

10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, May 28, 2002

[Mr. Clark in the chair]

The Chair: Well, ladies and gentlemen, the throng rather reminds me of the story of a minister who had worked very hard on a sermon. He got to the church and only one person had come. The minister had to make a decision: do I give him the whole sermon or not? He thought: I worked on this very hard; I got this all prepared; I'm going to give it all to him. So he gave this one cowboy who had come to church the full sermon. As he was leaving, the preacher said to the cowboy, "What did you think of the sermon?" He said, "Well, you know, quite frankly, when I take a load of hay out to the cows and only one cow turns up, I don't give him the full load." I think that's about what we're going to do this morning, so I'm going to make my remarks pretty short and to the point.

This Electoral Boundaries Commission is functioning under the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. My colleagues to my left and right are Ernie Patterson, the mayor of Claresholm; Glen Clegg, former MLA for Dunvegan; to my left, Bauni Mackay, former president of the Alberta Teachers' Association; and on my far left, Doug Graham, who's a lawyer from the city of Calgary. These people were appointed to the commission, two by the Executive Council and two by the Leader of the Opposition with consultation. Brian Fjeldheim is walking around. He just walked out the door. Brian is the Chief Electoral Officer of the province, and he and his office are assisting us in the course of these hearings.

We were in Calgary yesterday and I think had 22 or 23 submissions. We're here in Olds this morning and in Red Deer this afternoon, and then we have a full day in Edmonton tomorrow, starting at 9 o'clock in the morning and going until 9 o'clock tomorrow night, and then we're off for a week. We go from St. Paul down to Medicine Hat, over to Lethbridge, up to Wetaskiwin, and then the last week of June we go to Westlock, Edson, Slave Lake, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, and Peace River. Following that, early in the month of July we'll be getting together and commencing our initial report. The initial report will be finished and hopefully in the hands of the Speaker in the early part of September, hopefully the first week. The Speaker will then release that report, and it will be available to you people who are making submissions today and anybody else across the province. We want people to respond to that, and then we'll have another set of hearings in December or early January with a view in mind of listening to the suggestions. Then a final report will be in the Speaker's hands by the 1st of March. The last report under the able chairmanship of Mr. Justice Ed Wachowich was accepted basically in its entirety by the Members of the Legislative Assembly. As chairman it's my hope that this report will suffer the same fate.

This morning we have three people to make presentations: Mr. Richard Marz, the MLA for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills; Mr. Kris Bojda, a councillor from the town of Olds; and Judy Stewart, mayor, and Truper McBride, councillor, from the MD of Kneehill. So they'll be appearing.

Mr. Marz, you were the first one here, and you indicated to me that you had one or two other things to do this morning, so if you would join us please, Richard, and make your presentation. I'm sure there'll be some questions, and then you'll be free to go and get on with the other things.

Mr. Marz: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair and panel, and good morning. I'm probably going to tell you some things that you have heard before, but you may not have heard them in Calgary yesterday. In comparison with my colleagues of the last number of years and even the time that some of the panel members have been rural

MLAs, there's quite a difference in the relationship between a rural MLA, in my mind and in talking to my urban colleagues, and the relationship that large-city MLAs have with theirs. Firstly, the areas are much larger in a rural MLA's constituency. However, in spite of that large geographic area, I believe there's a more personal relationship with the MLA that people have. They know you and call you on a first-name basis all the time, and with that goes the expectation that you are available for a host of things that my colleagues in the city aren't even invited to.

In my particular constituency I have two school regions, neither of which meets in the constituency. One meets in Innisfail and one meets in Strathmore. I have two health regions, neither of which meets in my constituency. One meets in Red Deer and the other in Drumheller. So for any meetings with them I'm traveling outside of my constituency. I'm relatively lucky. I only have a half-hour drive to my office, while many of my other rural counterparts have over an hour just to get to their offices before they begin their day's work.

So there's a large amount of traveling, and there's a much larger demand for your attendance at a host of functions, anniversaries and weddings, those personal types of functions, than my urban counterparts ever seem to encounter. Some urban constituencies don't even have a school within their constituency, and they can get across those constituencies in a matter of 10 to 15 minutes, while in many rural ones it takes a number of hours. For my particular one it's probably over an hour and a half from east to west. There's an expectation again that goes with that first-name basis. It's not good enough to just deal with a complaint over the phone. They actually expect you to come out and look at it, and that consumes a lot of time.

Just for interest's sake and to respond to some of my constituents' questions about how much time my job takes, I actually took the time to record how much time I spent on the job the first two years, 1997 and 1998. During session it was 80 hours a week. Out of session it was 60 hours a week, and that seemed to be quite consistent. For two years after that I quit keeping track of it.

Another thing is that at roughly 36,000 people in a constituency, if you divide that by the number of days in a year, you're looking at a potential of 100 people per day. If you divide that by four, for a family of four, you're looking at a potential of 25 families that could call you in a day. Now, not everybody calls you in a day, but some people call you several times in a month, several times in a week, and with the advent of e-mail that turns out to be more than once in a day. I guess that the point I'm trying to make is that the job is changing with the new technology that's available to people. You don't have to pack a laptop now. You just have to pack a palm pilot, and the expectation is that when that vibrates in your pocket, regardless of what you're doing, whoever is sending you that message on the other end is expecting a fairly immediate response.

