

10:02 a.m.

Tuesday, June 4, 2002

[Mr. Clark in the chair]

**The Chair:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to call this meeting of the Electoral Boundaries Commission here in Drumheller to order and welcome you all. According to my last advice I think we have four presenters this morning. Is that right, Mr. Olthof?

**Mr. Olthof:** That has increased to six.

**The Chair:** Okay. We have six then. So welcome.

I'd like to just take a few minutes and talk about the job that we have, the job that I suspect that at the end of the day few people are really going to be what I'd call tremendously satisfied with. It's an interesting challenge.

Under the law after every second election in Alberta there's a review of the election boundaries within the province. Under the law it says that you are to use the last census. In this case it's the 2001 census, which is fortunate compared to the last commission, where they had a census which was three or four years dated. Also under the law in Alberta there will be 83 seats. I think my colleagues and I have thought on occasion that this would be an easier job if there had been some changes there. About two-thirds of the written representation we've had is that there should be fewer seats, but we've certainly heard representation that there should be more seats too, so it's a checkered bit of representation we had there.

Under the legislation also the commission is established with the chairman being one of four people: either a member of the judiciary, the head of an academic institution, the Auditor General, or the Ethics Commissioner. I guess it's the Ethics Commissioner's turn this time, so I suspect that's why I'm chairman. Two of the members of the commission are appointed by Executive Council, and two members are appointed by the Leader of the Opposition in consultation.

I'd like to introduce my colleagues on the panel. To my right is Ernie Patterson, the mayor of the town of Claresholm. Ernie has been mayor for some 33 years down there. I don't know what that says about Ernie or the good folks in Claresholm, but it must be good, Ernie. Ernie is also one of the vice-presidents of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. To my right is one of Peace River's characters, Glen Clegg. Glen was the member of the Legislature for the Dunvegan riding for a number of years. That's the area around Spirit River-Fairview and so on. To my immediate left is Bauni Mackay. Bauni is from Edmonton. She's the former president of the Alberta Teachers' Association, and we're beginning to find out that Bauni in her own right is a bit of a character. To my far left is the fellow that we've come to rather refer to as Judge Graham. He's just waiting for the call. Doug Graham is a well-respected and well-known lawyer from the city of Calgary and is the fourth person on the panel.

The legislation says that we take the last census figure, which for Alberta is about 2.98 million, divide that by 83, the number of seats, and you get a figure I believe of 35,951. For the sake of our work we'll be talking in terms of 36,000 people per riding. That's the ideal. Then, of course, the legislation says that there can be up to a 25 percent variance plus or minus, but in the last commission the variances were all 15 percent up or down, except one riding, which was 16 percent.

The other part of the legislation that I want to talk about this morning deals with there being up to four constituencies which are special constituencies. If you look at the map of Alberta at the back, you'll see the riding of Athabasca-Wabasca, which is really the

northeast corner of the province of Alberta excluding the city of Fort McMurray, and then there is also the riding of Lesser Slave Lake, which is next to it. Those two are special ridings, and they have up to a 50 percent variance, so they can vary from the 36,000 down to about 18,000. There is provision in the legislation for four. At this time we only have two.

Our job as a commission is to take the legislation, hear representation – and that's what we're doing now. I can honestly say that we have not taken one pencil to any map at all as far as drawing boundaries and stuff like that. We're in this public consultation process right now. We started last week in Calgary, then up the corridor, and then in Edmonton. Yesterday we were in St. Paul and Wainwright. This morning we're here. Tonight we're in Medicine Hat. Tomorrow we're in Lethbridge. Thursday we're in Wetaskiwin. To be painfully honest – and because Drumheller is close to home, I can say this – the commissioner is going away for a week's holiday. We are getting back, though, later in the month, and then we're going from Westlock to Edson to Slave Lake to Fort McMurray to Peace River to Grande Prairie. That will take us virtually to the end of the month.

Very shortly after that, we're going to get together and come to some conclusions, and then along with our staff we will have the interim report written and available to the Speaker in the early part of September. It will go out to everyone who makes representation and anyone else who wants copies of course. There'll be up until early in December for people to react to that. Under the legislation we're bound to have a second set of hearings across the province in those areas where there's concern or consternation or in those areas where people want to tell us we've done a good job. We're not counting on the last group very much at all.

Once we've had the second round of hearings, then we're going to do our finalized report. The report will be in the hands of the Speaker in early March. As chairman I must confess quite publicly that I hope this report receives the same treatment that the last report received on the basis that the report that went from the committee went to the Legislature and by and large was approved by the Assembly. These boundaries, whatever we recommend and whatever the Legislature next spring concludes, will then become the boundaries for the next provincial election, be it in 2004, 2005, or 2006.

So in a nutshell, ladies and gentlemen, that's the task that's before us. I think that to be very candid, we all knew this was a challenge when we started and we looked at one of the ridings in Calgary, Calgary-Shaw, that has 82,000 people in it. You look at the north part of Calgary, and you see the challenges there. You look at the challenges of parts of the province like Airdrie, that area, and Cochrane, where they're having rapid growth. You look at other parts of the province that had a very, very difficult time, especially the agricultural community, where they have great distances, where communities aren't growing like some communities are growing, and you understand the immensity of the challenge which we have.

We try and have some fun at this job, but it's a difficult challenge. We're here to get your best advice as to how we interpret the law and what suggestions you have for us. We know and you know very well that we have to make some tough decisions as far as this area is concerned, because I think, if my memory is accurate – I know someone would correct me if it's not – the Drumheller-Chinook riding is at about minus 30. So one of the questions I know you're going to be asked when you're making a presentation is: if we have to do some juggling here, how's the best way to juggle that?

I'd be remiss if I didn't say that in Drumheller I can say that everybody's friend, the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Shirley McClellan, is here today. It's nice to have you here, Madam Minister.

**Mrs. McClellan:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'd be a little bit remiss, too, if I didn't pay recognition to the former Speaker of the Legislature, Stan Schumacher, who was my MP for a period of time. He and I have been known as cohorts from time to time. That's a nice introduction to say that Mr. Schumacher is going to be the first person to make a presentation to us. So, Stan, you're on.

**Mr. Schumacher:** Thank you very much, Mr. Commissioner. Members of the commission, this is a much more pleasant occasion than the first time I appeared before an Electoral Boundaries Commission, which was in 1966 at the courthouse in Calgary before the hon. Marshall Menzies Porter, which was much more intimidating.

**The Chair:** You're not finished yet. [interjections] Thank you very much.

**Mr. Schumacher:** Now, I understand that the time constraints are 15 minutes or 10 minutes.

10:12

**The Chair:** For Speakers we'd make it 12, and then we'll ask questions.

**Mr. Schumacher:** I've got to make up for the lack of speaking while I was Speaker.

**The Chair:** Not here.

**Mr. Schumacher:** In any event, I did send in an outline of what I hope to cover. There are no details there. Number one was the use of the legislation governing this matter and particularly the idea of variance. You have already outlined what that is, and I guess my submission is based on the fact that in the past the commissions have not made sufficient use of the law to avoid these very big disruptions in the nonmetropolitan areas of this province. You mentioned last time. The maximum was 15 percent, and one was 16 percent, when it could have gone up to 25 percent.

I don't know what it is. There seems to be this political correctness that we must worship at the shrine of the one person, one vote concept, which was developed in a small part of Greece a long time ago but then brought to public attention in the United Kingdom first, I believe, where it's a very small, relatively homogeneous unit. It can probably work in areas like this, but certainly in North America that is an absolute impossibility if anyone looks at the situation. We certainly as Albertans recognize that on the federal scene, but I don't know why we can't recognize it on the provincial scene.

One person, one vote should not be the first thing to be trying to get. The purpose of this is representation. I would ask the commission to think about that when they are using the law that is at their disposal. Use it. That's what it's intended for. Your obligation is not to try to even it out over the next eight years or whatever to make sure it ends up at 25 percent or something. Use it now. If it grows, it grows. If it gets up to 50 percent variance during the 10 years, what's wrong with that? Cindy Ady isn't on the verge of a nervous breakdown as a result of having 82,000 people in her constituency.

I've represented large areas of Calgary. I've also represented the rural parts around Calgary in that federal seat that I represented. I know what it takes to represent people, both rural and urban. This baloney about having 82,000 people to try to represent is purely that, baloney. She's an MLA like everybody else, and I don't think she's

under any more strain than any other MLA in Calgary.

If there are administrative details – we've heard time and time, again from urban centres, that the rural people don't have to worry; there's technology now. Well, the other side of that coin is that you don't even need the technology; you can just hire a few more bodies for the constituency office to represent that thing to help the member. They can have assistants too. It just doesn't all work one way. So I ask you to look at those things.

Now, the second point – I could go on for a lot longer on that issue, but I must move on – is frequency of reviews. I would make a strong submission that this commission make a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly that this law be changed. I mean, where else in Canada do they review the boundaries after every second election? That's totally ridiculous. We had the last review in 1996, six years ago, for goodness' sake. I mean, what's wrong with it? Why do we have to continue navel-gazing representation in this province? Every other jurisdiction that I know of uses the decennial census and does it every 10 years. Why can't we get into the mainstream of our country and look at that? And talking about members, the Legislative Assembly people, the media have got them convinced that there are too many members in the Legislative Assembly. I guess that somebody got us convinced that we have to have these reviews more frequently, but I can't understand why we have to be continually doing this.

