

9:55 a.m.

Tuesday, December 17, 2002

[Mr. Clark in the chair]

The Chair: Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, it's now 10 o'clock, so I'd like to call the meeting to order. This is the second day of the second round of the Electoral Boundaries Commission's hearings. We were in Athabasca yesterday and spent an afternoon and evening with the good folks of northeastern Alberta.

Today we have, I think, close to 10 briefs this morning, and then this afternoon we have a little change in our plan. We'll be adjourning at around a quarter to 12. I have to leave to go to a budget meeting for the Ethics Commissioner, but I'm going to ask Mr. Glen Clegg to close off the last session before lunch. We'll be reconvening at 2 o'clock, and then we'll go until we finish this afternoon, and then we'll go this evening also. The commission will reconvene tomorrow morning in Red Deer at 9 o'clock, and then we'll be reconvening in Calgary late tomorrow afternoon.

I'm reminded of the story of the preacher who prepared most diligently for a sermon. He got to church on Sunday morning, and there were only two people at the service. He thought about it and thought about it. He knew how hard he'd worked on his sermon, so he decided to take the whole 20 minutes and give them everything he'd thought of. He did, and then he finished the service and was standing at the back door as the one lone parishioner walked out. He said, "What did you think of my sermon?" The guy said, "Well, you know, I'm a rancher, and when I go out to feed the cows and only one cow turns up, I don't give them the full load." That's a little bit the way I feel this morning. So having said that, I'm going to save my remarks for perhaps later on during the day or after lunch.

What I would ordinarily deal with is the background dealing with the law, the fact that the Legislature has said that there'll be 83 seats. We have to use the 2001 stats, we're guided by the Charter of Rights, and also if you take the population of Alberta and divide it by 83, you're looking at 35,951 per riding. Now, that obviously isn't going to happen, and we have some variance up to 25 percent.

I guess the key thing that we struggle with all the time and with varying degrees of success among my colleagues is: what is effective representation? We spent all yesterday afternoon and evening in Athabasca, and we certainly got an earful as to what their sense of effective representation is. I'm sure the same will happen here in Edmonton today.

Once we're finished the three days of hearings, then we'll be putting our heads together, and by the 20th of January we hope to have a final report in place. It'll then go to the printers. It'll be available to the Speaker of the Legislature around the 1st of March. At that time, it will be up to the Legislature, the members of the Legislature to determine how they want to handle the report.

So without much more comment than that, the procedure I want to use this morning is what we have been using and what seems to work quite well. We'll ask the reeve of the MD of Northern Sunrise to make the first presentation, followed by the mayor of Strathcona county, followed by the town of Devon, followed by the mayor of Beaumont, followed by the MLA for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, followed by the chief administrator for Viking, followed by a councillor for Beaver county, then the St. Albert PC Association, then the Edmonton-Gold Bar PC Association, and then Duncan Brooks from the Edmonton-Gold Bar association. That's the list we have for this morning. There's no rest for the wicked, so I suggest that we move right along. I'd ask the reeve of the MD of Northern Sunrise to come forward.

Thank you very much for coming. I won't ask you how long it took you to get here. I know it took a long time. How long, actually?

Mrs. Kolebaba: Well, I flew down this morning, and then we will drive back right away. It usually takes about five hours.

The Chair: We won't keep you here any longer than need be, then.

Mrs. Kolebaba: Thank you.

The Chair: We look forward to hearing you.

Mrs. Kolebaba: Thank you. I wish to address the commission to bring forward the concerns of the residents of Northern Sunrise county. Thank you for this opportunity.

The proposed new boundary of the Peace River-Dunvegan constituency is unacceptable to the residents of Northern Sunrise county. Our county will be divided in a way that is not effective nor efficient. The will of the people is to stay in the Peace River constituency. Every time there's a boundary review, we are the target. In the last 20 years our residents have been shuffled between constituencies three times. This time we ask you not to change our boundaries. We request that you leave the boundaries where they are at present. More consideration should be given to the trade patterns of the residents. The dissecting of Northern Sunrise county is not the answer to saving the Dunvegan constituency if that is the goal of the boundary change. You should give consideration to taking a portion of the Grande Prairie-Smoky or Grande Prairie-Wapiti constituencies as those two constituencies show more population growth than the Peace River area. Removal of the population from this constituency is not a long-term solution.

