridings to be within plus or minus 25 percent, but there was no minimum or maximum for rural ridings. So that's the situation we're in now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much, Pat. Pat, would you like to lead us through the slides, please?

MRS. BLACK: Okay. When most of you came in to the meeting today, you probably picked up a package. We're going to go through some of the slides that are attached to your package, but we'll go through them in a little more detail.

The first slide is an alphabetical listing of all the constituencies in the province, and it also shows the number of eligible voters within each constituency. The second slide is again the same constituencies; however, they're listed as to the size of the

constituencies, from the largest, being Edmonton-Whitemud, to the smallest, being Cardston. If you look at Cardston, you can see that there's a little notation beside it. Cardston has a notation because the Blood Indian reservation down there chose not to be enumerated. As most of you know, traditionally Alberta's electoral boundaries have been determined on enumerated or eligible voters. So we want to bring that to your attention.

The next slide shows you that if you add up all of those voters in the province, we have just over 1.5 million eligible voters as per the last election. We have 83 constituencies, and if you divide the 1.5 million by 83 constituencies, you have an average of eligible voters per electoral division of 18,600. Now, if you take the case in British Columbia and apply the plus and minus 25 percent rule, that means that the high would be 23,300 and the low would be 14,000 for each electoral division.

Now, if you take the same listing again and you apply the plus 25 and the minus 25, you can see in the green the ridings that are over the mean by 25 percent, and in the pink you can see the ridings that are below the mean of 18,000 by 25 percent or more. The riding of Bow Valley is in the pink with 11,486 eligible voters.

Now, if you look at the province of Alberta, you can see on the map that those ridings shown in pink are those that are 25 percent or more below the mean. There are two little dots, I believe, on there that are in green that show the ridings that are 25 percent above the mean. Most of the ridings that are in pink are in a rural setting; in fact, all of them are.

The next map is of Calgary, and you can see from that that there are nine ridings over the mean by 25 percent. Then there's the map of the city of Edmonton, and again it shows that there are eight ridings which are over the mean by 25 percent. They're shown in the green again. This is the city of Lethbridge. It has two ridings in Lethbridge, and both of those ridings fit within the mean; they're not above or below. The city of Medicine Hat is the fourth largest riding in the province, and it's all in green. All those lines are just really polling station divisions.

Red Deer has Red Deer-North and Red Deer-South. It's kind of a unique situation, because this is the one riding that was changed and sort of fell out of sync in the last distribution. The brown line around there shows the municipal boundaries or the city limits of the riding. Traditionally, the electoral district has maintained itself within the city ridings, but in the last distribution Red Deer didn't have enough, really, for two ridings but was too large for one riding, so they expanded out into the rural area. The black line is the electoral boundaries, and you can see that it exceeds the municipal boundaries.

This is the city of St. Albert, and again it is above the mean by more than 25 percent. That is again polling stations that show.

This is again the map of Alberta, and this will show you those ridings that are more than 35 percent below the mean. That means they have electoral populations of 12,000 or less. This map shows you, in the yellow, that there are five ridings down there that are more than 50 percent away from the mean.

On August 14 we decided we would have additional hearings, and you can see the hearings. In fact, today we're in Brooks, and it shows that we've only two more hearings to go through before the process is over. This map with the blue dots on it shows the locations of the hearings and where the committee has traveled. We've tried to go into ridings that would be affected by redistribution. Then we've applied the map which showed those ridings that had a 35 percent variance or more, and you

can see that we've traveled to as many of those locations as possible. We've tried to really get around the province so that we had input from everyone.

Earlier on in the process – in fact, I guess it was really last fall – we talked with people, and they talked about using the full population within the riding instead of eligible voters as a determining factor for population to see if there would be a difference in distribution. So we applied the full population numbers to the statistics we had and to the individual ridings to see if that would make a difference, and in fact it did. Based on the 1986 census, the population in Alberta was 2,365,000 people. Now, if you divide that by 83 electoral districts, you see that the mean moves to 28,504 in population. Again if you apply the plus 25 percent and the minus 25 percent, you would have an upper limit of 35,600 for population and a lower limit of 21,370. I think if we go through it, we can then look at how this affects the maps and the charts.

We're back to the chart we saw before but this time with full population. You can see in green those ridings that are 25 percent or more above the mean of 28,504, and in pink are those ridings that are below the mean by 25 percent or more. Again if you apply it to the map of Alberta, it shows in pink those ridings that are 25 percent or more below the mean. Interestingly enough, there are two rural ridings now that are 25 percent or more above the mean which we didn't have before. That's up in Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie.

Now, this is the map of Calgary, and with using the full population, we now only have seven ridings that are above the mean by 25 percent as opposed to nine ridings when we were using the enumeration listing.

In the city of Edmonton, using full population again, we only have seven ridings that are above the 25 percent variance, and when we used the enumeration, we had eight ridings.

If you look at the map of Alberta, the purple indicates those ridings that have a variance of 35 percent or more. You can see that with using the population, there are 12 ridings that are still 35 percent or more away from the mean, where when we used the enumeration numbers, we had 16 ridings that were 35 percent or more away. One of the biggest changes is when you look at the ridings that had a variance of 50 percent or more. In the first slide we had five ridings when we used enumeration numbers, and in this, when we use full population, we only have one riding, which is Pincher Creek-Crowsnest.

The committee traveled to other jurisdictions to try and gather information as to what they had done with regard to electoral boundaries. They went into Regina, Winnipeg, and then out to Victoria. We compared notes to see what they were doing and how we could address the problems and compare notes along the way. We will have had 39 hearings in total. They're listed up above, and you can see that we've been to basically all the centres that were going to be affected. We've had well over 700 people attend the meetings to date; I don't know where we'll end up, but well over 700. We've had more than 300 presentations and quite a bit more than 115 written submissions.

Are there any questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much, Pat.

Okay, if there are no questions, I think we're ready to proceed, then, with the presentations. Bob, the first two, please.

MR. PRITCHARD: Could I ask Ford Workes and Glen Lyster to come up, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome. Ford, would you like to begin?

MR. WORKES: Thank you, Bob. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Chairman, and members of the select special committee on boundaries review. My name is Ford Workes. I am a member of the council of the county of Newell No. 4.

After study and discussion of this subject, we have been asked to make this presentation to you on behalf of the people of the county of Newell. We recognize that the task you have before you is not an easy one. Even if you have heard these arguments before, we feel they are important enough to be repeated. We believe we can assist you in making good, sensible decisions in this matter, so we would like to talk to you about some of our concerns.

One concern is that we could lose our MLA, Mr. Tom Musgrove, thereby losing the good, effective representation that we now enjoy. We are sure our neighbouring jurisdictions do not wish to lose their representatives either. If the proposed 25 percent plus or minus of the average comes into being, we may lose our representative or perhaps gain a large portion of a neighbouring jurisdiction. Neither of these alternatives is fair or acceptable to us.

We do not wish to lose our representative, for obvious reasons. Mr. Tom Musgrove is presently serving 18 different boards and authorities in the Bow Valley constituency plus serving the general public as well. We do not feel that it is reasonable to add to his workload by bringing in possibly 7,000 more people plus the increased mileage he will be required to travel in order to meet the 25 percent more or less theory. Bow Valley is presently 35 percent below the average. Mr. Tom Musgrove would be hard pressed to properly meet the needs of this increased electorate. We ask you to let us continue with a system that is working well and does not need any change.

We offer this suggestion as a possible method of solving the discrepancy in numbers. If we refer to the statistics we have been given, we note that all jurisdictions that exceed the 25 percent plus average, 19 in all, are urban areas. Likewise all constituencies that are more than 25 percent below the average, 24 in all, are rural areas. We suggest that we have an average for urban areas and an average for rural areas in order to balance the jurisdictions. It seems relatively simple to adjust a few city blocks and much more difficult to add or subtract many miles of rural area. Most of all, we do not feel this change is necessary.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, we sincerely appreciate being allowed to present to you our point of view. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ford.