Now, as far as boundaries are concerned, what I wanted to say there is that we should have natural boundaries for constituencies so constituents know where they live. This business on the northwest corner of this constituency is absolutely – it's a staircase boundary running from highway 21 over to 27. What's the point of that for the number of people involved? Is this another thing, this reverence for one person, one vote, that you've got to fine-tune it that closely?

**The Chair:** That's the northwest corner of this riding?

**Mr. Schumacher:** Yes.

**The Chair:** What community area?

**Mr. Schumacher:** Well, between Carbon and Three Hills, and there's no sense to that at all. I'm saying this on behalf of the Drumheller-Chinook constituency as well, as a director of that association. That should be straightened out. On the other hand, we have an area west of highway 21, west of Rockyford, that is another no-man's-land, and that should be put into the adjoining constituency and highway 21 be our west boundary, and then that's a perfectly identifiable area. I don't see any other situations of that nature in our constituency, and I hope you'll do that in other constituencies too, because I've heard that same comment about areas where people really don't know where they live.

**The Chair:** They know where they live, but they don't know where they vote.

**Mr. Schumacher:** True. Yeah, in which constituency they live. I'm sorry.

Then I guess the last thing is Drumheller-Chinook, and I've been asked to submit that if it's felt that this constituency requires more people, the commission look at adding the county of Paintearth. The county of Paintearth has been a part of the former Chinook constituency. It worked for that, but of course you do have the challenge of what you are going to do with Wainwright. It's in as bad a shape as we are, but as you pointed out, there are still two more special constituencies that you could recognize, only using two, and that would relieve the pressure. On the whole, it seems to me that while

Calgary has an 82,000 population constituency, it also has some that are pretty close to right on the average, and there's lots of room for using that variance factor to resolve Cindy Ady's problem.

With that, I want to thank you very much for your kind attention.

**The Chair:** Okay, sir. Good.

Mr. Patterson.

**Mr. Patterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Stan, thank you for your submission. It was straightforward and precise. I'm almost afraid to ask you this question, but I guess I will. As our chair has pointed out, one of the things that we have to try and do as best we can is to avoid a court challenge, because when we get into that, it gets us into all kinds of difficulties. You talk about the variance under the legislation of plus 25 or minus 25. For example, in the Saskatchewan legislation it's 5 percent tolerance.

10:22

**Mr. Schumacher:** But the Leg. chose that. I mean, that doesn't give it any special – if you want to look at Canada, the law of the whole country is 25 percent.

**Mr. Patterson:** If I could just finish though. See; one of the problems, then, is we have people who know that.

**Mr. Schumacher:** Well, move to Saskatchewan is what I'd tell them, if they want that. It needs all the help it can get.

**The Chair:** You'd better let him finish the question for you, Stan.

**Mr. Patterson:** Anyway, the point I'm trying to make here is that – you know, everything you've said so far I can agree with, but the problem we've got then is that there are people who are knowledgeable and aware of the situation in Saskatchewan, and we don't know who they might be, who might take up the court challenge. They're aware of that. So while the law says plus or minus 25, having been making presentations in courts to honourable judges far more than I've ever been in court, you probably know that when you get into that court situation, you just don't know what's going to happen. It depends on whether the judge has had a good breakfast or whether he wants to go play golf or so on.

**The Chair:** What's the question?

**Mr. Patterson:** So, anyway, I guess I could ask you this as a member of the legal profession. The question is: if we follow your advice, how do we avoid the possibility of a court challenge? You know, you're talking about Calgary and so on.

**Mr. Schumacher:** I can't see how there could possibly be a court challenge, because the law allows for 25 percent. If the Legislative Assembly didn't want you to use 25 percent, they would have said so. They would have said 20 or 15 or 10 or 5, as Saskatchewan has done, but they chose 25, and they've got good company. I guess, you could say that maybe the fact that 25 percent was first introduced into Canada in Ottawa by the federal government in 1965 – and it has been challenged, questioned on many occasions, most recently in a serious way in British Columbia when, as she then was, Madam Justice McLachlin was a member of the British Columbia Supreme Court. Now, we know what's happened to her. She's gone on to the Supreme Court of Canada, but her feelings on that subject are that 25 percent is very acceptable. She defended that 25 percent as a jurist in this country who has now been promoted, so I don't know why anyone would fear a court challenge of using the 25

percent. All sorts of authority for that.

**The Chair:** Okay. Mr. Clegg.

**Mr. Clegg:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and hello again, Stan. It's always great to talk to you and to meet with you again. As you know – and you're really on this 25 percent, obviously – during the last round of electoral boundaries they used I think they called it a matrix system. We're not metric; we're matrix. There are many factors that we can use. You know, you just can't say: well, it should be 25. I mean, it's distance from the Legislature or if it's against a border of another province or area. What do you actually think about that system? Obviously, you have looked at that somewhat. What do you think of that?

**Mr. Schumacher:** Well, I really don't see the need for that system too much except to justify activating two more special constituencies, because that's where the distances and sparsity are really, really evident. All those factors have to come into play, but you know, we've had redistributions for years and years and years in this country, and so far as I know, the matrix system was first used last time and I don't think with very much success, with all due respect to the previous commission.

**Mr. Graham:** Mr. Schumacher, thanks very much. I thought your presentation was very good, and the particular parts of it that I've taken note of were your comments on the boundaries. I think that's extremely helpful.

My reading, quite frankly, of the case law may be a little different than yours, which is that the legislation gives us an ability to vary up to 25 percent, but we don't have licence to vary up to 25 percent. We have to provide reasons within that 25 percent. These comments are not just directed to yourself – I thought your presentation was very good – but are perhaps directed to others who follow you as well. What we find particularly helpful in justifying or not justifying this variance are concrete, factual insights into your constituency, which would help us understand the problems that an MLA has representing constituents. You've given us a number of those factors, and you've made some concrete suggestions. I've made note of those.

The principles, you know, we are very aware of. In my mind there's no debate over whether it's equal representation or effective. It's effective. We all know that. We're aware of the general principles. What we're looking for are your factual insights into your constituency, which help us to apply those principles. So my question is: if you have further insights of that nature that you want to tell us about today, please do so. If you have further insights of that nature that you become aware of later, please submit them later, because those are helpful.

**Mr. Schumacher:** These things certainly have been said in many previous commissions, and no doubt they will be in this one. I know that it's difficult for people who have an urban background to understand what the rural situation is. We all tend to look on things as – we'd have our own point of view from the environment we're living in. I've had the benefit of serving both types of areas, and the thing about non-urban constituencies is there are so many other jurisdictions that interface with the provincial government that you have to deal with: hospital boards, school boards, things of that nature. In the city of Calgary or the city of Edmonton there's one health care jurisdiction, one educational jurisdiction, only one municipal jurisdiction, whereas when you get outside of those metropolitan areas, you've got multimunicipal, multieducational, multihealth.

**The Chair:** If I can interrupt you, Stan, that's the kind of stuff that's going to be helpful to us. Hopefully, sometime today or following you can give us for the Chinook riding the number of jurisdictions, all that kind of information, because if we're going to be making exceptions, then we need that kind of background information to justify it.

**Mr. Schumacher:** All I can say is that this commission has been chosen for that very reason: to represent both urban and rural. You all, each and every one of you, know those things from your own personal experience: you as an MLA, you as an MLA, you as a rural mayor, and the urban side is certainly well represented by Ms Mackay and Mr. Graham.

**The Chair:** Quite frankly, I don't know how many towns and villages . . .

**Mr. Schumacher:** No. No.

**The Chair:** Just let me finish.

. . . there are in this constituency, how many school jurisdictions or special areas, and that's the kind of information we need to be helpful, if we're going to be able to do the job for you.

10:32

**Mr. Schumacher:** Well, I think that's looking at it in too much of a mechanical way. This has got to be looked at as a philosophical way of looking at our whole problem. That's been the mistake in the past. It's all based on this bloody one-person, one-vote concept, which we feel we have to worship before, which is wrong – absolutely wrong – in a geographic jurisdiction like we've got in Canada and in the United States. The United States certainly recognized that when they had their bicameral Legislatures. We don't do that here. We probably should, but because we don't do it, there has to be some way of recognizing that, and you do that through the variance.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Schumacher:** Now, I see that Mr. Horner is here. He's going to be following. He was intimately involved in the development of that federal legislation, and I hope he'll have something to say on this.

**The Chair:** I know he will have.

**Mr. Schumacher:** This commission does have that responsibility. Now, if this commission wants to act like an adding machine, fine, but it will not be doing a good job for the people of Alberta.

**The Chair:** Okay. Bauni, you had a question?

**Ms Mackay:** I have two questions actually. At the risk of sounding like an adding machine, to what extent would you take into consideration – I mean, I found your comments about the job of an urban MLA versus the job of a rural MLA and the fact that Cindy Ady can handle 80,000 constituents very interesting. To what extent would you give any credence to the difference in the demographics of the two areas of the province in terms of the particular issues that an urban MLA faces with regard to the fact that the cities are magnets for immigrants, for people who have particular medical problems, you know, that kind of thing, the lower socioeconomic groups and so on? Do you give any weight to that at all when you're making your comments in terms of having this wide variance and

letting the urban MLAs continue to have huge numbers of constituents?