So the demands on your time that I've seen in the five years I've been there have increased, and I don't know if that's a combination of factors like new technology or just familiarity. The more well known you become, the more comfortable people around you feel and would like you to be involved in different things that they're putting on or they feel more comfortable in sharing some of the concerns they have. So the job is becoming quite a bit busier.

I would urge the committee to not deviate from the 25 percent variance and to the best degree possible solve the problems within the major cities. Calgary has some large variances. Some are under and some are quite a bit over. Just roughly doing some calculations – and I'm not claiming that this is very scientific – I've noted that most of them could probably stay within that 25 percent variance almost within the city of Calgary boundaries. The more times we lose rural representation, the larger the number of people those rural representatives have and the greater the task for them.

10:10

The other thing I'd like to point out about losing rural representation is my concern about our forestry, our energy sector, agriculture, our major industries. That doesn't take place in the city. The business end does, but the development of those industries takes place in rural Alberta, and the more rural representatives we lose, the tougher it's going to be to emphasize the impact that some of the development of these industries has on rural Albertans.

One thing I was talking to some of my colleagues about is these fuel-cell cars, driving an electric or fuel-cell car around, that the cities would like to see developed so that pollution is not generated in the city, but that's got to be generated someplace. If the by-product of that is pollution someplace else, it's likely going to happen in a rural area, which is going to have an impact on a rural area. If you don't have the representation that goes with that, I have a concern whether that development will take place in an environmentally safe manner. You know how the story goes. If it's not in my backyard, it's not a concern to me.

I guess that's the gist of my concerns. I'm not here to try to salvage any particular boundaries. This constituency, I believe, has got a lot of compatibility the way it's currently set up. There would be compatibility with other communities around it as well. I think Crossfield would fit well into it, or Drumheller, Sundre, even Innisfail. I suppose it could go a number of directions and still maintain the same type of rural character that a rural central Alberta constituency would have. I realize, too, that you have a monumental task in front of you, because every movement you make to adjust something creates a domino effect someplace else. I don't envy you your task at all, and I am very confident that your committee will come up with some workable solutions. So I guess that concludes my presentation.

The Chair: Thanks very much, Richard.

Mr. Clegg.

Mr. Clegg: Well, thanks. Thank you, Richard, for coming.

Mr. Marz: Oh, this is going to be question period now.

Mr. Clegg: Not question period. Just comments or clarification but no questions.

Richard, we've heard many times to try and keep communities together if possible, and certainly in urban and rural there are communities that work together. Now, without getting too specific – I mean, you're pretty familiar with the area – if you did have to expand, which would be the best way to do it and still keep the communities together?

Mr. Marz: Well, based on feedback that I've got from a number of people around me – and I'd been in municipal government, as some of you know, for 17 years prior to this job, so I know people all around the area – I would say that Crossfield would make a good fit. Actually, Sundre would make a good fit because it would be coterminous with the county of Mountain View as would Carbon, and the southeast corner, the county of Kneehill, would make a good fit. In this constituency we've got two opposite corners, the Sundre area and the Carbon area, that have been actually cut out of the municipality and are different municipalities. Drumheller would probably also be a good fit, but then I don't know how that would make the numbers. It depends on which way you go. I was looking at the map, and I also recognize that Drumheller-Chinook is about 30 percent under. I thought that the easiest solution was to maybe annex Kindersley, and that would solve that. I say that facetiously.

Ms Mackay: I do have a question. I'm well aware of the amount of work that a rural MLA has to do and how that's compounded by distance and by the whole personal touch. I'm wondering though: do you make a distinction as a rural MLA between those expectations on behalf of the constituents that are really serving the needs of the constituents in terms of government and those that are more social? It's important for the MLA to be there in the sense that, you know, he or she should be visible. The visibility is important, but the work that's involved isn't enhancing that person's ability to access the democratic process. Do you make that kind of a distinction? You must have to prioritize sometimes, I would guess, in what you go to and what you don't go to.

Mr. Marz: That's a good question. You do have to prioritize because on your weekends, through the summer especially, you're making a choice between several events on the same day. So you do have to prioritize that type of thing. Aside from that, your week seems to be scheduled about two months ahead of time with constituent or government concerns. In addition to the health authority and the school authorities that I mentioned, I also have two children's services authorities. Those social issues are becoming greater and greater, and those issues seem to be all brought to the doorstep of my office. I'm sure they're brought to the doorsteps of the urban MLAs as well.

In addition to that, I believe I've got eight urban councils and three rural councils that I meet with and deal with. There are always issues there that are government-related issues, so I'm not just responding to, for example, the city of Calgary or the city of Red Deer as one of several MLAs. I'm responding as the only MLA for several jurisdictions and boards. That is all government business, and that creates a very heavy mix. So you're starting to prioritize government business, and I was just doing that this morning before I came here. I can't be at all of them, and I have no one to share, to fill in as one of the other MLAs to go to a function within our city. I'm shared with several small cities we call towns.

Ms Mackay: Thank you.

Mr. Patterson: You've got Olds College right here in your constituency. Does this affect your work as an MLA very much?

Mr. Marz: It has busier times than others, but it does have an effect. Actually, I have two colleges in the constituency. The other one is the Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills; it's a Bible college. But I would say that the college in Olds here is part of the hub of the constituency in the educational regard. It is an agricultural college, and there are times when it does occupy a fair degree of my time. Then there are other times that are slacker, but it does add to the traffic mix of the whole constituency. It's a big attraction to the town of Olds, and that's where I have my office. I'm 32 miles from my office, so it's about a half-hour drive if you know where the radar traps are.