Questions from the committee? Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you for your presentation. You're arguing that the province maintain the ratio of urban to rural split: 42 urban seats and 41 rural seats. Something that's not specific to Alberta or unique to Alberta is rural depopulation. Currently there are approximately 60 percent of Albertans living in urban centres and 40 percent living in rural parts of the province. If rural depopulation continues, is there a point on that line that you would ever see or argue that it might be necessary to change the ratio?

MR. WORKES: I think my argument is that we're talking about representation, and regardless of what we may arrive at as a population, the important part is that each area have very effective representation. I suppose there has to be a minimum at some time; I don't think we've reached it to this point.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Chairman, maybe I could just follow up then. I've got the map of Alberta, and I've tried to draw two highways, Highway 3 in Pincher Creek-Crowsnest and Highway 2 in Peace River. In Pincher Creek-Crowsnest and in Peace River, both constituencies, the population settlements are along the highways: Pincher Creek and then the municipality of Crowsnest; and in Peace River the municipalities of Grimshaw, Peace River, High Level, Manning. Pincher Creek has a voter population of under 10,000. Peace River has a population of over 15,000. Would you argue, sir, that there's no reason to increase the size of the Pincher Creek-Crowsnest constituency?

MR. WORKES: As long as they are receiving good, effective representation, perhaps it can be increased. But, as I repeat, the important part is: if you increase it, will they receive good representation? I think the population isn't the thing. The thing is: are you going to increase it to the point where the representative in that area can handle the job? Is it too big an area for him?

MR. SIGURDSON: Do you think these people up here are receiving less representation then?

MR. WORKES: I don't know. I'm worried about that.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Yes, Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thanks for your presentation, Mr. Workes. In your presentation you were advocating two averages, one for rural and one for urban. Are you suggesting that if we were to recommend that we would then have a 25 percent variation for the urban and a 25 percent variation for the rural?

MR. WORKES: Yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. I did some quick calculation, and I'm probably reasonably close. If we were to do that, the upper end of the urban could be as high as 27,500 and the lower end for the rural would be as low as 10,500, a difference of some 17,000. Would you be comfortable with that kind of discrepancy in population in constituencies, where there could be as much as a 17,000 variation?

MR. WORKES: I don't feel that the gist of the problem in the cities and in the rural area is comparative. I think the problems handled in the city are handled much easier because of the small area involved.

MR. BRUSEKER: So you wouldn't object to seeing more people in urban ridings and fewer in rural ridings then?

MR. WORKES: No, I wouldn't.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Anyone else? Anyone from the audience? Yes, ma'am.

MRS. CONNERS: Just a comment. I think . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. You may not have been here when I asked if you would identify yourself for *Hansard*, please, because this is being recorded.

MRS. CONNERS: Okay. Kay Connors from the county of Newell. I think your rural areas tend to have so many more boards they have to represent, and I think that's where your representative feedback comes from, more than just the individuals. If you've got three or four or five or six school boards and hospital boards and then councils from different municipalities . . . There's quite a difference between one city council and town and village councils – many, many in one jurisdiction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Yes, sir.

MR. DeJONG: Ted DeJong. Mr. Chairman, I have a different opinion on this altogether. I've seen the slides. I've heard your figures. It doesn't mean too much to me. I think there are lots of people in this room that believe in the Triple E Senate. Right? That is reasonable representation. You're going to throw this completely out of the window if you go this route that you describe. If people want to live in Calgary or Edmonton, perhaps in the low spot and in the past week they just about got drowned, that's their business.

MRS. BLACK: That's my riding.

MR. DeJONG: That's their business. But how many people in Calgary know what's going on in the country? There might be some of them that think we're milking cows by hand yet. We've got to safeguard ourselves that in this country farming is a very important enterprise, and if we don't watch it, there may be 3 or 4 percent left that are representing provincial or federal things from agriculture. We've got nothing to say anymore. This explains itself in the animal care, in pollution, and in so many things. In the cities they have no more brains about what goes on back in the country . . . I would suggest: keep the boundaries as they are. Whether they want to live in Calgary – fine, but keep the country represented as is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before we go on, the two points raised in the audience – one, that you take into account the number of councils and boards that an MLA works with, and, secondly, the concept of a Triple E Senate – have been raised repeatedly in other meetings we've had. So those points are well documented and will be in our record. Anyone else before we move on to Glen?

Okay. Glen.

MR. Lyster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm Glen Lyster, the president of the Brooks and District Chamber of Commerce. I guess when I was preparing my brief I thought what we have to do, if you're going to go back and make sense out of this in Edmonton, is give you some facts and not an emotional appeal, because you can't go and say that the people in Brooks and district said because they feel this way we're going to leave it the same. I guess you just mentioned a few of the facts right there.

You're aware that Mr. Musgrove represents five school boards, three hospital boards, four villages, two town councils, and four rural municipalities. He covers 12,719 square miles, and he's a four and a half hour drive from the Legislature Building. Now, through my term with the chamber of commerce

I've been involved in various meetings and dinners and presentations, and whenever Tom comes flying in the back door and sits at the table with me, I say, "What have you been doing?" He's been driving all over the entire country. The man works seven days a week. I can't believe the hours he puts in. When I met with him last week, he had just gotten in at 1 o'clock in the morning. So I guess what we can gather from that is that it's impossible to give him more constituency to represent, because he just won't be able to do it. He does have to sleep.

If you consider Brooks as being the hub of the wheel, the spokes are: his constituent has an hour and a half drive to his office here and an hour and a half the other way. If you represent that in terms of does that make sense: well, in Calgary you're 15 or 20 minutes away from your representative. I think if he's going to represent these constituents spread all over these 12,000 miles, there's no way we can make it bigger, because we have to be represented. It's just not an option.

You mentioned Triple E Senate. With my involvement in the chamber this year, we've been back east for our meeting. When we go to Edmonton, I can't believe that Albertans can scream and cry on the news that we want a Triple E Senate, and as soon as we get back home, and Calgary and Edmonton want a chance to take some power, these same people that are on the news asking for equal representation in Ottawa are saying they want all the representation in Alberta. I'm afraid that if we are Albertans, if we're western Canadians, if we believe in Triple E Senate, if we believe in equal representation, we don't have any option but to go back to Edmonton and accept the fact that in Calgary somebody is going to represent more voters than they do in rural Alberta. That's a fact. And if we're going to be together as western Canadians, this is something that we'll have to . . . How are we going to make a representation in Ottawa if we can't even represent ourselves in western Canada and be honest with ourselves.

When I meet up with the other chambers, it happens all through everything, through all the levels of governments, through the chambers of commerce. We're constantly fighting, and saying: "No, we have to have equal representation. What's the problem?" That's just the way things are going to have to be. We're going to have to accept this or we're not going to have any credence when we go to Ottawa.

From Calgary you have one constituency meeting per year, and if you want to meet with all your constituents you can have one meeting. When Mr. Musgrove has his meetings with constituents, he has to have 14 meetings.

I guess that's about all I have. If you have some questions for me . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Glen, thank you.

Yes, Pat, and I'm sure Frank will be right after.

MRS. BLACK: Glen, first of all I want to clarify one thing: the people of Calgary and Edmonton did not ask for this process. This process came into being through our own legislation. We are required by law after every second election to review the electoral boundaries, and in fact in a lot of places in Calgary you'll find the attitude is: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. This is not something that the people of Calgary are looking forward to.

MR. LYSTER: I'm aware of that. I just referred to it as being . . .

MRS. BLACK: No. But I want you to be clear on that: that this just was not a hue and cry from Calgary or Edmonton to go through this process.

The second thing I want you to be clear on is: when we look at this 25 percent, the reason we've looked at that very closely is because we as a committee have to go back with something that is going to be constitutionally sound. There was a Charter challenge in British Columbia. Now, that isn't to say that that's the only way it can be done, but keep in mind that the judge that came down with this ruling in British Columbia has now been appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. So anything we go back with has to be constitutionally sound.

Now, my one question to you is: in your meetings – and I too am a Triple E supporter; I'll lay that out on the table right now – do you feel that there should be a list of factors that enter into distribution?