**Mr. Schumacher:** Well, do I understand you to say that there could possibly be immigration problems arising for the MLA?

**Ms Mackay:** No, no. I mean, do you see those as having any kind of bearing on the job of the urban MLA; linguistic problems, for example?

**Mr. Schumacher:** Well, when I was the Member of Parliament for everything west of 37th Street in Calgary, from south to north, from the Sarcee reserve to then Dalhousie and Silver Springs and across the top through Huntington Hills and then into northeast Calgary including Dover and Marlborough Park, which were all fast growing areas in the mid to late '70s, I certainly didn't notice any great pressure from those groups who were then pouring into Calgary because it was boom time then. I've always had more calls for assistance from nonmetropolitan areas than I did from any of the metropolitan areas that I had. So that's my experience, and I don't think things have changed that much. I think that with 21 MLAs in Calgary they're falling over each other, in my view. Now, anybody can make their job sound like it's really horrendous. Anybody can do that, and I suppose they try to justify that, but I can't understand what they do, from my own experience when I represented the same people.

**Ms Mackay:** Okay. Thank you.

Then my last question. You said that if we had to make this constituency larger, the county of Paintearth would be the way to go. Do you have any idea if the people in that area are happy to be moved back into this constituency?

**Mr. Schumacher:** I don't know. I would think that they wouldn't be, because they've already had the pleasure of having our current MLA represent them.

**Ms Mackay:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any other questions or comments? Stan, despite our rather sparkling exchange, thank you very much.

**Mr. Schumacher:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** I'm pleased to introduce Mr. Barry Davies and his group, from the special areas. Good morning, gentlemen. Barry, I think you were here when we introduced the group.

**Mr. Davies:** I was.

**The Chair:** We talked about the challenge that we have before us, so we look forward to your presentation. I think all five of us don't understand it completely, but we know that you represent a very unique and very special part of rural Alberta, and we look forward to your suggestions and guidance. Thanks very much.

**Mr. Davies:** Thank you. I'm here representing the chairman, who was unable to be here, in addition to Gerald and Kyle, who are board members. We are from the special areas. I'll maybe just read the brief and then try and answer any questions you might have.

The special areas is a rural municipality located in east-central Alberta. It is 5.2 million acres in size and has a rural population of 5,314, administered by the Special Areas Board. The board is opposed to any further eroding of effective representation of the

people of the special areas by expansion of the present Drumheller-Chinook constituency boundaries.

As you are aware, effective representation is a guaranteed right of every citizen under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and this right is in serious jeopardy in rural Alberta. Rural residents have lost and continue to lose essential services through closure of schools, hospitals, and government offices due largely to sparsity and density of populations. The special areas have experienced an 8 percent loss in population since the 1996 federal census and 34 percent from the 1966 census. This, in addition to the difficult economic conditions throughout rural Alberta, is driving farmers and ranchers out of the rural areas, and when I say this, I mean the closure of schools and hospitals and government offices, et cetera, together with the economic conditions. It is this population-based reasoning that makes Alberta and western Canada politically subservient to eastern Canada. It threatens to make rural Alberta subservient to urban Alberta. It may be good for the corridor and particularly Calgary and Edmonton, but it does not provide effective representation for rural Albertans.

We would suggest that provincial law needs to provide for more ridings to be exempt from the 25 percent rule. As was cited in the '95 electoral boundaries review, it is entirely appropriate to have "the right to have the parity of the votes of others diluted, but not unduly, in order to gain effective representation or as a matter of practical necessity."

Maintaining common community interest is also a concern. Further enlargement of present boundaries would make the constituency even less contiguous than it presently is. Prairie agricultural communities have a distinct identity, much the same as cities have a distinct identity. Their political, economic, and social activities are different than in other regions. It is not conducive to the common community interest to expand constituency boundaries into areas that do not have common interests with our community.

We have concerns for our MLA as well, that we do not get to meet face to face as often as is desirable because of the time and distance factors. Our MLA has a four-hour drive from her constituency to Edmonton, with no access to commercial air travel in her riding. An MLA from Calgary, Medicine Hat, or Lethbridge gets credit for the distance factor from Edmonton, but they do have the option of air travel.

Our MLA must try to maintain contact with her constituents over a 16,000 square kilometre area. We acknowledge that communication by phone, fax, or computer is the accepted way of doing business today, but in the final analysis there is no substitute for being able to meet with people face to face, especially in the fast-paced world of our MLA. If government wants to be truly accountable, its MLAs need to meet with their constituents on a face-to-face basis to exchange information and resolve problems.

We strongly recommend that the boundaries remain unchanged. Thank you.

10:42

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Barry.  
Mr. Clegg.

**Mr. Clegg:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, folks. It's great to have you come in to give us a good presentation. As many of you know, I did represent for many years a very rural riding, and all your remarks here are certainly well taken. I know the difficulty of the distance factor in Drumheller-Chinook, and like you say, the population is getting smaller. What would your feeling be on the county of Paintearth? More specifically, where does the county of Paintearth do their trading? Is it in Drumheller-Chinook, or is it in Wainwright?

**Mr. Davies:** I would suggest probably north of the special areas in the Stettler-Wainwright direction. But I think they have in Paintearth a lot of common concerns, you know, similar to the people of the special areas. Farmers and ranchers are relatively drought prone, as we are, I think. At least it's my perception that we identify with a lot of the common areas that Paintearth does, maybe not so much with Kneehill and Wheatland, if that answers the question at all.

**Mr. Clegg:** Thank you. Yes, it does.

**The Chair:** I'm just going to ask about Kneehill. You think there'd be more affinity with Paintearth than Kneehill; do you?

**Mr. Davies:** That seems to be at least my perception, Mr. Clark. Kneehill and Wheatland are a little closer to the corridor. In the past there doesn't seem to have been quite as close a tie as Starland and Paintearth, who are immediately adjacent to us.

**The Chair:** Mr. Patterson.

**Mr. Patterson:** No questions, Mr. Chairman. Mine have been asked. Thank you.

**Mr. Graham:** I don't have any questions. I want to assure you that your concerns have been expressed very well and have been expressed by others, and we fully understand them. So the reason that I'm not asking you questions is because we know your situation.

**Mr. Davies:** Yeah. I know there's nothing new in this – it's all been said before – but we felt an obligation to make sure that, you know, you knew we were concerned.

**The Chair:** On a nonboundary basis for a moment, how is the moisture situation? Did you get any rain in the last couple of weeks?

**Mr. Davies:** Both Kyle and Gerald are farmers and ranchers and can probably speak to that a little better than I can, Bob.

**Mr. Kornelson:** I don't know what the question was.

**The Chair:** Any moisture in the last couple of weeks?

**Mr. Kornelson:** I've had two-tenths since last June. I'm at Empress, on the Alberta/Saskatchewan border. There have been showers hit and miss through the area up to half an inch. The crops emerged, but now with the grasshoppers, the flea beetles, and the drought they're disappearing again. So I'd say that it's a matter of moisture and the wind. It's a really desperate area right now.

**Mr. Clegg:** See your MLA.

**Mr. Kornelson:** I'm not sure she can help that. She can do pretty near anything else.

**Mr. Christianson:** Gerald said it basically. Some people have had nothing yet. It's just been showers here and there. Some may have got a little bit. In a lot of places the grass looks just like last winter yet. Some situations are pretty bad. Just last Sunday evening some areas, very small, may have got an inch of rain, but then maybe two miles down the road they didn't get anything. That's the way it's been.

**Mr. Kornelson:** The prairie will have no grazing on it this year at

all. I mean, it's all of southeastern Alberta, I believe. The cattle are basically gone, I think, out of that area. A lot have moved them into Saskatchewan or sold them. There'll be no prairie this year. It hasn't even greened up yet. It looks like a moonscape right now.

**Ms Mackay:** There's no irrigation?

**Mr. Kornelson:** No. We tried to build the Meridian dam, and that didn't work either.

**Mr. Davies:** We're trying to get water into our country through that special areas water supply project, that you may have heard of, getting water in from Red Deer across the Stettler country and into the top part of the special areas. That would help a lot of the special areas with stock watering and that sort of thing.

One other comment. You know, it's a fairly common feeling in rural areas when you're talking to rural people that there seems to be a disproportionately large voice in the cities compared to the rural areas with their 22, 23 seats, whatever Calgary has for example. Mr. Schumacher alluded to it, you know, and I don't know that it is as important that the population be as critical as it seems to be in the criteria that determine the size or the boundaries of these constituencies. Maybe area needs to be brought into the equation a little bit more.

**The Chair:** I'd never want Mr. Schumacher to hear me say this – he's sitting at the back – but an example of urban influence as opposed to rural influence: if you look at the recent Financial Review Commission that's been set up, all the members of it are from Edmonton and Calgary.

**Mr. Davies:** Yeah. You know, there was just a submission put together by the Alberta Ambulance Review Committee that I think was fairly positive for the rural areas, and it was shot down by the cities. It doesn't take much for them, if they don't like something, to overturn it, it seems.

**The Chair:** It's a very difficult challenge when you're sitting in Edmonton in the Legislature. You have that balancing act to do. It's very difficult.