10:20

Mr. Patterson: I've just got one more question, Mr. Chair, that I'd like to ask Richard.

One of the tasks that we've been given is to look at how we can make recommendations for effective representation, so we're looking at, you know, the population, geography, all of these different factors. You've referred to e-mail and the number of phone calls. Do you have any thoughts at all that might help a rural MLA as to either having an additional office or additional help?

Mr. Marz: What I do to offset the regional distances is that I will have office hours temporarily every second month out in Three Hills and out in Cremona. I'll alternate back and forth just to serve those people that have a difficult time traveling out of their home communities. So I'll set up half a day or whatever it takes. I'll advertise for that day, and if it takes half a day, I'll spend half a day out there. If it takes a day, I'll spend that much out there. So I'm trying to meet whatever those demands are. I find that by doing that, it also gets me out to those communities to see what some of the issues are in all those different communities, because if you don't force yourself to get to the different areas, you're looking at your constituency through, you know, the lenses of the town that your office is in.

Although there are a lot of similarities, there are also some diversities out there that you need to get out and talk to your other councils about, because they do have different issues. Just on highway 2, a two-way line here, I've got Carstairs and Didsbury and Olds. The farther south you go – with Carstairs there are a lot of commuters that work in Calgary, so there is more of a degree of urbanized types of issues than there would be, say, in Olds even though it's a smaller town. It's just the mix of the different communities. The high-growth factors of everything on the highway 2 line here keep this particular area quite busy.

The Chair: Doug Graham, do you have a question?

Mr. Graham: Yes. I don't know whether I heard this correctly. Did you say that you have 36,000 people in your constituency at present?

Mr. Marz: Your numbers show 31,000 and something?

Mr. Graham: Thirty-one thousand.

Mr. Marz: That's another thing, and thanks for bringing that up, because I neglected to earlier. I was going to question those numbers because those numbers to me sound very similar to what they were in '97. I did get another census figure a couple of months ago that showed that the constituency was 33,000. So I was just wondering if the committee would check those numbers, because on the one census it showed that Three Hills went down, but according to the mayor that particular census didn't account for the student population that is there eight months of the year at the Bible college. That's something that I would hope the committee would double-check.

Mr. Graham: Mr. Clegg actually asked my question, but if I could just ask maybe the reverse of that question, which is: if we were to keep communities together and if we had to move a line around here somewhere, are there parts of your constituency that you could see being compatible with a bordering constituency? If so, what would those be? You don't have to answer if you don't want to.

Mr. Marz: Boy, that's a loaded question. I love 'em all.

Mr. Graham: Which do you see being a good fit from a community perspective with the adjoining constituencies?

Mr. Marz: If I said something, it wouldn't be compatible with what people are telling me. I've had a number of people from the east area and the west area that actually come to my office because it's handier than going to their MLA. Nothing against their MLAs; it's just their travel patterns. They tend to come to Olds because there's the college here and there's the auction market here, which

is one of the most active auction services in the area. It's my largest town. It's a really growing area. It's on two highways. It's kind of the economic hub of the area, so people tend to gravitate toward this area.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, Richard.

Mr. Marz: Thank you for the opportunity.

The Chair: I appreciate your frankness. I'm sure you'll wait with bated breath to see what we have to say in September.

Mr. Marz: Well, I wish you all the best.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Next is Mr. Bojda. Mr. Bojda is a prominent town councillor in the town of Olds. He's lived in the community for years, been on council about three terms. Kris, you heard me introduce the members of the panel. I should just say on the question of population that the legislation says that we have to use the 2001 Canada census figures. I was just saying to Richard that the Speaker, I believe, uses an update after that for the purposes of allocating money to constituencies, but we're tied to that 2001 figure.

Mr. Bojda.

Mr. Bojda: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, it's somewhat with mixed emotions that we're here today.

The Chair: Well, you can leave.

Mr. Bojda: I'll take that under advisement.

The emotions are because Richard Marz has been our MLA for the past couple of terms, and he's been a true advocate of this constituency in Olds and everything involved. In the recommendation we have here, we are going to have to get Richard Marz to move a little bit farther west so that he can continue to be our MLA. But I thank you for the opportunity today.

A motion supported unanimously by Olds council was for this committee to look at boundaries that are a little bit more reflective of common patterns in the area, with a bigger focus on the highway 2 corridor, which we're all aware is considered one of the fastest growing in Canada. Communities such as Olds, Didsbury, Carstairs, Cremona, Crossfield, Water Valley, Sundre, Bowden, and Innisfail have already proven regional partnerships. However, we are currently in three different electoral divisions. An example of some of the projects these communities have worked together on is most recently the Mountain View Regional Emergency Services Commission, which provides ambulance service to Olds, Didsbury, Carstairs, Cremona, Water Valley, and Sundre. This covers two separate electoral areas, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills and Rocky Mountain House. We have a waste commission that covers the same area. Again, two ridings. The Mountain View Water Commission has been a very successful commission, just did a huge multimillion dollar upgrade, and that includes Innisfail, Bowden, Olds, Didsbury, Carstairs, and Crossfield. This covers three electoral boundaries: Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, and Airdrie-Rocky View. We are currently in the process of meeting regarding a wastewater committee, and we're working with Innisfail and Bowden. Once again, it's over two electoral divisions.