MR. LYSTER: Oh, there absolutely has to, I think. Mr. Workes gave you something to go by: a different setup for the cities and a different setup for the rural areas. You don't have an option. Because of the area that you're covering, what you've got to consider is that for Mr. Musgrove to cover this area . . . I've been in that office when he's not there during the week, and little old ladies come in and they're crying on the secretary. She's not getting paid enough for the hassle that she goes through; I'll tell you that. They're in there crying because of this and crying because of that, and I'll be in there the next day, and some older gentleman will be in there ripping a strip up and down her side. That's not her job. But unfortunately, because he's so far away, that's what happens.

But I agree with you; it comes down to that. But we also have to, as Mr. Workes said, consider the size of the area. I don't think that you have an option. If I in Alberta am paying the same taxes that you are, I have to have some representation, and I'm not going to get it if our MLA is inaccessible.

MRS. BLACK: Can I ask one more question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, and then Frank.

MRS. BLACK: Could I ask you to be as concise as you can to give me your definition of what is representation?

MR. LYSTER: I believe representation is: if I have a problem – or a compliment . . . Why does everything always have to be a problem? Maybe I'd like to tell him he's doing a good job. But if I do have a problem, I think we should be able to have access to our MLA relatively easily. As it is now, constituents have to wait one full week before they can meet with him in person. He leaves Sunday night, and he's not back until Friday. To me, it can't get any worse than that. That's the minimum that we can expect: at least once a week, the amount of people that live in this area should be able to talk to the MLA if they have a problem.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just before we carry on, if you recall when I was making introductions, I mentioned that Pam Barrett would be a little late. Well, Pam has now arrived. We're delighted to have her with us. Pam is the New Democratic member of the

Assembly for Edmonton-Highlands. She's the House leader for her party, and this is her second term in the Assembly.

MS BARRETT: Hi. Sorry I'm late. I ran into rain, and it slowed us all down.

I have a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Frank, with a question first.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, I have lots of time for committee meetings, because I only have one with my constituents. I'd like to know where you got that statistic, because I disagree with you vehemently on that point.

Nonetheless, the question I have for you . . .

MR. LYSTER: I'm sorry, which point is that?

MR. BRUSEKER: That I only have one meeting with my constituents.

MR. LYSTER: No, no. I'm talking about an annual meeting. If you have an annual meeting that's advertised, that all of your constituents can come to if they have anything, that you're going to review your year . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: You mean like a town hall meeting?

MR. LYSTER: That's correct.

MR. BRUSEKER: I have two scheduled for this fall.

MR. LYSTER: Right. But I mean, you can do it in one area, right? You don't have to travel to 14 different spots. And if you did have two meetings in your constituency, you could do one in the afternoon and one in the evening. Correct? You try doing that in the Bow Valley constituency of 12,000 miles. It's impossible.

MR. BRUSEKER: It is a huge constituency, but a portion of it is completely empty now.

MR. LYSTER: In fact, going on with that, some of the MLAs in Calgary can attend as many as two or three functions in one evening. You can attend two functions if you're asked to come to a grand opening or something here or there. It's impossible here. If he's out in Rolling Hills, he's not going to have a supper meeting there and then get to another meeting in Duchess. It's impossible.

MR. BRUSEKER: It is a big area; there's no doubt about it.

But the question I have for you is this. Even looking at some of the rural constituencies, there's a tremendous discrepancy; even forgetting the urban/rural, an obvious discrepancy. When we look at Bow Valley compared to some of the other constituencies – geographically it's probably medium size and in terms of rural constituencies is at the smaller end in terms of population – we have quite a discrepancy. How would you recommend that we eliminate or equalize some of those discrepancies between geographic area and population that exist even between the rural constituencies?

MR. LYSTER: I understand what you're coming from, and I'm not saying that you have an easy job. But I think you do have an easy solution to it in that all you have to do is look at: how

many boards does this man have to appease if something is going on? He's got five school boards and three hospital boards. I think that what you have to do is arrive at a formula that has the area that this man or lady can represent and how many boards they represent within that area. If you go into southern Alberta and somebody has a small area and they only have one school board and they don't even have a hospital board, perhaps you've got to give them a bigger job. But for this area – I understand you want to know what we're going to do over in this area. I don't have the magic answer for you. I'm just telling you that Bow Valley can't get any bigger, and we certainly can't lose our MLA.

MR. BRUSEKER: So in deciding this, we would need to include population as one, but also area, boards, distance, and . . .

MR. LYSTER: That's correct.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thanks.

MR. LYSTER: Part of my argument has been that there are MLAs in Calgary that don't represent any hospital boards. Is that possible?

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, we represent pieces of hospital boards, but I have no hospital in my constituency. Most of my constituents, for example, will go to the Foothills hospital, but they will go to any of the hospitals in the city, for that matter. So when a hospital board wants to talk to the MLAs, they call up all the MLAs. There are probably half a dozen hospitals within the city of Calgary, and if they have a point to make, they all call us. So it's kind of shared around there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pam.

MS BARRETT: Thanks. Glen, I'm sorry I'm late, so you may be repeating something here. When I walked in, I think I heard you say that you lost contact with your MLA during the week when the House is sitting.

MR. LYSTER: Personal contact, but I'm a willing and able person; I've got wheels, and I can use the telephone. But there are constituents that don't have access because of physical disabilities or because of age factors or any number of things.

MS BARRETT: Are you aware that that's virtually the case for every MLA for about half the year because the House sits, and that that is the case all across Canada?

MR. LYSTER: Right. But what time do you get back to Calgary on Friday night?

MS BARRETT: I don't live in Calgary.

MR. LYSTER: So you drive to your office for lunch, then, and you can pick up all your messages if you have any constituents that are upset.

MS BARRETT: Well, for example, I just drove from Edmonton to Brooks. I use a car phone, and I probably handled 15 calls, I would say. I'm a House leader, so I'm usually pretty busy during the day. Most of my return calls have to be done between 5:30 and 8 p.m., and that's also when I have to catch up

on correspondence, actually drafting correspondence. Are you suggesting that your MLA is in any different position with respect to returning phone calls or drafting correspondence?

MR. LYSTER: I don't think so.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

MR. LYSTER: But, I mean, you just drove down here yourself. How would you like to do that twice a week at the end of your schedule and at the beginning of your schedule: a four and a half hour drive after the Leg. finishes on Friday to get here, and then go in to work Saturday morning and Sunday if there are enough people that have problems?

MS BARRETT: I guess I would answer by saying that it's also quite convenient to fly from Edmonton to Calgary and then drive from Calgary. I happen to know that there are a number of MLAs that do that.

The other thing, of course, is that if, for instance, I have twice the number of constituents as the riding of Bow Valley, while the demands of the physical geography for the MLA for Bow Valley may be greater, the demands by sheer numbers for a city MLA with twice the number of constituents may compensate for that.

MR. LYSTER: I don't think so. Not if you consider the number of boards that he has to be involved with.

MS BARRETT: But are you aware that in cities, for example – in any small riding you'll be dealing with half a dozen community leagues, a number of volunteer agencies? A couple of nights ago during hearings someone made the same type of submission that you are making, and I counted 20 inner-city agencies that I deal with, all of them at least once a month. I didn't put that on the record at the time.

What I'm asking is: do you not recognize that while there are differences between the jobs of a rural MLA who may represent a large geography and an urban MLA who may represent a small geography with a large population, overall the number of work hours and the general accessibility must be about the same?

MR. LYSTER: I wouldn't be able to tell you for sure. I think probably your argument is sound, but I haven't followed you around for a day either. I don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a point of interest. One of the things that's always amazed me, and I think this equates to rural and urban MLAs alike – I'll use my own constituency as an example. I can spend a week and a half holding what I call pre-session meetings around the riding, and during that period of time I'll hold about three full days in Taber because it's the largest community in the constituency I represent. At the end of the third day, and let's assume it's a Friday, I can pick up a grocery cart in either the IGA store or Safeway to pick up a few items for my wife, and invariably someone will stop me in the store and say, "Oh, by the way, I've been meaning to ask you . . ." Now, sometimes it's an issue that wasn't that critical; it could wait a month or so. But on one occasion it was a senior with a pension matter, and it was very serious. I said: "Why didn't you call me? I've been here holding meetings." "Oh, I didn't want to bother you." So the personal contact that we all face

regardless of where we live in the province is very important with our constituents.