**Mr. Davies:** Yeah, for sure.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your presentation, gentlemen.

**Mr. Davies:** Thank you very much for the opportunity.

**The Chair:** I can assure you that your concerns will be very, very seriously considered.

Mr. Olthof, who is next?

**Mr. Olthof:** Mr. Jack Horner.

**The Chair:** Well, I'm pleased to welcome to the meeting this morning Mr. Jack Horner. I introduced Mr. Schumacher as being one of the local characters. I think we could include Jack in that illustrious group too. Just to the members of the commission, Jack was the MP for this area for many, many years and has a very successful ranching operation in the area.

Without any further ado, Jack, we're looking forward to some – and we know it will be – frank advice.

**Mr. Horner:** I don't know how correct it'll be, Mr. Chairman, but

I'd like to thank you and your group for giving me the opportunity to speak to you. I agree with in fact all of what Stan said with regards to the 25 percent rule. The 25 percent rule came about in the mid-60s in Ottawa. It took into consideration the economic importance of the areas of Canada that were sparsely settled. That was the main factor really. It was the economic importance of what still is a young country. It still is a young country in comparison to Europe. It had to have and needed that representation. The areas involved were sparsely settled and needed representation, and that was the main argument, really, that brought about the 25 percent rule.

With regards to court challenges, it's been challenged a number of times, and courts have upheld the 25 percent rule. It's disappointing that the last commission, in '96, didn't use it. You know, it was made to be used, not made to be disregarded or cut in half or whatever. In fact, as you've already recognized, in some areas of Alberta it could be enlarged. It is enlarged to 50 percent, as you suggested, in two areas, and you have room for four areas. The special areas could well be looked upon as a third area.

Looking at the map of Alberta and the distribution of people within Alberta, you see that Calgary – Stan mentioned 21. When I look at Calgary, I see that Calgary controls 24 MLAs really if you take in Airdrie and High River and Strathmore, which are really suburbia Calgary. Does Calgary need that many more MLAs than it has aldermen? You know, you really have to question the philosophy of that. Do they need that many more MLAs? Eight seats have more than the 25 percent rule in Calgary. You could jostle them around and give a few more to some of the others, and you could leave rural Alberta pretty nearly as is.

10:52

You know, I appeared before the one in '96, and I can't remember, but I think I might have appeared before the one in '91. I want you to look ahead. What do you see down the road? Are we going to keep enlarging the rural areas, the rural representation, all the time the next six years? The demographics as outlined by Harvard University studies suggest that Alberta by the year 2030 will have a population of 4 and a half million people. Now, let's suppose that they're out a little; let's suppose that it's 4 million. Four million it will have for certain by the year 2030. That isn't very far away. Where will those people be? Well, it's a safe bet that they'll be in the Edmonton/Calgary corridor mostly. How large will the rural areas be then, and how poor will their representation be then?

One argues and could argue very easily that if you get off an airplane in Calgary and you hit the press, you've covered your area and a lot of other areas to boot. But in the rural area there are five or six or maybe seven weekly papers. They don't get the daily paper. They see the TV, but television tends to cover the cities. The local MLA gets a far greater chance to appear on television than a rural MLA, who might want to use that same television station because his or her constituents see it as well. So there's no comparison in my opinion between representing a rural area and a city area. The city area is duck soup. It's easy compared to the rural area, the miles you have to drive in a rural area to get from one place to the other. In the city it's two blocks one way or the other or maybe an hour and a half in a taxi in busy traffic but nothing like the rural areas.

If you'd think now for a minute – when I was a kid going to school, there was a story in the readers about the church mice and the country mice and how they didn't get along. Then we saw rural Alberta come together. We saw electricity in rural Alberta. We saw running water in the homes in rural Alberta. We saw natural gas. And I think the rural and city people came together. Now I see them drifting apart very rapidly. City folk want to have a say in the

environment. Cities destroy the environment. There are no endangered species living, hardly, in a city. The cities wipe them out completely. If you look back in history, there were bear and elk all wandering around where Calgary is now. Now that's completely wiped out. City folk want to control the environment when they've destroyed their own. They want to control the environment in the rural areas.

Take a look at endangered species legislation. It certainly didn't originate with the rancher, although the rancher takes care of endangered species. I have deer, antelope, plovers, burrowing owls, all of those animals on my ranch, and I enjoy watching them. I very, very rarely hunt any of those animals. Now we have animal rights people coming into vogue. They're not ranchers; they're city folk determining what's good for the rancher. This whole concept is brought about by representation, by legislation that affects the rural area. So it's very important that the rural area have strong representation. Of course when it comes right down to it, if you don't have enough representation, you're going to lose anyway because it's a numbers game.

What is the solution? What would help? Well, you have to take a look at history. The Fathers of Confederation in 1867 created a Senate. The Senate was devised to more or less spread out the representation. Western Canada got 24 Senators. There wasn't anybody living out here, hardly, in 1867. That's 10 years after Palliser went through this area, so that gives you an idea of how many people were here. Not very many. But western Canada was given 24 Senators, equal to Ontario, equal to Quebec. Why? Because the Fathers of Confederation believed that there was an economic importance to that vast area, that they'd better take it into consideration.

Is there a parallel today in Alberta? I don't know whether you gentlemen saw this *Western Producer* last week. The report tells a tale of two Albertas. I won't say anything more than that, but there are really two Albertas: the vast area poorly represented because of numbers and the cities overly represented because of numbers.

While my recommendation to your commission may be beyond your means, it's not beyond your means to recommend to the government that the question be studied. My solution to the long-term solution of this problem is to reduce the number of MLAs from 83 to 63 and create a Senate of 10 from urban Alberta and 10 from country Alberta. The Senate would be the sober second thought. I wouldn't recommend that the Senate have legislative powers over the elected body, but it would provide the sober second thought. An effective Senate in my opinion would be one appointed by the Premier of senior people of economic benefit, as the Canadian Senate was supposed to be. You had to be over 34, and you had to have some economic value.

There are two evils in a democracy. One could say "faults," but I say "evils." One is the news media. Why is it evil in a democracy? Because it specializes or goes after the emotions. They love to get a politician crying. The camera comes right in close. They love to get emotions. It's an emotional media that sells papers. That doesn't really help the economic benefits or the economic determinants, what the government should be doing. You should be dealing with questions in an unemotional manner.

The other evil is the political parties. You see legislation passed and supported to save the political party. A good example of this is the farm legislation in the United States just recently passed. Everybody would agree that it's bad economics. It distorts the marketplace tremendously. Why was it passed? It was passed for political reasons.

**The Chair:** The elections this fall.

**Mr. Horner:** An election is coming up, and the Republicans want to win a few more Senate seats.

So an elected Senate would still be tied to a political party of some kind or another one way or another, but an appointed Senate would be prohibited from being involved in politics. The trouble with our Canadian Senate is not that we hear people say: well, they're not elected. The second most powerful person in Canada is not elected, and that's the governor of the Bank of Canada. He's not elected; he's appointed. He's supposed to work on economics, not on emotions, not for a political party or anything else. That's what the folly of the Canadian Senate is. They attend the caucuses of the party, and they get involved. The Conservatives and Liberals have appointed bagmen to the Senate. It's a nice place to gather money for the party, and naturally they support the party's legislation. But an appointed Senate that is prohibited from being involved in political parties and politics at all would then be able to rule. Did Bill 11, the health care bill, need a sober second thought? I don't know. Certainly I was just using that as an example. Everybody could pull a piece of legislation out and hope that somewhere along the line it was slowed up and somebody took another look at it.

**11:02**

My belief is that the best thing your commission could do is to recommend a study of the question of rural representation and how it could be benefited by the creation of a Senate divided equally between rural Alberta and urban Alberta so that when hurried-up legislation is passed by politicians, and not necessarily anything against present politicians but somewhere down the road, that would be harmful to one area, mainly rural Alberta, the Senate could say: hold up. They couldn't block it forever. They could hold it up for one session. "Hold it. Wait a minute. Let's study this. What kind of effect is it going to have?"

Look at the money the provincial government has in Alberta in this whole area. A number of billions of dollars come out of this economic area that goes into the coffers in Alberta. That's from oil and gas. The same could be said for northern Alberta in the timber area. The money is spent in the cities. I'm not complaining. The country has been good to me; I've no complaints that way. I'm just drawing the parallel of where the money comes from and where the money goes.

Somebody once said that the cities are the engine of the economic growth of the province. That may be true, but the fuel for those cities is in the rural areas. You, recommending some changes to the electoral boundaries, have to consider where the fuel comes from. Certainly the vast wealth that this constituency provides to Alberta is not spent in this constituency. The main highways east and west are 60 to 70 miles apart. North and south are more than that, maybe a hundred miles apart, numbers 1 and 9 and then north to 12. So you see, I'm not complaining, but we don't get much money spent in rural Alberta by the government. Hospitals are diminishing. Education is becoming more difficult and further away from the local residences. Those things will continue to go that way. There's nothing that I can do.

I hope that your commission gives some thought to a long-term solution, not just the next six years. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Good. Thanks, Jack. You have the ability to help us take our blinders off. Last night, when we were in Wainwright, someone mentioned the idea of a second House, a Senate of some sort.