Since I've been on council, we have had very few partnerships if any east of highway 2, which forms a large part of our constituency. With the never-ending financial pressures that both municipal and provincial governments face, the promotion of regionalization and

shared services is now and will continue to be in great demand. Having one MLA represent this area will streamline communication and aid in the promotion of a regional model, ultimately saving taxpayers money.

10:30

The town of Olds' recommendation is to have an electoral division west of highway 2 from Bowden to Crossfield, including Sundre and Water Valley. If a larger area is required due to population, it could go either further north or south to Airdrie or Innisfail and west to Caroline and Spruce View, a little broader based on the numbers. We see most of our trade traffic, most of our travel, as Mr. Marz has mentioned, coming to Olds, and it's coming from these outlying areas. We don't see as much from the east country, so ours is to focus on the highway 2 corridor.

Mayor Duncan passes her regrets as she's off to the FCM convention today. She wishes she could be here, but on behalf of Mayor Duncan and the rest of council we thank you for the opportunity to give you our thoughts today.

The Chair: Thanks, Kris. Could I be so presumptuous as to ask you: have you given any thought to moving the boundary, rather than just to highway 2, east to the county boundary? It seems to me that if there's validity in this idea of having the people served by commissions and so on – and that's the school boundary, too; isn't it? It isn't a criticism, Kris. Please understand that. It's simply: have you had a chance to reflect on that?

Mr. Bojda: The Mountain View county boundary would be a fair place to break it off. Again, just from highway 2 to the first real municipality – and it was Torrington, but they've been absorbed into Kneehill now. Really, the first town that you'd come across would be Three Hills. The boundary is about halfway, not quite, so the boundary would be a fine split. I think council would be comfortable with something like that.

The Chair: Then you wouldn't have to go so far either.

Mr. Bojda: Yeah. Only a couple of blocks.

The Chair: Mr. Patterson?

Mr. Patterson: Yes, Mr. Chair. Kris, I'd like to thank you very much for making a very concrete suggestion to us. As you understand, we have lots of difficulties as soon as we start moving one, but you've given us some precise ideas on what we can do in this area, and I just want to thank you for that. I really don't have any questions on it. Maybe I do have one. You have all these municipal relationships here. Are you also looking at forming or have you formed a regional economic development commission under this new program?

Mr. Bojda: Actually, we are a member of CAEP, which is out of Red Deer. It incorporates about 80. Just last night at our council meeting there was discussion that we are meeting with the county of Mountain View right now. They've set up a few meetings. A majority of these communities with the exception of Innisfail and Bowden are involved. We brought the individual that helped start CAEP to look at the economic impact plan for this area as well.

Mr. Patterson: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Graham: I don't have a question, but I have a comment. I personally work way better with maps than I do with descriptions

like this, so if you could get us a map with this proposal on it – and it helps to have the old constituencies in one colour on the map and the new proposed constituency in a different colour. That's just very helpful for me personally and I think perhaps other members of the commission. It makes the proposal a bit easier to understand.

Mr. Bojda: Okay. We can get that for you.

The Chair: If you'd just do that and get it to Mr. Fjeldheim's office, he'll get it to us.

Ms Mackay: Have you figured out what the population of your proposed new constituency would be?

Mr. Bojda: No, we haven't because there are so many variables, and based on the numbers of which direction we wanted to go – our thoughts are that there's a lot more compatibility for us with Innisfail than Airdrie at this time with the wastewater and water commissions. We know that there's a lot of pressure on this committee to try and figure it out, so ours are just some thoughts for the plan. We haven't sat down and calculated numbers.

If I may, Mr. Chair. I have spoken with the mayor of Carstairs on this, Richard Dais. They are a hundred percent supportive of a plan of this. He was going to try and be here today, but unfortunately he couldn't make it.

The Chair: Thanks, Kris. I hate to let you off so easy, but thank you very much for an excellent presentation. You've highlighted things that those of us who live in the area know, but you've been extremely helpful to the commission. Thank you very, very much.

Mr. Bojda: Thank you.

The Chair: Before we hear Mayor Judy Stewart, we're going to break for a short coffee break. Then we'll get back and hear Her Worship.

[The commission adjourned from 10:36 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.]

The Chair: Okay. We're really pleased to have Her Worship Mayor Judy Stewart and Councillor Truper McBride. I might, on an editorial point of view, Truper, say that it's so good to see young people like yourself involved in public life.

Mr. McBride: Thank you.

The Chair: Truper is an economics student at the University of Calgary and involved in political matters. That's great to see. We had a number of young people in Calgary yesterday. One would think on the surface that this is not the most thrilling subject for people, but we're glad you're here. Your Worship, we look forward to hearing from you.

Mrs. Stewart: I just have a few introductory comments. Thank you for having us in Olds. We really enjoy coming up the corridor. We've done a survey, and one of the survey respondents told us that some people in Cochrane had never been to Olds, so rather than go to the city of Calgary to do our presentation, we decided to come up and be the minority who have visited Olds. I'm pleased to be here.

Councillor McBride has actually prepared a presentation to deliver to you today. As well, we have given you some folders with some background information and the results of our survey, and I think that Councillor McBride will refer to that survey in his presentation.

So I'll turn it over to Councillor McBride.