An alternative for the Dunvegan constituency could be designating it as a special area with conditions as noted in the draft report of the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission 2002-2003. This report states that up to four electoral divisions which meet special conditions specified in the act may have populations as much as 50 percent below the average. With the proposed boundary changes we will have a constituency that reaches from the middle of the province all the way to the western border. We don't believe that this would be effective or efficient political representation.

I have a map here that maybe will show you a little bit better – and we'll leave the map with you – how you propose to dissect our municipality.

The Chair: Can we put it on the wall here? Perhaps we can look at it while you're speaking.

Mrs. Kolebaba: Okay. Thank you very much. This map is one-sixth of our municipality.

The Northern Sunrise county administration office is on one side of highway 688 in the proposal that has put us into the Dunvegan constituency. The other side of highway 688, to the north and the east, is in the Peace River constituency. We are too closely entwined to draw a line through Northern Sunrise county like this. It divides the people who have the same issues. This proposed boundary change would isolate our residents from our present Peace River based media outlets, trading patterns, health care provisions, and social connections. This proposed change is not the answer. Changing constituencies again for a portion of the Northern Sunrise county is unacceptable to our residents. Our issues in the Northern Sunrise county are geographically linked to the Peace River constituency.

Once again I thank you for the opportunity to address you with the views of the residents of Northern Sunrise. We urge you to hear us and to leave the present constituency boundary as is. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you on the board. With

no boundary changes to the Peace River constituency, that would be a good Christmas present to our people.

Thank you.

10:05

The Chair: Thank you very much. You have a way of telling it the way it is in a pretty concise form. We appreciate that.

Really, what you're saying to us is to leave the boundaries as they are around the town of Peace River and in your county.

Mrs. Kolebaba: That's right. If I may say: in six to 10 years, hopefully, a road would be put through, the east/west connector from Peerless Lake to Fort McMurray. If that would be the case, then I could see that there would be a shift to a special area in the north, but as it is today, that road does not exist. So if we could be left alone for one electoral time change, that would be a good thing, and then maybe at the next time change there could be a difference because the road would hopefully be there.

The Chair: How many people are involved in the area that you want us to leave in the Peace River constituency now?

Mrs. Kolebaba: Well, our last census is not an accurate one because we have a native band in there. The numbers are not as accurate, maybe, as they should be, so we are given numbers. I'm thinking around 2,000 people. So the difference in moving us out of that boundary into Dunvegan is not significant enough when you look at the numbers for Dunvegan. That's why I'm suggesting that you either move it into Grande Prairie-Wapiti or Grande Prairie-Smoky, take more of that, or just leave us for once would be nice.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Kolebaba: I do have another presentation before you, Mr. Chair, if I may. The village of Nampa has asked me to speak to you.

The Chair: Perhaps I might ask my colleagues if they have any questions on your presentation. Anyone?

Mr. Clegg: Yeah. Well, thanks, Carolyn. It's certainly a pleasure to have somebody from the north here this morning. Of course, we in the north always get up early.

The Chair: Question, Glen.

Mr. Clegg: Okay. Carolyn, certainly I do know that with the proposed boundaries you are split in two. You mentioned the distance, but, you know, because you have a representative in Peace River now, that doesn't mean to say that you will. You could be in Fort Vermilion and High Level, and you'd have a lot farther to go than anywhere in the Dunvegan constituency. What if we put the whole area into Dunvegan?

Mrs. Kolebaba: Well, then, I would suggest to you that a better time would be the next review because then the east/west connector would be there and it would be easier for an MLA to move back and forth. Right now we're trapped. You know, for an MLA to do that, it means that it's far more dollars for him to fly constantly. I mean, now is not the time to make that change. If the next change comes around and that road is there, then I would strongly say that that would be the time that we should really look at a special area, which in fact that truly would be.

Mr. Clegg: Well, you're certainly right. Dunvegan is still a special

area even by adding that area. I think we're looking at 1,500 votes the way it is now, but certainly there are pros and cons for it, and I appreciate your comments.

Mrs. Kolebaba: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Would you like to then give us the presentation for the village of Nampa?

Mrs. Kolebaba: Okay. You have it before you; do you?