**Mr. Horner:** Well, I'm pleased to hear that.

**The Chair:** Ernie.

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes, Mr. Chair. Good to see and hear you, Jack. You and I've been on the same political platform, sometimes on the same side and sometimes on opposite sides. It's good to hear you today, and thank you very much for your presentation.

You made some very important points very effectively. When you're talking about effective representation, and you having been an elected person, sometimes we have the suggestion made to us that more offices for an MLA or more staff for an MLA would help that MLA or elected representative be more effective. Any thoughts on that?

**Mr. Horner:** I wouldn't say that. When I got elected in Ottawa for the first time, my salary was \$8,000, and I got a \$2,000 addition, whatever they called it, a bonus. Today I think it's \$135,000 and probably \$20,000 in gratuities besides that. When we went to Ottawa, two members shared one secretary. Now when I go to Ottawa, I see that some members have three offices and four or five girls. I don't think they're out doing more work than I or any other members did when I first got elected, and to get in to see them now is as difficult as difficult can be. I'm not particularly meaning any political party. It seems like they're all the same.

When I went to Ottawa, of course, I was so happy to see somebody from home. My door was always open: "Gosh, come on in." Now, when I went to Ottawa, I did my own research. I felt that once I researched it, I knew the subject better and I could then explain it better. Now they've got a whole lot of computers. Each member has a computer and e-mails and all the rest of it. I don't think it improved the representation. If anything, they're stuck to their computers and their e-mails, and they're not listening to the people as much as they should. That'd be my criticism. No, I don't think it's a question of staff. I think it's got to be the people.

**The Chair:** Glen.

**Mr. Clegg:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I really haven't got a question, but I'm enlightened by your remarks. There are so many things that I totally agree with you on. To me, having represented a rural riding for 15 years, it's not more staff that the people want to see. It is the MLA and in your case the MP. I totally agree with you. Somebody said: well, somebody knows somebody, and they're good people too. But the MLA or the MP is the person that the municipality or the school board wants to see. I've heard it said many times that if you send somebody to represent yourself and they get back, you probably never even talked to the MLA. I mean, that's the kind of remark you get. I totally agree with your remarks, and I'm enlightened by them.

Thank you.

**Mr. Horner:** That's very true. In the rural areas people want to see their MLA or their MP. They want to shake hands. They want to know them. They want to give them a barb or two.

**Mr. Clegg:** Yeah.

**Mr. Horner:** People enjoy that.

**Mr. Clegg:** Exactly.

**Mr. Horner:** In the cities they don't expect to see their MLA or their MP nearly as much as the country people. Country people want to see this guy or this woman more so.

**Mr. Clegg:** And it's not because they're good looking.

**Mr. Horner:** It's a different thing. They say, "Oh, there are too darn many people."

**The Chair:** In some cases.  
Bauni.

**Ms Mackay:** I really enjoyed your presentation. I learned a lot from it. I guess it's the same as with Mr. Schumacher. We benefit from the experience that you bring to these hearings.

I was particularly interested in your comments when you said: look ahead, and look ahead to 30 years down the road and what the demographics will be. I guess it's one of the sad situations in Alberta. I mean, the reality is that it is becoming an increasingly urbanized province and is already two-thirds urban. As an urban person but with strong rural roots my question to you would be: how do I as an urbanite go back to urban people and explain the need to not recognize the integrity of that ratio of urban/rural as reflecting that reality in population when it comes to representation?

11:12

**Mr. Horner:** It has to be done on economic worth. You know, when a gas well is going to be drilled on the edge of Calgary and there's a hue and cry from Calgarians saying, "Oh, it can't be this close," I think every rural person in Alberta just smiles a little to themselves and says, "Tough." You know? Now, because there's going to be a gas thermoelectric plant built out near Calgary, there's a hue and cry about it. We welcomed the plant at Sheerness, although it's not as pure and clean as a lot of people advocate it is, and I can vouch for that because I live downwind from it.

That's the difference between the people. You have to take into consideration the economic worth of rural Alberta. What would Calgary be if it were isolated on an island without the economics of rural Alberta providing for it? You know, it's the economics. I mentioned the oil and gas industry, but the agricultural industry is equally as important, and up until a few years ago – in fact, it may even be so today – more manufacturing jobs were created in Alberta from the livestock industry than from many others. It's the economics of the importance of rural Alberta. Yes, we could do a lot of things that would help rural Alberta. The special area was mentioned. We need more water very, very badly, and it would create for greater development of rural Alberta, but it will never catch up to the Calgary/Edmonton corridor.

You know, you just have to think for a minute. Back in 1945 Alberta had 8 percent of the national population. Today it's 11 percent and going up. So you say to yourself: if there are 30 million people in Canada now, with the growth in world population we'll hit 40 million quite easily by the year 2030. If that's true, Alberta will have 4 and a half million people, a 50 percent increase in what we are now. We're not doing enough, in my opinion, to prepare Alberta for that huge increase that is coming about. Whether you sit there or I sit here or what, it doesn't really matter; it's coming. As sure as guns it'll happen.

**Ms Mackay:** Good. Thank you.

**Mr. Graham:** I thought it was a great presentation, and it kind of reminds me of a quote from Winston Churchill, when he said: democracy is the worst system of all except for all the other systems. So this must be the worst committee to be on, then, because of that.

I have a more pointed comment, which is this. It quite caught my interest when you mentioned the possibility of using more of these special areas, and I think that one of the things we may be considering is that. When I looked at the past reports and so forth, one of the things that was missing from the reports, I thought, was: what's the

justification for a special area? In other words, what tips the balance of a rural area over in to one of those special areas? How does that happen? What are the factors that you would take into account? Where is the break point where that happens? If you have any further comments on that either now or later on, I would personally be appreciative. Nobody is ordinary, but when does an ordinary rural riding become a special rural riding? What are the factors that we should consider in addressing that issue?

**Mr. Horner:** The special areas used to be far larger than it is now.

**Mr. Graham:** I'm not talking about the special areas. I'm talking about the special constituencies.

**Mr. Horner:** I know what you're talking about. I would come back to the fact that it's the economics of that special area. Do you need it? Do you want it? Do you want to encourage it? Is there more potential there? Thirty years ago who would have thought Fort McMurray would develop to be quite the major centre that it is today? It's the economics that brought it about, and luckily some people foresaw that possibility and then developed that area. So I think it's got to be the economic importance of the area.

**Mr. Graham:** So you'd look at the resources being drawn from that area versus the population base when you're considering a special area. Is that what you're saying?

**Mr. Horner:** Yes, I think so. You take the possibility of another coal mine south of Brooks, the enlargement of the existing coal mine at Sheerness, and then of course the agricultural industry with greater irrigation. Take the irrigation area in Brooks alone: huge, huge potential. Somebody once said that 80 percent of agricultural production in Alberta comes from the irrigated areas. I don't know whether that figure is accurate or not, but that gives you an idea of the economic importance that has been developed. We're not nearly done developing the agricultural ability of this province.

**Mr. Graham:** So if we were to look at those factors in this area, some of the factors you would cite are the possibility of further irrigation, the possibility of another coal mine, another power plant.

**Mr. Horner:** Yes. Certainly.

**Mr. Graham:** Anything else?

**Mr. Horner:** Of course, the further development of the oil and gas industry. I don't know, but I hear stories that a lot of shallow gas wells are still to be drilled in east-central Alberta. In some areas they're putting a well on every quarter section and in some areas closer together than that. So that gives you an idea of the amount of gas and of course some oil, too, that will continue to be produced and will be further developed.

**The Chair:** Okay, Jack. I'd like to make just one comment. Your comment about looking ahead, that we're really developing two Albertas and that this committee should seriously look at recommending outside its terms of reference something to kind of try and come to grips with that – that struck a meaningful chord with me and is something I know we'll seriously consider.

Thank you very much, Jack.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** The commission is in a bind. In addition to the decisions we have to make, we have to check out of our hotel by

11:30. It's here, so we'll take a 15-minute break for the members to check out of the hotel, and then we'll reconvene.

Doug, who's the next presenter?

**Mr. Olthof:** The next presenters will be Ross Rawlusyk and Shirley Bremer from Starland county.

**The Chair:** Who is after that? Could you give us the list, please?

**Mr. Olthof:** Terry Kuhl.

**The Chair:** Just two left?

**Mr. Olthof:** That's everyone.

**The Chair:** Any other people? I suspect that the Deputy Premier may want a few comments at the end too.

**Mrs. McClellan:** The Deputy Premier has to take advantage of the radio station and has an interview with Mr. Fisher today that he's been advertising all over Alberta for the last two weeks.

**The Chair:** Would you like to make your pitch now then?

**Mrs. McClellan:** I have to leave about at 10 after 12. I'll wait till after your break. I'm here to listen mainly.

**The Chair:** Is that agreeable to the other two presenters? No one would have enough nerve to say no; would they?

**Mrs. McClellan:** These are my constituents.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Mr. Chairman, I'm with the town of Drumheller. We don't have a formal presentation, but we would like to make probably a couple of minutes of brief comments.

**The Chair:** Sure. Just talk to Doug, will you, and we'll get you on the agenda. Thanks very much.

[The commission adjourned from 11:20 a.m. to 11:37 a.m.]

**The Chair:** We now have Shirley McClellan, the MLA for this area. Shirley has indicated to me that she'll be making a few comments now, then a formal presentation later on dealing with some of the issues that we raised earlier.