Mr. McBride: Thank you. We did have a slightly different version of this report, as I was mentioning to you, until last night after our council meeting, when it was amended slightly. I finished this very late last night, so I'm hoping that it still flows like it used to.

The Chair: Government at all levels, it's been my experience, just works like that.

Mr. McBride: We believe that it is quite evident that the town of Cochrane has several strong linkages to the Calgary region. These linkages are not only economic but political as well. The citizens and businesses in Cochrane have much more in common with the people east of us than those in any other direction. Regional services such as the Calgary health region, the Calgary Rocky View children's services, and the Rocky View school board are excellent illustrations of these commonalities. On top of these issues, Cochrane is working collectively with other communities to create the Calgary regional partnership. We are also active participants in the C-Prosperty initiative, which again involves the Calgary region. From the survey we passed around from the town's staff, the survey respondents felt that the regional services, economic trade patterns, and similar makeup of taxpayers were the most preferred measures to ensure effective representation.

On that issue, the town of Cochrane is evenly split on whether or not we do in fact have effective representation in our electoral division. Many feel that Canmore and Banff have quite different issues and concerns than we do. We believe that this in turn is leading to this feeling of ineffective representation. We would again like to point out and emphasize that respondents to our survey were evenly split 50-50 on this issue. It is our belief that effective representation does not occur if only 50 percent of the population believe it exists.

The town of Cochrane would therefore prefer to remain in its current state with the Banff-Cochrane electoral division. If this is not achievable, we would like to be included in the electoral division with the lands on the east side, on our side of Calgary. We are adamantly opposed to being included in a north/south access with the towns of Didsbury and Olds. That would be the most undesirable scenario for us, for the municipalities north of us have the least in common with us in relation to social, economic, and political terms.

Our respondents also believe that we do not share many commonalities with either Canmore or Banff; however, we share more commonalities with those than communities north of us.

The town of Cochrane does not support the notion of highway 1A being a northern boundary to any electoral division we may become a part of. The highway is not an official boundary due to the fact that it separates the town of Cochrane into two communities. Our current riding boundary, which results in two electoral boundaries in close proximity to our corporate borders, is also not supported. We believe that all lands identified in the current intermunicipal development plan with the municipal district of Rocky View should be included in the same electoral division.

So that was the report that we prepared. In just reading it over again later in the morning, I'm finding that I think there is maybe a little bit of confusion in what we did say. We want to stay in Calgary, in Cochrane, in Canmore, and Banff, and we're also giving strong indications that we'd like to move towards more small urban-centre ridings. Council supported quite strongly that they would prefer to stay in the Banff-Cochrane riding, but we felt that the majority of our survey respondents much more supported the idea of moving more in alignment with some Calgary communities.

Council also wanted us to point out – and I'm sure that you

already know this, but they really wanted us to say this – that they didn't want you to think that this is any kind of a comment on whether or not our MLA, Janis Tarchuk, is providing effective representation for us. The effective representation is whether or not the issues of Canmore and Banff can be aligned with the same issues as Cochrane's, and that's where we feel the effective representation is perhaps missing.

Thank you.

The Chair: Both Mr. Fjeldheim and I worked for an all-party committee chaired by your MLA. We both will assure her that the town of Cochrane thinks she's doing a very good job as MLA, but you realize that you can't stay in that constituency possibly. You don't want to move north; you want to move someplace else. Is that fair?

Mrs. Stewart: Yes, for sure. If I could add a few comments. In the package that I have given you all today, there is a document like this attached to a blue sheet. This is sort of a position paper that is similar to the information provided by Councillor McBride but sets it out as well for people who would rather read than hear oral testimony. We do set out our position on electoral division boundaries quite clearly in that paper.

There are four main points that we'd like to make. Number one is that the town of Cochrane has strong political and economic links with the Calgary region. Secondly, the town of Cochrane is evenly split on whether we are effectively represented in our current electoral division. Thirdly, the town of Cochrane would prefer to remain in the Banff-Cochrane electoral division. If this is not achievable given our growing population and our dissimilar interests, then Cochrane would prefer being included in an electoral division with lands east of Cochrane; i.e., the surrounding MD lands bordering on the Calgary area. We wouldn't be opposed to a suggestion of being included with other small urban centres like Okotoks and High River. Okotoks and High River are also in our Calgary regional partnership and do form some links with us as far as economic and political ties.

The town of Cochrane does not support highway 1A as a northern boundary to the electoral division. In many cases it splits the community in two. Many of the people who use our services are on the northern side of highway 1A. We understand that all of the town of Cochrane is currently in the same electoral division, but as we continue to grow, the electoral boundary will have to grow with us. We just want to point that out so that if you are looking at lines on the map, you will see that there may be a more logical boundary for the Banff-Cochrane electoral division per se instead of highway 1A.

So those are just the basic principles that we do want to set out. Just to let you know, our survey was only circulated to town of Cochrane staff. We have everyone there from part-time, single moms to people who've been there for years and years and years, and we thought it provided a good cross section of the diverse population in Cochrane. We did get 18 surveys back from town staff. You will see from our survey results, that are appended, that the range of comments was kind of intriguing. So this is what we have to provide you from the town of Cochrane's perspective, and we look forward to any questions.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you very much for your detailed presentation. I've got a couple of questions. First of all, let me ask you this. When you're talking about lands to the east of Cochrane approaching the city of Calgary, have you given any thought to becoming a part of a constituency that could be part of the city of Calgary and take in the lands west of the city going all the way out to Cochrane? Have you thought about that at all?