MS BARRETT: Sure. That happens to all of us, Bob, as you know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the point I made. I said urban and rural.

MR. LYSTER: Your point on the airbus. If you timed yourself from your office to here today and then the next time you come down you take the airbus, you're not saving yourself a lot of time. It's nice to fly on the airplane and not do that Highway 2 and all the traffic and things like that, but you're not saving any time. By the time you get into the airport, get out of the airport, get your car and stuff, you're timing is . . .

MS BARRETT: May I comment?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. The point about that is that it is less stressful. You may not save a lot of time, but you're not flying the plane.

I'm not familiar with the daily schedule of a lot of MLAs from rural ridings, although I know all of them. I am familiar with, for instance, two who sit in our caucus, one being the Member for West-Yellowhead, the other being the Member for Vegreville. West-Yellowhead has a convenient factor: it appears to be quite a large constituency, but most of the people are actually located in three or four fairly large-sized towns. In Vegreville that's not the case. Derek Fox is the representative. I know you said, "Gee, you can't go to two different events on the same night." That riding appears to be about half the size of Bow Valley geographically, and I think it is considerably more populous. Nonetheless, I know that Derek can go to three events in one evening and literally cover from one end to the other. So I'm not sure that it is impossible. Sometimes it is; there's no question that sometimes it is. But I'm not sure that it is impossible.

MR. LYSTER: You're not sure about that?

MS BARRETT: No, because I know Derek so well and because I . . .

MR. LYSTER: Well, I'm not sure what Derek flies, but you can't get from one end of this constituency to the other in the evening and go to two different events.

MS BARRETT: No. I'm suggesting that – I did include the factor of the size difference. But I do know that Derek can go to three, for example, and start at one end of his riding and end up at another, and if that riding is geographically half the size of the Bow Valley riding, surely it cannot be impossible under all circumstances to be at one event at 6 p.m., leave it at 7, and arrive at another 9 p.m. That cannot be impossible, would you agree?

MRS. CONNERS: In some cases, yes.

MS BARRETT: No, it cannot be impossible. Sometimes it will be, but my question was: it's not always impossible.

MR. LYSTER: So why would he show up at an event at 9 o'clock at night if it started at 6? Don't you think he'd look a little strange? We'd all wonder what our MLA was doing if he showed up for meetings two hours late all the time.

MS BARRETT: No, no. If you've got two events, let's say one of them is a sociable event where you're participating in the dance that goes with the summer fair, for instance, and another event started earlier, such as a meeting . . .

MR. LYSTER: That could be possible if we all phoned Tom before we scheduled all our events, but usually the chamber organizes a dinner and then we phone and tell him to be there. We don't usually say, "Tom, when can you come?" It's like "It starts at 6:30, and please be there."

MS BARRETT: Yes, I understand that. Okay. I guess my point is lost on you.

MR. LYSTER: I think it's lost, yeah.

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone from the audience?

MR. SIGURDSON: I had a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see your hand, Tom.

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

MR. LYSTER: I think we have a problem with that in western Canada – if we believe in majority rule – simply because we're growing older by the minute expecting Ottawa to start giving us some respect, and we all are forcing – not "we-all," but hopefully most of us are forcing this Triple E Senate thing and you're tired of hearing it. I'm tired of hearing it in Alberta and then seeing the hypocrites turn around behind closed doors and say we don't believe in equal representation by this population down there in Brooks, Alberta. We deserve to be equally represented, and I think until we get united and say yes, we don't stand a chance. We've got to live what we're saying, otherwise they don't have to pay any attention to us in eastern Canada.

MR. SIGURDSON: So you don't believe in majority rule?

MR. LYSTER: I don't think I said that.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, let me give you the question again. Do you believe in majority rule?

MR. LYSTER: I don't know if you can nail it down to "Do you believe in majority rule?" and say "Yes, the majority rules." I don't think that we can do that. No, I guess I don't, because I believe in Triple E Senate. So I don't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. NICKEL: Majority rule as long as it doesn't interfere with the rights of the minority. There's a difference there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, there's another factor that has been mentioned at some of the hearings, and that is that in Canada

and in the United States we have a bicameral system. We have an upper and a lower House. So while in the lower House – in the case of the United States you've got very strict representation by population; you have a balance in the upper House, where each state regardless of its population has two Senators. So there is the balance. Even in Ottawa, as unequal as we feel our Senate is, there is, on paper in any event, a balance in that there's a Senate with equal representation from regions and a lower House based on population.

In Alberta we have a unicameral House; we have one House. So what we've traditionally had from 1905 to now is a blending – a blending – of population and regions, and that's why historically we've seen roughly seven urban votes equaling four rural votes. I suggest to you, ladies and gentlemen, that if it were not for the court case in British Columbia and the Charter of Rights, at this moment we'd have a commission at work – not a committee of the Assembly but a commission – redrawing boundaries in Alberta. I also suspect that it would be based on the same 7-4 ratio.

We are now charged as a committee of the Assembly to look at a lot of different factors and come up with a formula, a solution which will take into account the Charter and try to ensure that we don't run into the same problem they did in British Columbia. Now, we can't guarantee that. We may come back with a set of recommendations. Those recommendations might be adopted by the Assembly. They could be challenged in court, and this could go all the way to the Supreme Court of the country. So be it. We're still determined to have a made-in-Alberta solution.

MR. DeJONG: Well, Mr. Chairman, it was asked: do you believe in the majority ruling? I'd like to counter question this: why does a minority government have better policies and better government than a majority government?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's very subjective.

MR. SIGURDSON: Maybe I could just ask one question of Glen in that you answered the question about majority rule. Would it be acceptable to you to have a minority group impose its will on the majority?

MR. LYSTER: It's happening right now. Have you watched the news the last couple of weeks?

MR. SIGURDSON: I'm asking if it's acceptable to you. I'm not asking if it's happening now.

MR. LYSTER: It's acceptable across Canada. I mean, our country is being run by the minority right now because the Caucasian voter doesn't get out and vote any more. Until we get upset enough and get out there and get it done, we're going to be run by the minorities, and we are right now today on either end of the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Anyone else?

All right; thanks very much, Glen.

MR. LYSTER: Thank you. Oh, I meant to thank you for coming and at least asking us before you just went ahead and did something.

MR. PRITCHARD: Could I have the next two presenters come up? Monte Solberg and Jean Franklin.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Monte, would you like to proceed, please.

MR. SOLBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, committee members, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, thank you for bringing these public hearings to Brooks. Despite the small turnout for these meetings, I can assure you that this chance to participate directly in formulating legislation is very much appreciated by the grand majority of Albertans.

The whole subject of electoral boundary reform probably to most people appears to be pretty dry stuff, but I believe that's because most people don't understand how these reforms can affect them. At stake for those of us in underpopulated rural areas such as Bow Valley is the possibility that our MLA may become almost entirely inaccessible to us. If constituencies like Bow Valley are enlarged, not only will our MLA be forced to spend even more time driving; he or she will face the even more onerous likelihood that they will be forced to deal with even more village councils, school boards, hospital boards, and literally dozens of other groups and individuals and businesses. Urban MLAs contrarily often only have to deal with one of each of these bodies or perhaps several MLAs are available to deal with each group, such as would be the case in Edmonton or Calgary, as Mr. Bruseker pointed out.

It's my concern that rural Albertans could not expect even the most basic level of access to their MLA under any proposal that would see constituencies grow larger. This really goes to the heart of an issue that all parties claim to be concerned about, that being the loss of population in rural areas in Alberta. Any proposal that would suggest that rural constituencies be enlarged, thereby diminishing rural representation in the Legislature, could only exacerbate the problem. Less clout in the Legislature would inevitably mean less government support for rural programs, which would mean more people heading to the cities, and on and on the cycle goes.

Finally, I find it extraordinarily ironic that this has now become an issue in Alberta considering the overwhelming support in this province for a Triple E Senate. Albertans have long been cognizant of the injustice of government solely on the basis of representation by population. This has manifested itself in outright anger towards central Canada, where of course the bulk of the Canadian population resides, and I believe there is a very real possibility that this type of animosity will build in Alberta between rural and urban centres, particularly if the cities are given the decided edge in representation in the Legislature.