The Chair: Yes, we have. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Kolebaba:

The village of Nampa will be moved into the Dunvegan Constituency in the new electoral boundaries review. The Council of the Village of Nampa is not happy with the change. We feel that our natural trading area is Peace River and that we should stay in the Peace River Constituency where our natural trading area is.

We also feel that we are being bounced around back and forth with the reviews, as this change will mean that we have had to change electoral districts three times in the last 20 years. This makes it hard for the residents to figure out where they belong. We need some stability in knowing where we belong and who our representatives are. We request that we remain in the Peace River Constituency.

That's all they had. I'm just reading directly from a letter from them.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Thank you very much.
Any questions or comments from my colleagues?

Mr. Graham: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Kolebaba: Thank you.

The Chair: We'll certainly keep in mind what you've told us, and we'll do our best to give you a Merry Christmas. Thank you.

Mrs. Kolebaba: Thank you. Good luck to you.

The Chair: I'd now like to ask the deputy mayor for Strathcona, I believe it's Mr. Ken Lesniak – is that right, Ken? I certainly murdered some names yesterday, so I'm trying to be more careful today. Thank you very much.

Mr. Lesniak: Thank you. I hope that you have a copy of our presentation in front of you. On the second page is a map, because I was going to put something up on an overhead for you.

I want to begin, first of all, by saying that if the presentation is fine and you accept my recommendations, then they reflect that my name is Ken Lesniak and I'm the deputy mayor.

The Chair: In the event that we're not so wise, what's your name?

Mr. Lesniak: Otherwise I'm Vern Hartwell, the mayor; okay?

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Mr. Lesniak: Thank you. My presentation will be brief. In response to the proposed boundaries put forward by the Electoral Boundaries Commission, I want to say first that Strathcona county wishes to acknowledge the difficult task undertaken by you, the commission, and to indicate our overall support for the commission's proposal. We do, however, have two minor

recommendations that we would like your consideration in addressing that would impact the proposed riding of Vegreville-Viking, number 77, and the proposed riding of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, number 49. The map that you have before you shows Strathcona county and the proposed riding of Sherwood Park in gray, the Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan riding in light blue, which is the huge riding that goes across the whole map, and the portion of Vegreville-Viking that is within the county in the dark blue and yellow colours. I hope you're able to follow me.

What we would like your consideration for is that the 10-mile section of the boundary separating Vegreville-Viking from the electoral division of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan be extended approximately four miles south to township road 510. In essence, we would like you to consider drawing the boundary line by extending the solid purple line to where the dotted line is shown.

The Chair: Where you've got that dotted line.

Mr. Lesniak: That's right. This is shown on the map with the dotted line. Under our proposal the boundary would run along highway 824 from highway 16 to the county border of township road 510. The portion in yellow would be then changed from the Vegreville-Viking riding and would become part of the Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan riding.

Now, this extension south of the proposed boundary will create a more natural boundary between the two electoral divisions and eliminate an awkward jog in the boundary that will cause some confusion for many of our residents. The change will also better align the provincial boundaries with the municipal boundaries, and that recommended change would only impact an area of 18.9 square miles, or 963 residents. With that, when you take a look at the populations of the ridings that are being proposed, this would very much fall into the average. It wouldn't affect significantly either of the ridings but I think would help eliminate confusion to our residents and also align it a little more naturally with the municipal boundaries. So with that, we would ask your consideration in that amendment.

The second one where we would like your consideration relates to a name change, and that is to change the name of the electoral division Vegreville-Viking to Strathcona-Vegreville. The reason for this is that the reference to Viking in the title is confusing, as the town of Viking actually falls within the proposed electoral division of Vermilion-Lloydminster.

The Chair: Guilty. Yes, you're right. We were hoping you wouldn't notice it. We'd already noticed it and will deal with it.

Mr. Lesniak: We'll plead with you because Strathcona county is the third largest municipality in the province, and it really would seem appropriate to include the county's name in the title of the electoral division. I know that our residents would appreciate having their county name on it, and it also makes sense because a good portion of that is in the Strathcona county area.

So with that, we would urge and plead that you consider these very minor amendments and also wish each of you a Merry Christmas. I thank you for your consideration.