Mrs. Stewart: We have thought about that, and quite frankly we do have a lot in common with the citizens between Calgary and Cochrane. There is Springbank and Bearspaw. Both of those areas are very similar economically and politically, and we all rely on the same region for our services. The regional health authority is very, very significant; we are aligned with Calgary. With children's services we're aligned with Calgary. All of the communities around Calgary are in the Rocky View school board. Most of our jobs are in Calgary. We have thought about that, if it were possible. Our understanding, however, is that the city of Calgary likes to end at their boundary, so we're aware of that issue as well.

Mr. McBride: I think that council from last night was also concerned that we would be lumped into a boundary that would include some of Calgary, within the Calgary corporate limits, and that was something they did not want to happen.

10:55

Mr. Patterson: A second question, Mr. Chair, if I might. I think that maybe you've already answered it. Would you prefer the Okotoks-High River combination, going around the southwest side of the city, rather than being a part of the city of Calgary itself?

Mrs. Stewart: I think that it is clearly stated in our paper as well that we do believe that small urban centres are better grouped together than grouped in with a major city like the city of Calgary. Our interests are very similar. Okotoks, Turner Valley, High River, all of those lands, use the same city of Calgary services as we do. Being put in an electoral division with them would not hurt us at all as far as effective representation.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Any of my colleagues?

Mr. Graham: I just would like to make sure that I understand this correctly, Your Worship. Preference 1 is to stay in Banff-Cochrane. Preference 2 is to be incorporated in this crescent that would go around which would include Okotoks and High River. Preference 3 would be to be merged into a constituency that's part of northwest Calgary. Is that right, roughly?

Mrs. Stewart: Yes.

The Chair: Preference 4 would be to come north.

Mrs. Stewart: I guess our main point that we were trying to make is that we don't have anything in common with Olds, Didsbury, and Sundre other than the highway 22 corridor. There are no trading patterns, no health services or children's services, nothing. So I do see – and we recognized it right away – that Cochrane is a problem for any electoral division commission, and we wanted to come here and tell you some of our concerns and our issues.

I think the strong council position that we want to remain in our current electoral division is because we have had good representation and because it's always been that way. It's hard for people to change. However, both Councillor McBride and myself were able to verify our concerns that perhaps it's time for Cochrane to make a change given that we're not going to stop growing. Okotoks isn't going to stop growing. High River isn't going to stop growing. So recognizing that, where do you put these communities so that every two years we're not back here saying, "Well, maybe you should move us again"? Did I help with your question?

Mr. Graham: It's clear to me now. Thank you very much. I've got it: preferences 1, 2, 3, 4.

Ms Mackay: I don't have any questions, but thank you for the information. That'll be very helpful to us.

Mr. Clegg: Just a comment that certainly I totally agree with you that, you know, there are patterns. There are trading patterns in how people go. We all know, at least I think we all know, that in Cochrane – did you say that 80 percent or 60 percent of the people work in Calgary? Of course, that's what they have in common. Certainly I'm glad to hear that you would consider Okotoks in that area, because we have a problem down there, too, with the high growth. We have a very tough job, if that's the word, but it's nice to know from your remarks today that it might alleviate more than one problem. I understand exactly what you're saying, and thanks for the presentation.

Mrs. Stewart: Well, thank you.

The Chair: As one who lives in Carstairs I'm not surprised by the attitude that you take as far as coming north to the Sundre area. In another lifetime I taught school in Sundre. People drive down the Sundre road to go to Calgary and then they come back. There's little if anything in common, so I certainly understand where you're coming from, Your Worship.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chair, I have another question. You referred in your presentation to highway 1A, and then, Truper, I think you referred to some plan where maybe you thought we should consider going north from Cochrane.

Mr. McBride: Yes. We could provide that to you. It's sort of a Cochrane growth plan, I believe. It's a boundary of land where basically, even though it's not within our corporate borders, the people within this land have a certain feeling that they are part of Cochrane. You know, we just had our municipal elections of course last year, and there are people coming in from the MD saying: well, we supported you in the election, you know. Well, that's great, but of course they don't live in Cochrane. So there's that feeling that we're all one big family there and right now we are being cut. We are being divided by Airdrie-Rocky View, I believe, and Banff-Cochrane.

Yeah. We could get that to you. It's just basically a problem with 1A.

Mr. Patterson: The reason I'm interested in it, Mr. Chair, is that it's terrible when someone just lives right outside of Cochrane and then maybe has to go quite a long ways north to vote when the pattern is the other way. So that map would be helpful.

The Chair: Yes. If you could get that map to us and show where you think that northern boundary should be. You might also want to think in terms of how far west. Once again, as Mr. Clegg said, don't read too much into this, but it would be interesting to see, if Cochrane were to move out, how far west you think would be reasonable. We're going to have to be conscious, if we do this, of the population on the western side. Is it going to take in Banff-Canmore? I don't know those figures, how close they are to 36,000.