I therefore urge you to maintain the present balance in the Legislature between rural and urban areas. Having said that, I must also tell you that I sympathize with the difficult position you are in. No doubt there is pressure from the cities for more representation, and for the Liberal and NDP members, if past patterns hold, there are probably good political reasons for supporting calls for more urban representation. Still, I would ask you at least for now to resist those pressures. Rural Alberta is already in poor shape for many different reasons, and any move that could give it even less clout in the government of Alberta would be devastating. In the long run, I strongly believe that a provincial type of Triple E Senate could address the concerns of urban and rural dwellers alike, and I urge your committee to investigate the implications and viability of a provincial Senate. In the meantime, until solutions can be found to address the problems that would arise by tipping the balance too far in favour of the cities, I urge you to maintain the present equitable balance of rural to urban representation in the Alberta Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thanks for your presentation, Monte. As was pointed out, the reason we're here is because legislation that was previously introduced in the Assembly would probably not be valid any longer under our Charter. Are you suggesting to this committee that we recommend that we ignore the Charter of Rights?

MR. SOLBERG: I'm suggesting that the courts, as they pointed out, shouldn't be the ones who govern. Maybe it's time we changed the Charter then. I don't know. But what I'm suggesting ultimately: if you people can't come to terms with giving some representation through the present formula to the rural areas, then maybe at some point down the road or maybe right away we should look at a different system that guarantees we'll all have proper representation.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Mr. Chairman, if I could follow up on that then. If we're going to look at a different kind of political makeup, the Triple E argument that's been presented throughout the countryside, throughout western Canada, is that we've always argued that each political jurisdiction in Canada should carry the same weight regardless of its population. If we were to accept that argument, which is one of the feelings I'm getting here today, would you then suggest that the town of Brooks as a political jurisdiction should have the same kind of representation, the same equal number of representatives in a provincial council, as, say, the city of Calgary?

MR. SOLBERG: I'm not quite sure I understand what you're saying.

MR. SIGURDSON: You've got political jurisdictions that you're trying to have some form of representation with. Alberta would have an equal number of Senators.

MR. SOLBERG: Okay. You're talking about a Senate.

MR. SIGURDSON: A Senate at that level. If you're going to give political jurisdictions power and if Brooks is a political jurisdiction and Edmonton is a political jurisdiction, would you give them both equal voice in some forum – let's call it a provincial Legislature – one representative from each area?

MR. SOLBERG: I guess I can't answer that question until I ask you a question, and that would be: why would you set the limit at the town of Brooks?

MR. SIGURDSON: I could take Bashaw.

MR. SOLBERG: But that's taking it to the point of the ridiculous.

MR. SIGURDSON: No. What I'm trying to do is point out that if you've got political jurisdictions and a municipalities Act that proposes what a political jurisdiction is, then you're going to have an extraordinary variance in population, anywhere from I don't know how many hundreds to 400,000 or 500,000. Now, if that's a political jurisdiction in the definition, is that acceptable?

MR. SOLBERG: Let me explain. I haven't really given this much thought. Maybe the best way to answer this is to explain roughly how I would see something like that working. I would think that you would group areas together, areas of roughly common concern. I think what you would do is take cities, for instance. You might give a city like Calgary a couple of Senators, and you might take a corner of southern Alberta and give them two Senators and the other corner two Senators and break it up something like that so it makes some sense. I mean, to take Brooks and give them a Senator and Calgary a Senator is ridiculous.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thanks for your presentation, Monte. You talked in your presentation about equitable representation, and I just want to pose a question for you. If you take the three constituencies across the southern part of the province – Cardston, Taber-Warner, and Cypress-Redcliff – and sum the number of electors there, there's about 30,000; Edmonton-Whitemud has 30,000: similar populations, yet one group of 30,000 gets three MLAs and the other group of 30,000 gets one MLA. Is that equitable representation by your definition?

MR. SOLBERG: Well, no, it's not equitable representation. I think the point is that those people need some representation. They need to have somebody they can go to when they've got a problem. As I mentioned in my brief, rural Alberta needs some help right now. I don't think urban Alberta needs the help. I think rural Alberta does. Not that long ago I guess it was Mr. Speaker who raised the issue of the population draining out of rural Alberta into the cities, and that continues to this day. I think if we give more representation to the cities, you're going to have less support for the people in the rural areas and it's just going to make the problem worse; it's going to continue on. I guess there are two issues here. One is: do you want to be legalistic and say, you know, that for every 30,000 or 25,000 we have a representative? The other issue is being fair to people all over the province.

MR. BRUSEKER: So I guess the question I'm asking, then, is: how do you resolve those discrepancies?

MR. SOLBERG: Well, one way is to have a Senate-type concept. I mean, I haven't thought this out. I would leave it to you people to do something like that.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? In the audience? Thanks very much, Monte.

Your Worship, welcome.

MRS. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's nice to see you again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's good to be here.

MRS. FRANKLIN: Members of the panel, we welcome you to Brooks today. Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the council of the town of Brooks regarding provincial electoral boundaries. We note that our constituency of Bow Valley falls 38 percent below the provincial average of eligible

voters per constituency and on the surface the Bow Valley constituency would appear to be ripe for expansion so that our MLA would become responsible for more eligible voters. We would, however, ask the committee to consider other factors in addition to representation by population.

Our constituency presently stretches from the Bow River to the Red Deer River and from the South Saskatchewan River to west of Bassano. Our concern is that our MLA already has a great deal of territory to cover – and I think a lot of the crux of the concern today is the distances that are involved – and a diverse number of municipal councils, hospital boards, and school boards to deal with. No centre in the constituency of Bow Valley has regularly scheduled flights to Edmonton so the travel obligations for our MLA are onerous. If we were to compare a constituency of a city containing a similar or larger number of eligible voters, quite clearly the urban MLA would not be faced with the problems of this extensive travel, and the urban MLA probably would not be representing the interests of five school boards – and education is a high profile problem and is becoming more high profile in rural areas – three hospital boards, and 10 municipal councils. To keep a rural economy viable is a great challenge, and all municipal councils are trying to meet that challenge in rural Alberta.

We request that the committee weigh the extra duties put upon the MLA who is responsible for large rural areas. The Brooks town council fully supports the concept of equal representation for all voters in Alberta, but we believe that equal representation will not be achieved unless the additional burdens faced by the rural MLAs are given proper consideration. We recognize that difficult decisions are to be made by the electoral boundaries committee, and we wish you good fortune in your deliberations.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Jean.
Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Your Worship, thanks very much for your presentation. You've clearly outlined the problems we have in trying to resolve this matter.

You talked about equal representation and that you can't really have all the considerations that have to be made in this rural constituency. Goodness knows how they would compare with the problems that go on in my constituency. I don't know if one could be so objective as to find a common line. But would it be possible, do you think, then, if we're going to have equal representation in the Legislature – as Mr. Bruseker pointed out, there are three constituencies in the south that don't add up to the same total population as Edmonton-Whitemud. If we were to keep everything the same in terms of current boundaries and population, would it be fair after you elect a member of the Legislature that that member have a weighted ballot in the Legislature?

MRS. FRANKLIN: I suppose that's one way of looking at it.

MR. SIGURDSON: Do you think it would be feasible?

MRS. FRANKLIN: Well, it's happened before in the ASTA, et cetera. But once again, then, we all must be very objective about this, and I really don't like to get into rural/urban things.

MR. SIGURDSON: Right. Good.

MRS. FRANKLIN: It goes against my grain. But I've seen it in the ASTA. I've seen it happen. I saw it happen when the cities had the weighted ballot and they controlled the decisions. I don't know what happens now in the ASTA because I'm not involved anymore. But I had a lot of years there, 15. Sometimes it's true that the urban dweller does not appreciate the rural problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And vice versa.

MRS. FRANKLIN: And vice versa, very much so. So I don't know about the weighted ballot.

MR. SIGURDSON: Pam Barrett has an urban constituency in the inner city with approximately 15,000, 16,000 people. Pat's got 26,000, 27,000?