**Mrs. McClellan:** Well, thank you very much, and welcome to all of the members of the committee. The first thing I'm just going to say – and I mean this most sincerely – is that I truly wish that your committee had the luxury of driving from community to community when you're doing this job. I mean it most sincerely. One, you're missing an incredibly beautiful time of the year in our province, and two, I think you'd have a far better understanding of travel patterns, trading patterns, natural barriers, road conditions, sparsity, distance, and also where there are intensive areas and the challenges that go with that.

Most of us who live in this country or who have lived in this country all of our lives can't remember learning to drive. It's so much a part of your life. But I will tell the commission that I'm about 30 minutes from Calgary, at the southwest corner of my constituency now, and it does go to the Saskatchewan border. The South Saskatchewan River is the boundary on the south side, and highway 599 is the north boundary, if that gives you any indication of distance.

I will give you a written submission that gives you all of the demographics, but there are over 15 communities that have some type of a municipal council in this constituency. That's towns, villages, et cetera. There are four school jurisdictions: one Catholic, three public. There are three health regions in the area. The municipalities are special areas 2, 3, and 4, the MD of Acadia, Starland county, and part of Wheatland.

Many comments have been made that I won't cover again, but I will remind all members that there is a distinct lack of government services in rural areas. Things that people in the urban areas take for granted, that they can pick up the phone or drive a couple of blocks and have access to information, are just not available in rural areas, and that is becoming more and more the case. There have been discussions of closures of schools, hospital beds, certainly agricultural offices most recently, I'm reminded. So I think those things have to be recognized.

What access do the people in this community have to services? Well, in many cases their MLA is that access. I wish that I had as much time to spend in meetings with my constituents as I spend in my car. I drive about 110,000 kilometres a year. Mike Cardinal and I always joke that we run out of the mileage allowance about two-thirds through the year, and it's a fact. It's true. There is no air service that makes any kind of sense. I could drive two and a half hours south and catch a plane that would have terrible connections to get to Edmonton through Medicine Hat, or I could drive to Calgary, which is 210 miles from where I live, or I can drive to Edmonton, which is 210 miles from where I live. It doesn't really matter where you live in this constituency. You're going to be faced with the distance challenge one way or another.

One of the things I just want to comment on before I ask if you have any questions of me is that Jack Horner made some very, very pertinent comments. The rural areas are the fuel of this province. The economic activity that occurs in this province does not occur in downtown Edmonton or Calgary or Red Deer. The petrochemical plant is at Joffre, not in Red Deer. The oil and gas that really is Calgary's economy is out in the rural areas in this province. The refineries that generate a lot of the economy in Edmonton refine gas and oil that is brought in from rural areas. The rural residents have to contend with all of the difficulties associated with that, whether it's forestry and its logging trucks on your roads or the destruction of roads from heavy traffic, whether it's the movement of agricultural goods or oil and gas. Remember, those are the three primary industries in this province. They have to contend with that, but they reap very few of the economic benefits.

Agriculture is the single largest manufacturing sector in this province. No, it is not petrochemicals; it is agriculture. There are more jobs in that area. However, with most of the food and beverage processing, which has reached a new high at about \$9.9 billion in value adding – that's billion, with a B, and we expect to go to \$20 billion – those jobs are in your urban areas. They are the Conagras in Calgary, they are the Cargills, they are the Centennial meats, and they're the hundred and some companies in Edmonton that process food products that are sent to over a hundred countries in the world. That's where those jobs are. But without a strong primary sector you would have none of that, because you could not bring the product in – that's been tried in a number of areas – to process it economically to provide those kinds of jobs. We expect the growth to be \$20 billion by the year 2010. We're hoping that with good planning some of that benefit will be seen in the rural areas and that more food and beverage processing could occur. We have a good transportation system. We do suffer from lack of adequate water in some areas.

Irrigation, a huge benefit to this province. It's about 4 or 5 percent

of the land that provides about 25 percent of the product. The most important part is the product that it allows us to grow. We have two large potato plants that are here strictly because of irrigation: McCain's, of course, and Lamb Weston. We have a mustard plant and we have a canola plant that are here because of, primarily, irrigation. Next time you chew a stick of gum, the flavour in that gum, the mint, probably came from southern Alberta. I could give you the company name of the gum that you should chew, and then you'd be sure to be having an Alberta product. So there's a further added processing that occurs here that many of us don't think about.

Look at natural barriers and look at natural boundaries. Wainwright was mentioned, and I would suggest to you that putting Paintearth in with Wainwright was not the best thing in the world, with all respect to the commission, who had a very tough job. There is the Battle River, that runs along that boundary. We don't have a lot of bridges crossing these, so your trading pattern and your traffic pattern change quite a bit by what we call natural boundaries. One of the wise moves that the commission made, I felt, was putting this boundary of this constituency right down to the South Saskatchewan River, which encompassed all of the special areas, rather than it ending at the Red Deer River and also for commonality of interests. So if I may be so bold as to give your commission a bit of advice.

**The Chair:** No one else has been contained.

**Mrs. McClellan:** Listen very carefully to the people who do talk to you in the communities. They understand those communities. They live in them. They care about them. I came here knowing that I would go away feeling very guilty about the job that I do representing these people. I will do that, but I've got another couple of hundred miles to make today, and I'll have lots of time to reflect on it.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Any questions of the minister?

**Mr. Clegg:** Just a quick comment. I know you have to go. That offer that I gave you when you were short of water a few years ago – a dollar a pail and you have to bring it with five-gallon pails from the Peace River – still stands, so if you get really short, you just bring more pails.

**Mrs. McClellan:** I appreciate that, and I remember what you told Roy Brassard too: it wouldn't take a whole pail for him.

**Mr. Clegg:** Anyway, Shirley, it's great to see you again. It's great to hear that you're a big advocate of rural Alberta, and certainly I am too. I know the challenges that you have, and I know the challenges of the 110,000 miles. I recognize all that. You're not really representing your people when you're driving down the road.

Thank you.

**Mrs. McClellan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and to all of the committee. I know that most of your committee does understand rural Alberta. Bauni, I know that from your past experience, although you may not have lived in rural Alberta very recently, you've certainly had association with a lot of people that have, and you understand the difficulties that they face. We don't want our kids on a school bus for more than an hour and a half a day. We just don't think that's quite fair.

Doug, I don't know you well, but I've observed in the short time I've been here – and I may pop in in Lethbridge tomorrow; I'm there

– that you listen very carefully, and that’s all we ask of this commission.

Thank you.

11:47

**The Chair:** Thanks very much.

Okay. The next presentation is Ross Rawlusk, representative of the county of Starland. Please proceed, Ross.

**Mr. Rawlusk:** Well, I make this presentation today on behalf of our reeve, Don Thompson, who unfortunately was unable to get here today. I was hoping that he would be able to and we’d be able to make our presentation. I hope you’ve received a copy of the written submission that we prepared as well.

I think that when we do this six years from now, we’re going to be careful to make sure that Starland gets listed on the agenda first so that I don’t have the strain of following Stan and Jack and Shirley McClellan on my presentation. That’s a pretty ominous position.

**The Chair:** And the special areas guys too.

**Mr. Rawlusk:** Yeah, special areas as well. I feel like a cleanup batter here, and I hope I can hit the home run.

Starland county is certainly pleased to be able to have the opportunity to provide these comments to the review. I provided a copy of the map of our county boundary with our submission. We’re basically a rural municipality that’s physically located north of the town of Drumheller. A special area forms our east boundary, the Red Deer River forms our west boundary, and the county of Stettler is to the north of us. We have a total of 2,210 residents, and we’re one of the few rural municipalities in this part of east-central Alberta that actually increased in population in the last federal census. We went up about 6.5 percent from the previous census.

Our municipality, as you are probably well aware, is located within the Drumheller-Chinook provincial electoral division, and we feel that our municipality is very well placed within the constituency. We share a number of common ties with the municipalities in this area. For example, we participate in a regional economic development activity with the members in the region. We’re a partnership in a regional water commission. We share regional fire and ambulance services. We have a regional solid waste distribution system. We have a regional planning function that also actively works within all these communities that are within our constituency. We generally feel that the constituency boundary is representative of our regional interests. We share a lot of common goals and objectives with the people that are within the constituency now. Unfortunately, I guess we feel that the common area of interest that we do have is threatened because our population in the constituency is only 25,000, or about 30.3 percent under the average population in the electoral division. Our submission is going to focus on maintaining the boundary as it currently is established and trying to convince you that we should have one of the special considerations under the act.

In terms of effective representation I know that you’re familiar with section 3 of the Canadian Charter, which notes that “every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.” I think the courts in Canada, in Carter, expanded that right to vote to include the right to cast a ballot; the right not to have the political force of one’s vote unduly diluted; the right to effective representation, which we see as key; and the right to have the parity of vote of others diluted but not unduly in order to gain effective representation or in the name of practical necessity.

To be effective, we feel that political representation must recognize factors of geography, community history, community interests, and minority representation. We believe that the current boundaries of the Drumheller-Chinook constituency reflect effective representation. The current constituency extends from the Saskatchewan border in the east to the village of Rockyford in the west. It’s well over a three-hour drive from Oyen to Consort to the west end of the riding, and that’s my driving, so I can tell you that I don’t often perhaps stick with the posted speed limits that are out there because of the distance factors that we do have to live with.