Mrs. Stewart: What I should tell you, Mr. Chair, is that Cochrane to the west borders on the Morley reserve, so there isn't a question there. They're our neighbours, but really, other than trade, we have nothing in common with people in Morley. We've been trying to

work on that. We have some aboriginal awareness committees, and we are going aggressively out trying to fix that problem. I did have some experience trying to look at common issues and places where we could deal with the common issues between the two diverse communities, and it was very, very difficult. It isn't an artificial boundary at all. Our western border is right on the Morley reserve, and we don't need to go any farther west than that, because we have nothing in common with Morley. We've tried to establish it, but it's forced.

The Chair: How far west is that?

Mrs. Stewart: It's right on our border.

The Chair: How far west does your border go?

Mrs. Stewart: To Horse Creek Road.

Mr. McBride: Big Hill Creek is pretty close to it as well.

The Chair: Ten miles west?

Mrs. Stewart: Ten miles west from the town of Cochrane?

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs. Stewart: It's right on our western border.

Mr. McBride: Our corporate border and Morley's border are flush.

The Chair: I understand.

Mrs. Stewart: So if we were going to talk about a western border, that seems to be a natural border, and Morley has always been in the Banff-Cochrane riding. I'm not quite sure if they'd be interested in changing. You'd have to hear from them.

The Chair: Okay. Any other questions, comments?

Thank you very much. I can't say how helpful it is when you come with a proposal and tell us what the heck you think. We're not going to satisfy everyone, but at least it's nice to start from the point of view that we know what you want. We can then attempt to accommodate as much as we possibly can. We really do appreciate your coming up to this beautiful part of the world.

Mrs. Stewart: That's right, and I appreciate all your time. It is a Charter right to have effective representation, and it's good that we have people who are committed to ensuring that that takes place.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Okay. Mr. Olthof, I believe that the next person is the mayor of Didsbury, and she'll be here at 11:30. Is that right?

Mr. Olthof: Yes, she will.

The Chair: Then we'll stand adjourned.

[The commission adjourned from 11:05 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.]

The Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to introduce Mayor Dorothy Moore from the town of Didsbury, just to the south of us. Dorothy, I'd like to introduce you to the members of the panel:

Mayor Ernie Patterson from Claresholm; Glen Clegg, the former member of the Legislature from the Dunvegan-Spirit River-Peace River area; Bauni Mackay, the former president of the Alberta Teachers' Association; and Doug Graham, a respected lawyer from the city of Calgary.

The five of us have been set with the task of looking at the boundaries in Alberta. This happens after every two provincial elections. We have to take the population from the last 10-year census. That population is 2.98 million. Our task is that we have to recommend 83 constituencies. You divide the 83 into the 2.98 million, and you get 35,951. So that's what our target is. We will be concluding this tour around the province at the end of June. We'll have our first report in the hands of the Speaker and to become public in early September. We want people to respond to that, and then in December or early January we'll be going out to those communities where issues were raised, hearing those concerns again. Then we'll have a final report in the Speaker's hands by the early part of March next year. It is my hope that the Legislature will deal with our report shortly after that.

I should talk about the makeup of the committee. Two of the people have been appointed by cabinet; two have been appointed by the Leader of the Opposition in consultation. The legislation says that the chairman shall be either the Ethics Commissioner, the Auditor General, a judge, or someone from an academic institution. I guess it's the Ethics Commissioner's turn. That's how come I'm the chairman. I've taken on tasks that I've found to be much easier than this one, believe me.

So without any further ado, Dorothy, please make your presentation to us. We're very informal. I'm sure my colleagues will have some questions, and Mr. Clegg may even have some comments, and then we'll go from there.

Ms Moore: Thank you. My presentation will not be very long. I've given it to you in point form. I'd like to mention to the lady on the panel that I am a teacher. I have a Bachelor of Education as my first degree.

I thank you for having these in our communities. We appreciate you coming out and listening to us. The basic premise of my presentation is that allowances be made as much as is possible within the parameters that have been given, the 25 percent one way or another, for rural representation particularly. When I think about ridings like Mike Cardinal's, where there aren't roads to some of the areas and they're completely cut off from their MLA for part of the year, it really doesn't compare to a city constituency that can be measured in blocks, where people have easy access to their MLA. So I thank you for the range that you have allowed. Looking at that range and the average population, I have made a presentation with aspects provincially, regionally, and locally regarding my presentation from the town of Didsbury.

Provincially I would ask that northern and rural constituencies due to their large land areas and more demanding and time-consuming access to and for constituents should contain as a maximum the average population per electoral district. The most difficult areas to serve should be near the low end of the acceptable population range. City constituencies measured in mere blocks should logically contain a minimum of the average electoral population with additional consideration given toward the high end of the acceptable population range. Transportation and accessibility to their MLA is not an issue.

Recognize that traffic corridors and traditional trading areas run north and south, not east to west. Residents along these corridors have similar issues. Wherever possible use district or county lines as a border of the constituency, again tying similar areas together.

Recognize that the Calgary/Edmonton corridor is poised for

continued exceptional growth. You'll notice in the census report that it's one of the four fastest growing areas in Canada, expecting that our 2.14 million population will grow to 4 million within the next 10 years. Residents along these corridors have similar issues. Provide boundaries within the corridor that bind areas with similar issues of growth and development together. Plan boundaries that take into account that growth has already increased their population beyond the 2001 census statistics and will continue to grow disproportionately.