MRS. BLACK: Population?

MR. SIGURDSON: No.

MRS. BLACK: Voters? Twenty-three thousand.

MR. SIGURDSON: Twenty-three thousand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Tom, as this is the first time we've really discussed this, you may want to bring an urban and a rural member from the ASTA and talk to the committee and tell us how it works.

MR. SIGURDSON: Sure. Sure. I was just wondering if you thought it would be feasible though. Thank you.

MRS. FRANKLIN: I certainly would have to give that a lot of thought.

May I be specific with a problem? We've had a challenge in getting our college campus established in Brooks. We are a satellite campus of the Medicine Hat College, and I understand the mayor of Edmonton, Ms Reimer, spoke vehemently against provincial funding coming into Brooks for the college campus, also a member of the Legislative Assembly out of Calgary. Of course, to us this is a vital happening in this area. We are serving people, students, from Strathmore, Vulcan, Hanna, Oyen, our own Brooks, a large radius around town. I don't think maybe the mayor of Edmonton appreciates the opportunities that are being given to these young people with the first two years of university being offered here, students who may never be able to get to the cities to access this learning. You know, these are the kinds of things that we see and we're concerned about. We're really concerned about losing the voice of rural Alberta. We certainly don't want a confrontation, rural and urban, but we do have unique problems.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks.
Pam.

MS BARRETT: Your Worship, I'd like to make a comment on your last observation and then ask a couple of questions. The comment is basically: as a student of history, I've never seen a political environment in which there is no tension between one group and another. You know, you might identify rural versus urban, but even within my riding I've got it between one group and another. It's all over the place. I really think that's the nature of politics, and the best thing to do is always work

towards compromise. I like your posture about that. You have a very good attitude.

The question I wanted to bridge into, though, is this. You were the one that gave a very good description. I've been trying to make sure I've got exactly on my map what this riding looks like, and I take it that Vauxhall is outside the riding. Am I correct?

MRS. FRANKLIN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Yes. So Vauxhall is outside. Now, if you've got a plus or minus 25 percent rule such as they have in British Columbia or Saskatchewan or generally for our federal ridings with the odd exception – and it's a justifiable exception – what you really have is a total discrepancy between the smallest population riding and the largest population of 40 percent, which is quite a variation. Now, if you had a neighbouring town – and I'm just pulling Vauxhall out of a hat; I've been to Vauxhall – let's say it had just enough of a population to bring you into the 25 percent rule if that rule were applicable. It's quite close to the border of Bow Valley, right? Would that be onerous, or could you agree to that in principle so that both rules and reasonableness are being accommodated?

MRS. FRANKLIN: Well, I suppose that's an easy one, but you'd really have to ask Tom, because I don't know about his workload. I don't know his workload as well as he does. I certainly know my workload.

MS BARRETT: I can ask Tom anytime. That's why we've got public hearings. The 83 of us can talk to each other to no end.

MRS. FRANKLIN: Surely. I realize that. I was being a little facetious. But I don't suppose that would matter a lot, if Vauxhall . . . How many people are in Vauxhall?

MS BARRETT: Well, I think my point is this. When the 25 percent rule was applied in British Columbia and Saskatchewan and the 10 percent rule, which is considerably more onerous, was applied in Manitoba, commissions went out of their way to make sure that the MLA serving the area was not stretched to his or her limits and have done that in a reasonable way. My question is basically: do you discount that as a possibility altogether, or are you open to that as a possibility?

MRS. FRANKLIN: I'm always open to negotiation.

MS BARRETT: Thanks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else?

MR. LYSTER: I have a question for Tom. You were talking about that weighted vote. My concern with that would be that it's a known fact that for the amount of tax dollars they pay, people in Ontario get a larger percentage back from the federal government for different grants and programs and things like that than we do in western Canada. You'll accept that fact?

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, in this province.

MR. LYSTER: Yeah. Are you not concerned that if we set that up within our own little Alberta, that these people here have a weighted vote, then not you politicians but some politicians would try to purchase votes by taking more of our tax

dollars that we're paying and not giving as much back to Brooks as they have in the past, rather giving more to the ridings where they have a weighted vote? It makes more sense to me, and I don't think you can claim that you wouldn't get involved in that. It's happened over history here.

MR. SIGURDSON: That's why in the United States in the House of Representatives the population is very even, so you can't get into that kind of situation. It's divided right down to almost within five or 10 people. I think 18 was the number. From constituency to constituency you cannot have more than 18 voters difference, so you're not going to have that weighted disproportionate representation. So here we've got a different thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Glen, I'll give you this assurance. If the committee wants to seriously look at the weighted ballot concept, then obviously we would bring in, as I mentioned earlier, people who have worked with that system – the ASTA, one or two from Calgary and Edmonton and one or two from the rural parts of the province – to find out how well it's worked. We may find that it's worked very well, and if they all were to agree, that would be a factor. If two on one side believe it works well and two on the other side don't, we'll take that into account as well.

MR. LYSTER: Do you see a problem here today in that some of the people on the board are trying to bring in what we should do in Alberta? I think what we have assembled here are some experts on Brooks and district, and we're suggesting what perhaps you should do with where we're at right now, the problem being that we're not expert enough on the other areas in Alberta that you're bringing out. If we had the facts like we have the facts on this constituency, if we knew how many school boards you're talking about, then we could give you a better answer. We wouldn't look at you and go, you know, "Duh, I don't know if that 30,000 voters should have more representation than this." So I think your questions are a little bit unfair, because we're not trying to tell you what to do in Alberta. We're trying to tell you what to do for our area. We're trying to tell you the problems the MLA has and people have getting in touch with him. Perhaps asking us what to do with other people lives is . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. No. In fairness, we've been all across the province. There have been remarkable recommendations made in some of the briefs. Each area believes it's unique, and to a degree each area is unique. That's what makes us special. We recognize that. But remember, when you've . . . Now, this is our 37th meeting. Many of the things that have been said today we've heard before. We're hearing some things in slightly different ways. Okay? But it's natural for committee members to ask questions to draw you out on a particular point.

MR. LYSTER: But I don't think some of the questions make sense. As far as us taking on Vauxhall . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Glen, I don't . . .

MR. LYSTER: . . . I don't know if they have a school board or a hospital board or . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Glen, whether a question makes sense or whether the answer makes sense is something we shouldn't get into.

MR. LYSTER: But, you know, if we're given the facts, I'm sure we could help a lot more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's why we shared with you the material when we had the slide presentation.

Pat, you wanted to respond?

MR. LEDGERWOOD: I think, to put it into context, we should tell you that there are 12 rural electoral divisions that are larger than this one, and this is about one-tenth the size of the largest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The other thing, to be fair, is that there's a difference between a riding like Fort McMurray, which is almost entirely the city of Fort McMurray, and a riding like Bow Valley or Chinook, which may be very sparsely populated but is completely settled and there are people living in every corner of the riding. So those are all part of the problems we have to weigh out. But remember, if we ask questions, it's because we want to make sure we haven't misunderstood you.

MR. LYSTER: I think some of the questions are leading, though, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, with due respect, of course they are. We've got a committee made up of three political parties with three different philosophies. We have people coming and giving us briefs, some of whom are coming with a neutral background; many are not. So if someone stands up and gives a brief that is diametrically opposed to one of my colleagues, they're going to take you on. But you've handled yourself well; so have others. Don't worry about it.

MR. SOLBERG: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I'm just curious to know why this committee is skewed so heavily towards city MLAs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When the Assembly selects a special committee, each political party determines the makeup of that committee in terms of its own membership. This is a seven-member committee. Because there is a majority Progressive Conservative government, as is the case where there is a majority government, the government has a majority of the members. Four of the seven members are from the governing party, two are from the Official Opposition, and one member of the committee is from the Liberal Party. So each party picked its own membership. Okay? The government selected the chairman and the vice-chairman. That's the process that's followed. It's not a free vote in the Assembly or a draw out of a hat or anything like that.