**The Chair:** That’s a contagious thing in this part of the world.

**Mr. Rawlusk:** I went to the Stan Schumacher school of driving.

In beautiful downtown Morrin we still don’t have high-speed Internet services. We still have four telephone exchanges to deal with in Starland county alone, and virtually every government office we deal with on any level is now located in a city someplace. By contrast, the average constituency in Calgary has about 41,850 people in it, and the range of options available – I think that’s one of the things that struck me. Just looking at the city of Calgary, the variances in Calgary could range from just simply realigning the 21 boundaries so that every constituency in Calgary has 41,850 residents. That would put the city on average at 16.4 percent over the provincial average, which is well within the variance. You could go from that range to a range of adding three new electoral divisions to attain that current average of 35,000. So there’s a fair range of options that appears to be available to the commission. I guess the point that we wanted to discuss: is that additional representation warranted? Already the city has more MLAs than they do city council members, and those major metropolitan areas are not encumbered by distance or the technological restrictions that we still face here in rural areas. I think you have to ask yourself: would the city actually be served better by more representation?

The commission’s decision in this regard is going to have a great impact on the design and effectiveness of representation in all the other Alberta ridings. In making these decisions, the commission should recognize that while population growth continues to concentrate in the metropolitan regions and along highway 2, the rural communities in the rest of Alberta play a key role in the economic vitality of the province. As Shirley McClellan noted, much of the province’s current wealth comes from agricultural activity, oil and gas activity, forestry activity, and natural resource development, that takes place almost exclusively in rural Alberta.

Back in 1996 our county sponsored a resolution at the fall convention of the AAMD and C relative to effective representation. Our resolution at that time, which was passed by that assembly, called on the association to urge the government of the province to amend section 3 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act to clearly state that the function of the boundaries commission is to make proposals for electoral boundaries which will ensure effective representation. I think our goal back then was to try and entrench the effective representation into the very core of the commission rather than have it as just one of the considerations that the commission has to deal with.

Our concern came from the 1995-96 Electoral Boundaries Commission, which utilized the matrix system that you referred to to evaluate six different variables to try and quantify the degree of difficulty associated with representation of each of the electoral divisions. Those six variables included geographic area in square kilometres, population, population density, the number of households, the number of elected and appointed bodies in the area, and the distance to the Legislative Assembly in Edmonton. Our municipality felt that the application of that analysis tool was faulted

in that three of those six factors related directly to density and population and, as such, population factors were weighted heavily in that matrix.

The intent of our resolution, as I mentioned, was to get the following Electoral Boundaries Commission to focus on the requirement for effective representation as opposed to the unweighted analysis of sparsity and density, which is also one of the considerations under section 14(b) of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, that you'll be dealing with. We felt that if the principle of effective representation was reflected in the function of the commission, the review would be much more likely to utilize the population variances that are allowed within the act. It's important to note that the concept of building effective representation in the Assembly has long been recognized by the Alberta elected officials and by the Canadian courts. I think you got a really good history of that from Mr. Horner today and where those variances came from.

11:57

Stan also talked about Madam Justice Beverley McLachlin of the Supreme Court of Canada, who stated in a case in Saskatchewan in 1991:

It is my conclusion that the purpose of the right to vote enshrined in s. 3 of the Charter is not equality of voting power per se, but the right to "effective representation." Ours is a representative democracy. Each citizen is entitled to be represented in government.

Later in the same ruling she went on to state:

Before examining the electoral boundaries to determine if they are justified, it may be useful to mention some of the factors other than equality of voting power, which figure in the analysis. One of the most important is the fact that it is more difficult to represent rural ridings than urban. The material before us suggests that not only are rural ridings harder to serve because of difficulty in transport and communications, but that rural voters make greater demands on their elected representatives, whether because of the absence of alternative resources to be found in urban centres or for other reasons. Thus the goal of effective representation may justify somewhat lower voter populations in rural areas.

Our municipality, Starland county, certainly feels that the factors of distance, communication barriers, sparsity, resource ownership, and the distance to the Legislature are valid facts which support the full use of the variances provided in the legislation.

The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties in their submission to this commission identified eight key factors for the commission to consider in designing new electoral boundaries for Alberta. I found it interesting when we applied those eight factors to our particular riding, so I included in here a bit of a discussion on those eight factors and how we feel they fit into our existing constituency boundaries, the first being geographic size of the constituency. As Shirley indicated, it's a fairly large expanse. It's characteristic of low density, sparsely populated farming and ranching areas. Just combining the special areas and Starland county alone, we have over 22,972 square kilometres, which exceeds the area in the act for special consideration. The largest community in our riding right now is the town of Drumheller, with a 2001 population of only 7,785, and it would take well over three hours to drive from the extreme ends of the constituency. We feel that increasing the size of the constituency would only exacerbate this problem.

Distance of the community from the Assembly. Our MLA is faced with at least a four-hour drive to get to Edmonton unless she went to the Stan Schumacher school of driving. You could probably do it in two and a half hours then. The town of Drumheller is almost 300 kilometres from Edmonton, and the town of Oyen would be well over 400 kilometres away. So those are some fairly substantial distances to deal with.

In terms of the number of local governments, school boards, and

community organizations just in our region our MLA has to deal with three town councils, 10 village councils, the Special Areas Board, Starland county council, portions of Kneehill county council and Wheatland county council. There are three different school authorities in that riding, two different health authorities, and literally hundreds of community organizations. In Starland alone we have 27 different community groups, four agricultural societies, all of them looking for at least information and in a lot of cases funding assistance and advice from the local MLA. As we mentioned, distance from the community to other major centres on the west end of our constituency is about 90 kilometres from the city of Calgary. Residents on the north end in Consort and the northeast corner of special areas are well over 360 kilometres from a major urban centre.

In terms of the local political, cultural, and historical context our municipality works in concert with many of the jurisdictions in the Drumheller-Chinook constituency. We feel that the Red Deer River kind of forms a natural boundary to the west and the provincial border to the east. Minor boundary adjustments to add population will be unlikely to add to the local political culture. In fact, small added-on areas probably will feel like they have unbalanced representation when they are actually compared to the core of us that are left in Drumheller-Chinook.

In terms of the traditional trading and transportation patterns, we feel that the traditional trading patterns in our community are generally reflected by the current boundaries. Granted, the mobility of people has increased, and there's always some overlap, but we feel generally that the current boundaries are tied to the transportation and trading patterns.

In terms of the community of interest, Starland county has been previously impacted by a shuffle of constituency boundaries several times. Our municipality was split into two constituencies at one time and bounced between east and west adjustments of previous Drumheller and Chinook electoral wards. It's important to have some stability in representation, and we feel that that's not an ideal situation. It has also been our experience that it takes some time to adjust to the political reality of a boundary adjustment. We certainly like to work with our MLA, and she is a very important person when it comes to a liaison with provincial government agencies.

The eighth factor is population. The Drumheller-Chinook constituency exceeds the population variance; we're under 30.3 percent at the current time. Our municipality would like to encourage the commission to consider the application of section 15(2) of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act to our existing constituency boundaries. We feel that we have identified compliance to this section of the legislation to warrant this consideration.

In summary, we would ask that you acknowledge the uniqueness of this region of Alberta and apply that variance allowance under section 15(2) to the Drumheller-Chinook constituency. In analyzing the ward relative to the key factors as identified by the AAMD and C, we feel that there is a substantial reason to support this request. We would also encourage you to make use of the allowable discrepancies in constituency population up to 25 percent from the mean for the majority of constituencies and up to 50 percent for the remote and sparsely populated constituencies. Finally, we would encourage you to recognize effective representation because it's the most important of the relevant considerations by this commission.

On behalf of our county we'd certainly like to thank you for taking the time to come to the Drumheller region. If you have any questions, I'd be more than happy to try and answer them.

**The Chair:** Ross, thank you very much. Ross and Shirley, thank you very much for a very thoughtful and provoking presentation. We are in the process right now of looking at this matrix, and from what you've said here, I've made a note of some suggestions for the matrix from page 4 of your presentation. That hits right on.

Ernie.

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you very, very much for such a detailed presentation, and I echo the words of the chair. One of the things that I found interesting in here when you're talking about effective representation: on page 2 you talk about geography, community history, community interest, and minority representation. So am I interpreting correctly that you're saying that maybe we should look at this as part of the matrix and that rural people should be looked upon as a minority? How are you interpreting this in here?

**Mr. Rawlusk:** Finally, we're a minority. I guess the concern that we had – in some essences I think your job is very difficult; in some essences it could be very simple. The example that I would give you is that the population for Airdrie-Rocky View is over the variance, I believe, just from my recollection. Our constituency abuts that constituency in an area that's about 10 miles wide, so to meet the variance, one alternative might be for you to create a panhandle that drives into Airdrie-Rocky View up to the city of Calgary boundary. Our constituency would have enough people to meet the variance. It would likely drop theirs by enough to meet the variance, but I think that what we were trying to drive at is that while you would satisfy that population requirement, you've probably created an area there of people who would not readily identify with the rest of the constituency and as such would feel underrepresented.