Regionally: the Calgary/Edmonton corridor unique characteristics. Constituencies along the corridor such as Airdrie-Rocky View, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, Lacombe-Stettler, Ponoka-Rimbey, Rocky Mountain House, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, and Leduc should be reconfigured to recognize their unique situation within Alberta. Areas west of the halfway point between highways 2 and 21 should be considered as corridor constituencies. Areas east of that midway line between highways 2 and 21 have incongruent issues with the corridor areas, such as shrinking communities, closing facilities, larger farms, more drought, even different farming methods and products. For example, Camrose and Stettler and Hanna would have more in common than Stettler and Lacombe. Olds has more in common with Innisfail and Crossfield than with Three Hills. I'd like to mention Bashaw particularly, where not only did they lose their cheese factory with 80 employees and their last elevator but also lost their doctor. You know, how devastated can an area be? Shrinking population again there.

Locally. Crossfield has more in common with Mountain View county than with Airdrie and the Calgary fringe area in Rocky View and already shares medical services. Their doctor has privileges in our hospital, even though they're outside of our regional hospital district. A corridor water commission goes from Innisfail through Bowden and Olds and Didsbury and Carstairs and Crossfield, so that's another thing that ties us all together economically and in other associations.

Mountain View county and its urban areas contained 27,609 people in 2001. At our average growth rate since 1996, which we are surpassing by the way, we should have 28,200 now and 29,420 by 2004, when the next election might be called. If Crossfield and its surrounding district are added, we would have over 32,000 now and over 34,500 by 2004. That would be well into the midrange for electoral district population and encompass a considerable land area.

My recommendation and the town of Didsbury's recommendation is that an Olds-Didsbury constituency be aligned with Mountain View county boundaries as much as possible, perhaps reaching to include Crossfield and that north/south traffic and trading areas in central Alberta be considered.

Thank you.

The Chair: While you're reaching south and taking Crossfield, would you consider reaching north and picking up Bowden?

Ms Moore: Certainly. Either way. Sure.

The Chair: Bowden would be – what? – about 1,500.

Ms Moore: The only thing is that I look at Rocky View and the issues that it has, you know, with the acreages, the strip acreages, and the high population and the urban perspective. Crossfield is one that really fits better with us than with the others. Certainly we don't mind reaching either way as far as constituency boundaries. I'm thinking of Crossfield more and that their issues would be quite different than the rest of the constituency.

The Chair: The only reason I asked about adding Bowden, too, is that that would get you up to possibly 34,000. That was the only reason, Dorothy.

Ms Moore: Yeah, Bowden really has a lot in common with us and again is also on the water commission.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Clegg, Ernie, any comments, questions?

Mr. Clegg: Well, I'd just comment, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for being here. You know, it's very helpful to us. As our chairman said, we have a difficult – we can't change one voter without it affecting another, but it's always extremely enlightening to get your comments along with other people's to give us some alternatives to change the boundaries. I was very appreciative of your presentation.

Ms Moore: Thank you.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you for coming. When we come out, it's good to hear what local councils and people are thinking.

Do you believe that your general populace would support – Kris, a councillor from Olds, has already made a presentation somewhat similar to yours. Have you done any – what shall we say? – analysis or just kind of feeling what your general populace thinks of your suggestions?

11:30

Ms Moore: The councillors who represent my area certainly have passed this draft and have been included in the discussions. We have meet-the-taxpayer nights every month, and I certainly have been talking to other people in the area about this. I know that when I talk to my rural friends – and I do have coffee with them; I try to once a week or so – they are concerned that we do not erode rural representation.

When we look at straight representation by population, which I have seen presentations on at some of the PC conventions, that would be extremely unfair to the people in the very remote ridings, where huge land areas make it impossible for them to access their MLA. It's so different that I really would like to see the rural populations retain as much as possible the lower population, as small a land area as possible, especially in the areas to the east, where their populations are shrinking, the farms are growing. The size of some of those constituencies is already huge. So I would like real consideration to be given to them and to the northern ones. We're sort of midrange, so I'm not as much affected by that, but I do really feel that we need to be cognizant that there are people less fortunate than we are, and I would like them to be remembered.

Mr. Clegg: Thank you. Thank you. I'm from the north.

The Chair: Clegg is from the north, and he hasn't eaten for three weeks until he got down to Calgary, he told us the other night.

Mr. Graham: I just want to thank you, Your Worship, for an excellent presentation. We really do appreciate, you know, specific practical suggestions such as you've made. We may or may not be able to accommodate them, but rest assured that they're going to be kept and they're going to be reviewed. So thank you very much for all your efforts.

Ms Moore: I appreciate that.

Ms Mackay: I don't have a question either other than to say thanks. I like the fact that you put your local recommendation in the

context of the regional and the provincial, and that's helpful to us.

The Chair: Would it be appropriate, Your Worship, to say to my colleagues on the panel that if they have some real estate they'd like to buy or sell, they should give you a call?

Ms Moore: Actually, I'm not active in real estate. I find it conflicts with my job. So I'm selling cement trucks into 18 countries right now.

The Chair: Well, I'm not so sure about cement trucks. Okay. Thank you very much, Dorothy. I'm dated.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, the meetings here in Olds have come to a conclusion. Mr. Olthof, do we have anyone else scheduled to come? We're scheduled to be finished here at 12 o'clock. To the *Hansard* people and to the communications people, we'll adjourn early so you can be up and ready for our event in Red Deer at 2 o'clock. This is adjourned. Thank you very much.

[The commission adjourned at 11:35 a.m.]