In Frank's caucus there are eight members. You've got – what? – one rural member and seven urban members. Now, Frank was selected. In the New Democratic caucus there are 12 urban members and three rural members. Both of the members in the New Democratic Party are from the city of Edmonton. From the Conservative Party we have Pat, who represents a

Calgary riding; Stockwell Day, who represents one of the two Red Deer ridings; Mike Cardinal, who represents a northern rural riding; and myself, and as you know, I represent a neighbouring riding of yours.

So that's the reason for the . . . We've been asked that before: why was the committee struck the way it is? That's the answer. Do any committee members wish to add to that? Okay.

MRS. FRANKLIN: I have a question. Some of these names are quite familiar. Is this the same committee that increased the MLAs' salaries?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I am the same person but the committee's not.

MRS. FRANKLIN: Some of them are the same.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Three, I guess.

MRS. BLACK: No, and I'm one of those members too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I said three of us. And Stockwell. Well, that's right. Four of the committee, but three who are here.

MRS. FRANKLIN: Four out of seven.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Four out of seven.

MRS. FRANKLIN: That's very interesting. You must get along well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'll tell you this: we all voted the same way.

MRS. FRANKLIN: I wonder why.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir?

MR. DeJONG: Mr. Chairman, it was mentioned here that there is no friction between rural and urban in the Legislature. I'd like to ask a question. Do the representatives of urban people in the cities have the brains and the understanding of rural problems?

MS BARRETT: No. It's obvious that we're completely ignorant.

MR. DeJONG: That's my point. We're going to have the animal protection friends. Would you mind if I give a small example of how things can get out of proportion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, but you're not helping your case. I'm telling you.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

MR. DeJONG: I will demonstrate that the urban people have no more brains about rural problems. We saw a month ago I don't know how many tax dollars spent on a duck. If it had been a rural person, we would shoot the darn thing, and we'd spend not more than maybe a bullet or two bullets on it.

MRS. BLACK: Can I comment, Mr. Chairman? Just so you know, as a member of the government caucus, we pair up.

Actually, my office is right next door to Tom Musgrove's office in the Legislature. I'm the vice-chairman of forestry and natural resources for the government caucus, and I'm an urban member. In fact, I'm the only urban member on that committee. I have had to learn very quickly about things that I really had no background in at all. I come from a background of oil and gas, of which I have more background than most people in the Legislature, 15 years, which I have had to share with my colleagues. I'm also on the environment committee.

Yes, there's a different feeling between urban and rural. I have been through various places in the province and have had to talk about those different thoughts and carry messages back and forth. There is a lot of connecting between urban and rural people. It's not unusual to have an urban person saying, "Those rural people don't understand our feelings," and the rural person saying, "Those urban people don't understand us." When you get right down to sitting around the table with fish and wildlife groups, cattlemen groups, oilmen, chambers of commerce, whatever kind of group it is, it's amazing how close their thoughts are, even though one thinks the other doesn't understand. I think that's very important.

In our caucus - as I'm sure it is in the other caucuses; I don't think we're unique on that - we have had to share information. One of the things was up in the north with pulp mills. As you know, Calgary went berserk, and when the representative who's on this committee came down south, when we went to Pincher Creek, he said to me on the plane, "Where are all the trees?" I said, "That's why people down here in Calgary went a little crazy, because we don't have the forests and the trees." So it's a sharing and an understanding that has to take place. I went up there and thought: "Holy crow, look at all these trees. Look at all the forests we have, the things that are available." You share back and forth, and you learn.

I'd lay you 10 to 1 odds that the first year anybody's an MLA you basically spend that year learning and learning to appreciate. One of the things that I have valued has been this tour so I can get more acquainted with the rural people. That's something I really value.

MR. DeJONG: You said it exactly right. You've got to share with other people. But this thing is changing boundaries, and if there are more city people representing us, how are you going to share? If there are 85 people in the Legislature and there are only five rural left, it's pretty hard to share.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. There was another hand up over here.

MRS. GROSFIELD: I had a question. I'm from a town council. Elsie Grosfield from the town of Brooks. If we have less representation in the rural areas, would it not have an effect on the agricultural profile as well as on the economy that is generated in the rural areas? You perhaps could take that into consideration too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll take it as a question. We know the point you're making.

MR. REMUS: Mr. Chairman, Ron Remus is my name, from the town of Brooks, and also I'm a local businessman. Just a comment on representation by population. It's a nice thing, and it possibly can be done, but when we say equal representation, from my point of view it means that we don't have one person

for X amount of people; we have a representative that we can easily contact.

The other thing is: has any consideration been given to dividing up the districts with a chunk of the city being associated with a chunk of the rural?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. One of the questions I was going to pose to you in the open question session, and we're into it right now, is that very point. When we were in Medicine Hat – and as you know, Medicine Hat has a population of 29,500. Both Bow Valley and Cypress-Redcliff are well under the minimum line if you were looking at the plus/minus 25 percent rule. One of the briefs at Medicine Hat suggested that we look at taking slivers of Medicine Hat – not half the city; not more than a quarter was the term they used. Not more than a quarter of the new riding should be from the city so that that portion of the city would not then dominate your rural constituency. In the same sense, any MLA who didn't take into account a quarter of the voters would be out of his or her mind. So that was put out as one suggestion.

There have been other ideas in other parts of the province that we should consider combined urban/rural ridings, and I wanted to throw that out to see if that had been given any thought by any of you and if you had a quick comment. Now, we soon have to wrap up, unfortunately, so we can get on to Rockyford.

MR. REMUS: In my mind I think that if you're talking representation by population, it's the only way it's going to get done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Obviously there aren't enough people in Medicine Hat for two full ridings, and there are too many for one. Is this something that could help where there's still a mutual respect? I used to represent a corner of Lethbridge, and it worked. I used to tease the mayor that I was one-thirty-second MLA for Lethbridge. My main responsibility was still in Taber and Coaldale and Milk River, but I did have a little sliver of the city.

MR. REMUS: As long as there's no dominance one way or the other, it's got to work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's right. Okay.

MRS. BOOKER: I agree with that. Velma Booker from Empress.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Anyone else before we wrap up? Yes, sir.

MR. COLLING: Hi, my name is Steve Colling. I don't know if I really should be commenting here or not, but several of you have made reference to Edmonton-Whitemud and Bow Valley. I feel I should say something, because I've had the pleasure of living in both: Edmonton-Whitemud for about 20 years and here in the Brooks riding for about four and a half.

I find kind of interesting some of the struggles. I've never noticed as diverse struggles as – let's take the proposed Highway 56 corridor, for instance. I know how that affects one end of this riding, and it also affects the other, one positively and the other possibly negatively. We have our MLA that has to deal with that struggle between these people. We have rural areas that are losing their population, small communities. They don't

have community centres and stuff like that. So what are they trying to do? They're trying to access the big dollars from the government to do that, and there are all these different areas that they're trying to access: the school systems, for instance. I've seen schools close in Edmonton, but I also see the kids walking only two, three blocks to go to the next school. I see we have two school boards here in this riding for sure that are competing for dollars for expansion.

I'd like to just more or less say that I think our MLA has more diverse problems. I honestly believe this because of the geographic size and people's attitudes, different communities. All the problems are so diverse in the smaller rural ridings than they are in the larger ridings. I appreciate that you have maybe more phone calls, more people to deal with. I've seen our MLA personally at three different rodeos in one summer. I lived a block and a half from Mr. Getty's office; I never saw Mr. Getty, and I personally hung around where his office was an awful lot. I honestly believe that even a smaller riding than Bow Valley geographically would be better than to increase it.

MR. SIGURDSON: Can I just respond to that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: I just want to respond. I'll give you an example of urban diversity, although it's contained in a small physical area. In the north end of a neighbouring constituency they bus out 1,500 kids every day because there are no schools. In the south end of the constituency they're shutting down some of those schools because of their low population, and parents don't want to send their kids to those particular schools. So you've got 1,500 kids that are going distances.

In the constituency that I represent, I share it with a couple of other areas. Our southern boundary is a railway track; we have underpasses to get into the downtown core of the city. We've got 100,000 people in the north end who have no access to medical facilities, so it's a major concern in the event of floods or the tornado that we had. We had to airlift people because there was no ground transportation access, and that happens on what's seemingly a more regular basis with the floods and the weather that we've been having.