So when it comes to effectiveness of the representation, I think you have to look beyond the population, because it's not just the population. I know that Calgary is now in their population counting even indigents on the streets of Calgary. They might have even caught me on a long weekend. I don't know. Sometimes I think you have to look beyond just counting population statistics, because there's a great variance in the population. It's a fluctuating thing. Calgary's population is probably not the same today as it was yesterday, and likely neither is Starland county's.

So I think what we were trying to get at is that if you can somehow identify by the submissions the groups of people that have common interests, that's the goal that we would like to see the commission try to reach. It's a very difficult thing, I know.

12:07

**Mr. Patterson:** I still don't think that you've quite answered my question. Okay. I accept geography, I accept community history, and I accept community interests. The reason I'm dwelling on this a little bit is that there's a book out on electoral boundaries commissions, which I've read, and in that they make quite a good case for minority representation in the matrix. So what I'm trying to get at here is: what do you mean by this? Are you talking about a special section, say, a native population? Or are you talking about people living in a constituency in a rural area as a minority? I'm trying to get – to me this has potential.

**Mr. Rawlusk:** I honestly do feel that we are a minority in the rural area.

**Mr. Patterson:** Okay.

**Mr. Rawlusk:** If that's what you wanted to include as the matrix evaluation, I think that that's what we would point to as justifying that variance up to 50 percent. Like I said, you could meet the population criteria, but at the same time you would be altering the community of interest that exists, I think.

**Mr. Patterson:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Bauni.

**Ms Mackay:** Thank you. Thanks for the very detailed presentation. There's a lot of good information in here. On page 6, number 5, you say that "minor boundary adjustments to add population will be unlikely to add to the local political culture." Could you define "political culture"? I'm not quite sure what you're talking about there.

**Mr. Rawlusk:** I think that what we were getting at is the condition I just described about adding to areas just for the sake of adding population. If we added 3,000 people from Forest Lawn in Calgary and a line a township wide into our constituency, those people probably wouldn't be effectively represented in the constituency either. They're probably going to be alienated.

I think we struggled with that to a degree at one point when our municipality, which is a relatively small municipality, was divided between two constituencies. You kind of feel like you're in this constituency, but you're also in this constituency, so if you're looking for a service or a good or support from your MLA, you have to make the presentation twice. One MLA may not represent that area to its fullest because the majority of that improvement might be in another area. So you always have the feeling that your effectiveness of representation isn't there. It's kind of hard to describe.

**Ms Mackay:** But it is different from communities of interest. Or is it the same?

**Mr. Rawlusk:** I think it's the same.

**Ms Mackay:** It's the same. Just people living in areas having common issues, common concerns.

**Mr. Rawlusk:** That's right.

**Ms Mackay:** Okay. I understand. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Glen or Doug?

**Mr. Clegg:** No. I'm good. Thank you very much for the presentation.

**Mr. Graham:** I just want to compliment you. I thought this was an excellent presentation, a lot of food for thought. I'm certainly going to refer to it again.

I don't want to be provocative and controversial in a room of such unprovocative people as this, but it strikes me that when we get this situation with constituencies that are below the mean, the natural tendency is always to add on. Another possibility in my mind frankly would be to shave some of your constituency off and then put you clearly in the special category. My question is: if that were to occur, what part of the constituency would you see being shaved off?

**Mr. Rawlusk:** Well, Wheatland county is in the position where they currently have representation from two MLAs, and I know just from reading the newspaper that they have an interest, if possible, in having one representative for that municipality. So to me it would make sense that the area in our constituency that's west of Drumheller would be the likely area to shave off. I think Starland county and the special areas have a general affinity in terms of the population and services that we provide. So if you were going to make the shift the other way, I think that would be our county's suggestion.

**Mr. Graham:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** I'd just simply echo the comments of my colleagues: a very well done presentation. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Rawlasyk:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'd like to ask Mr. Terry Kuhl to come forward. I'm very pleased to introduce Terry Kuhl from the Drumheller Regional Chamber of Development and Tourism association.

Terry, thank you very much for coming. We look forward to your presentation.

**Mr. Kuhl:** I'd like to thank the commission for the opportunity to make a brief submission. It's going to be a rather short one compared to some of the other lengthy ones that have been done. The DRCDT represents of course the 250 members of the local and district chamber of commerce. We also represent the Canadian Badlands Tourism destination, which is one of the three components of the Alberta South TDR, and of course we represent in a small way a major tourist attraction in the valley and in the badlands as well.

Our position would be similar I think to some of the others: that the district either remain the same size or perhaps, if there was a way, could be reduced very slightly. It's an extremely large, large area for an MLA to try to service. It's one of the five largest in terms of square kilometres and of course very sparsely populated. Adding size to it would just increase the complexity for the MLA to try to service the people in that area.

The second point. There are currently five such constituencies that are quite a bit underutilized: Athabasca-Wabasca being one, Lesser Slave Lake being two, Barrhead-Westlock being three, Dunvegan being four, and Drumheller-Chinook being five. Of those, the Barrhead-Westlock region is the smallest in terms of overall size, so if you were fiddling with one of them, it might perhaps be the natural tendency to go with the smallest of the special ones and try to fiddle with it a bit rather than make one of the other ones, who are already larger, even larger yet.

The third point that I would like to make is that if there was a boundary move at all, to group like-minded individuals together, you could make a bit of a case to include communities such as Rosebud, Standard, Rockyford, and Hussar in this area because they share commonalities such as traffic patterns, tourism, agriculture, and the same school authority and health authority in the region, but it would make a nominal population-base difference.

**The Chair:** Any guess at what the population would be?

12:17

**Mr. Kuhl:** Oh, I don't think it would be more than probably about 1,500, 1,800 people if you included those communities.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much, Terry. As you said, you had the opportunity of being able to cover a number of the points that had already been made. We appreciate your coming forward and making your presentation to us. Clearly, what you're telling us is: "Leave us alone" or, secondly, "If you're prepared to be bold, make us one of those four special ridings, and let us get on with our lives."

**Mr. Kuhl:** Correct.

**The Chair:** Any comments or questions, colleagues? Thank you very much.

Doug, who is next?

**Mr. Olthof:** Mr. Ray Romanetz and Mr. Brent Pedersen.

**The Chair:** I think this is the lobby from the town of Drumheller. I'd like to welcome Ray and Brent to the session this morning. I should tell my colleagues on the commission that these fellows can sell ice to the Eskimos. I've seen them do it. They were part of a delegation of 10, 11, or 12 people that came from Drumheller to the Alberta Junior Hockey League to try and get the 16th franchise in the league. Quite frankly, many of us didn't think they had a chance, and by the time they swept us off our feet an hour later, Drumheller had the next franchise in the Alberta Junior Hockey League. These were two of the reprobates – I mean, two of the gentlemen – who were a part of that. So, gentlemen, we're very pleased that you're here. I might say that they are going to give us a more detailed presentation shortly.

**Mr. Pedersen:** That's correct, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for allowing us this opportunity to sit here and make a few short comments. We intend to make the same presentation we did in Canmore, and we intend to be just as successful.

**The Chair:** Good luck. I hope you're right.

**Mr. Pedersen:** We don't have as many packages with us as we did then.

Anyway, we certainly appreciate and support the previous speakers: Mr. Schumacher, Starland, Mr. Horner, the chamber, our MLA. We will be submitting a more formal presentation to identify and explain the concerns, especially what Mr. Graham identified earlier on. We could maybe get this in a more formal way and be better able to identify the concerns.

This report provides the town's opinion and may be shared if requested by the commission. The town of Drumheller supports retaining the existing boundaries of the electoral division of Drumheller-Chinook. Minor adjustments may be considered where alignments for natural boundaries and municipal areas need to be fully included in one constituency. Population should not be the sole factor in determining boundaries. Effective representation must be included in decision-making, particularly where sparse population exists. Effective representation should be the most important, relevant consideration to be considered by the commission.

Drumheller, as the largest populated centre, is located on the west boundary of Chinook. The town serves as a major regional service and government centre within the constituency. We feel that existing constituency boundaries support to the greatest extent possible common interests and history. Issues like low population, common tourism focus, agriculture again, and oil and gas bring the electorate to the common community of interest.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, gentlemen. Any comments or questions? Mr. Patterson.

**Mr. Patterson:** I would like to express thanks to you and the chamber also. I should have said that. It is important that you do make a presentation. Thank you both.

**The Chair:** Mr. Clegg.

**Mr. Clegg:** Thanks. I have no question. Thank you for the information.

**The Chair:** We look forward, then, to your formal presentation. It would be really helpful to us – I'll be more direct than that. We need it before the last week in June.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Yes, we understand that.

**The Chair:** We'd really, really appreciate that.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And we apologize. Our mayor is away at the federal municipalities thing, so he wasn't able to make it this morning.

**The Chair:** Well, when he returns, he should be able to talk about some exciting political events that took place at that conference; shouldn't he?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Exactly. Certainly, I think that I can identify – and I had a brief opportunity to talk to Bauni during the break, and she expressed too that it's not just rural concerns. I spent a number of years with the city of Calgary, so I understand the urban concerns also. Urban people definitely have concerns and certainly rural do too, so I think we have to address both of those.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you very much, gentlemen. This, then, concludes the session here in Drumheller. We will reconvene tonight at 6 o'clock in Medicine Hat.

Thank you very much.

[The commission adjourned at 12:23 p.m.]