In my constituency – and it's all contained within the boundaries of Edmonton – in the far north end I've got farms; in the south end I've got the meat packing plants and the some of the rail yards. I've got a very impoverished area in the south end near the rail yards, and in the north end I've got that which could only be described as a very comfortable upper middle-class area. Again, even within a community I know of particular streets where I can cross from a high welfare, high crime rate where you don't want to walk the street at night, and you go across the street and it's an entirely different area. It's like walking into a spotlight. So there is an awful lot of diversity even in a very small, confined urban area.

MR. COLLING: I appreciate the diversity in your riding.

MR. SIGURDSON: I think in all ridings, regardless of where they're located in our province.

MR. COLLING: But I'm looking at some of the decisions that our MLA has to make. For instance, Highway 56: very unpopular. He's got to walk the fence, I think, a lot more than a lot of the urban MLAs would. I personally believe that he has to walk the fence more because of his decisions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I can take one more comment, and then I'm going to wrap up because of the hour. Yes, sir.

MR. ROY: Dean Roy from Bassano. The only comment I'd like to make is that I hope the committee gives consideration to the economics that go into whatever realignment of boundaries, because I think school boards, hospital boards throughout the province are feeling the pinch budgetwise. I just hope that they think out the economics in this, that they don't create more of a cost burden to the taxpayers of Alberta by the realignment. I hope whatever decisions are made are also made with some economic consideration given.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can you help us to ensure that we know what you mean by that?

MR. ROY: Well, I mean that there are no more constituencies that exist all of a sudden.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't create more seats.

MR. ROY: Exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. Just for your information, that is a common theme we've heard across the province. A few people have said, "Create more ridings," but the vast majority have said, "You have 83 members in the Assembly; don't add to that."

MR. ROY: Yeah, I think that's max. I think if there's going to be any redistribution, it has to be done with the existing numbers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's what you meant?

MR. ROY: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Fair enough. Okay.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Mr. Chairman, could we follow up with that? Would you give priority to hospital board parameters, school board parameters, municipal boundaries? Did you know that very seldom are they coterminous?

MR. ROY: Well, I don't believe there are very many of them that are coterminous. I think you have to elaborate on what you're trying to get at, because I think each board has to represent its own entity and speak on that behalf. I don't think it's fair for me to point out one over the other. I think we're all hearing about budgets, and we're all being underfunded today. I think if we're going to take care of our own province, it has to start taking place at the top, and then let it filter down from there, rather than having the local people trying to do the cost saving. I think there has to be some leadership shown at the top.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much.

Okay. I'm going to try to sum up the four presentations we heard.

Ford began by recommending that we maintain the status quo. He went on to say that we might wish to use an average number of electors for an urban riding and an average number for a rural riding and then have a variation from those two. That, again, is something we've heard at a number of hearings.

Glen went on to talk about the role of the rural member as a representative, the work that the member has with councils and boards and agencies. He talked about distances and went on to mention the Triple E Senate. Again, that's something we've heard many times across the province: how on one hand can we as Albertans be arguing for a Triple E Senate in Ottawa, and isn't there some consistency required, then, in terms of applying that same principle at the local level?

Monte picked up on that and talked about the Triple E Senate and suggests that we have the same urban/rural split that we now have: the 42 urban, 41 rural. By the way, just for information it's important to point out that those numbers aren't written in stone, and there's been a gradual shift from 1905 where we had considerably more rural ridings than we had urban ridings. There's been a shift, and over time the number of rural ridings as a percentage has come down, and the number of urban ridings has come up. That occurred during the last redistribution. The lines crossed one another.

Monte went on to suggest that if we found we couldn't maintain the current split and we had to look at something different, we might consider a provincial Senate. Now, as I recall, that's the first time that recommendation's been made. Anyway, I know that Monte didn't recommend that as a first priority, but it was pointed out as something that could be given some consideration.

Jean went on to ask that we consider factors in addition to population – travel, distance, the number of boards and councils in an area – and described how all of those things contributed to the workload.

Now, it's my understanding that we do have one additional presenter, Bob?

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes, we do.

Tom Livingston, would you come up please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what happens. You get these ranchers who originate from the Coultts-Milk River area; they tend to come to a meeting late. Come on in, Tom.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Well, we get a little busy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, well that happens.

MR. PRITCHARD: Would you like to come up, Tom?

MR. LIVINGSTON: I don't know if I should apologize for being late; I don't know if everybody else does. I'm late anyhow. I'm trying to get some grain put together. We need what little moisture we have. It's so seldom that it took a little shock to recover, the shock of the presentation, because of the moisture we're getting.

Anyway, I haven't got a written brief, but I represent the EID Landholders' Association. This is an organization of water users in the Eastern Irrigation District. We have approximately 1,200 members. At one of our meetings we passed a motion to present to the select committee that we would like to see what you'd call the enshrinement of the present rural/urban MLAs. In other words, let it stay the same; we don't lose the ratio. If you want five city MLAs, then let's get five more rural MLAs, for some of the reasons you listed.

Tom here has probably five school boards, five MDs, county councils, and lots of, say, irate producers to deal with. Many of the city MLAs can shake hands with everybody in the constituency in a couple of days. So distance, other political entities in the

riding I think all have a bearing on how many people the rural MLA has to deal with. I think if we believe in the concept of the Triple E Senate, we can't but apply the same concept to the provincial Legislature. One man, one vote is fine up to a point, but that area needs representation the same as population does.

I think if we look at the production, look at the industry, I don't know what portion is generated outside the larger centres, but quite a lot of it is. I think we'd be safe to say that certainly half of it is. If it wasn't for the rural ridings, there wouldn't be a whole lot to do in the city anyway. How would they candle eggs and refine oil if had to be produced in the city?

So I think for these considerations we would highly recommend that we retain the same ratio.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions from the panel?

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Livingston, you're suggesting that that ratio never change, that you never have a change? You've got rural depopulation now. You've got more people living in urban Alberta, and you're suggesting that you never change the ratio of representation between urban and rural Alberta?

MR. LIVINGSTON: I guess what "enshrinement" means is that it stay the same. By urban do you mean Calgary and Edmonton and Lethbridge and Red Deer?

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah. I guess so. Grande Prairie.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Well, Brooks is growing too.

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah. Brooks is growing.

MR. LIVINGSTON: I wouldn't really consider Brooks in Bow Valley. I would consider that Brooks would have as good a chance of growing in the proportion as Calgary does. I would certainly consider Mr. Musgrove a rural MLA not an urban MLA, the same as the fellow that represents Grande Prairie. I think we have to have a saw-off here someplace: what do we mean rural; what do we mean urban?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tom, it's interesting. The other evening we were in Wetaskiwin-Leduc. The Wetaskiwin-Leduc riding has

two cities, both Leduc and Wetaskiwin, and then has parts of municipalities and smaller towns. There wasn't one person in the room who considered the riding to be an urban riding. So really you don't think of purely urban ridings until you get into your major metropolitan centres.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Well, this is what we were considering. Basically we feel we get shuffled out of the pack by Lethbridge, Red Deer, Calgary, and Edmonton. I think certainly anything under 20,000 people owes most of its livelihood to the surrounding district.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Thanks very much, Tom.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I had just wrapped up the summations which were given by the four previous speakers. We'll add Tom's to that list, where he's maintaining the status quo.

In conclusion, I'd like to say a special thank you to all of you who have come out today. We know it's not easy when you're coming out in late August. You've got many other things to do, but we do appreciate the fact that you've come out to share your ideas with us. Again, I urge you not to take away any feelings of animosity or that we were trying to pin you down. Sure, there were some pointed questions made by some panelists on different things, but then some of you made some pretty pointed points, too, in your presentations. So a little give and take is all right. The key is: we were here to learn and gain information and knowledge for our task. It's not an easy task to try to wrestle with this issue and deal with the Charter of Rights that's out there.

Thank you so much for coming out.

MR. WORKES: I'd just like to, on behalf of the ladies and gentlemen here, express our appreciation to the panel for being here today. Could we give them a hand?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ford, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

[The committee adjourned at 3:48 p.m.]