The Chair: Is there anyone who'd like to argue with the last proposal?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chair, I would just like to say thank you very, very much for coming with specific suggestions and a map. As a commissioner I really appreciate this, rather than getting into a lot of general dialogue that doesn't mean anything. Thank you very much.

Mr. Lesniak: Thank you. Well, our staff prepared it well, because I was given it yesterday, and I read it last night and understood it.

The Chair: We understand it now. Thank you very much.

Mr. Lesniak: Thank you very, very much.

10:15

The Chair: Good.

Good morning, Chris.

Mr. Belke: Good morning.

The Chair: How are you today?

Mr. Belke: Pretty good.

The Chair: Good. Okay. We look forward to your presentation, Chris. Thank you very much.

Mr. Belke: Okay. I know you haven't seen this before because it was just brought in this morning, so basically I'll read though what I've prepared here, and hopefully I can make some sense of this for you.

The Chair: Give us the highlights.

Mr. Belke: Yes. Just to start with, this submission from the town of Devon is presented in order to re-emphasize two of the three points that were made in our initial submission to the commission back in May. In the points that were brought forward at that time was a request for a technical revision of the boundaries to include all of the town of Devon within one constituency.

The Chair: If my memory is accurate – and I haven't checked – we did listen to the presentation that you stay in Leduc and not go into Drayton Valley. Is that right?

Mr. Belke: That is correct, and that was the second point that we talked about at that time. Yes, we're happy to see that that was reflected in the interim report.

The third point we had at that time was a suggestion to change the name of Leduc constituency, if that's in fact the constituency that is going to be in place following the revisions, and that's what is being proposed at this point.

The first point, about the technical revisions to include all of the town of Devon in one boundary. It's apparent that there were revisions made to follow that request. However, in reviewing the wording that was done in the revision, I would suggest that it needs to be revisited.

The Chair: Would you take that up with Mr. Fjeldheim?

Mr. Belke: No problem. I've made some revisions, and I've included them as appendices at the back of this report. I'd be happy to supply an e-mail so that they have the electronic copy of that as well. I've made some suggestions on how that could be rectified, so hopefully that's not a big issue.

Now, the third point is the name of the constituency. To start with regarding the name, in reviewing the constituencies and the names of constituencies in the interim report, it's clear that the interim report shows that the use of composite names for constituencies in Alberta is an accepted practice. In terms of the names supplied in the interim report we've noted, breaking it into five categories, that there are 23 constituencies in Calgary, 18 in Edmonton, 21 that are

listed as urbanized areas, 19 as rural, and two that are special constituencies because of particular considerations. Of those constituencies all 23 of the Calgary and 18 of the Edmonton constituencies have composite names, as do 15 of the 21 urbanized constituencies and 12 of the 19 rural constituencies. It's well over 70 percent of the ridings that have composite names, so I think from that we've concluded that the use of composite names in naming constituencies is a fairly accepted practice.

Also in there we've got an examination of the situations where single names, noncomposite names, have been used, identifying the particular circumstances where those have been appropriate or where it's been deemed to be appropriate. I won't read through those because you have them in front of you.

The Chair: It seems to me if I flip to I think the fifth page, the question is: Devon-Leduc-Beaumont or Leduc-Devon-Beaumont?

Mr. Belke: Yeah, and there's a rationale that's included in the submission that explains why we feel that those are appropriate names to use for the constituency in naming the constituency. The main point of the rationale is that to start with, the name Leduc we don't feel is appropriate in that there are seven municipalities within the constituency as it's proposed. One is the city of Leduc, and the county of Leduc is partially within there. Of the seven, there are five municipalities that are not named Leduc that are included in the constituency. Then further to that, more than half of the county of Leduc's geographic area is outside of Leduc constituency, so we feel that that's maybe not the best name to indicate it. Everything that's in the constituency is not named Leduc, and everything that's named Leduc is not within the constituency. So we're suggesting that a composite name might be a better approach, being a name that would indicate to the general public the extent and the areas that are included within the constituency.

The Chair: If we went Leduc-Devon-Beaumont, is that rather in order of population?

Mr. Belke: Beaumont has more population than Devon. If you chose to go by population, an appropriate name would be Leduc-Beaumont-Devon. You know, that's entirely up to the commission. Based on the precedents that are out there, it seems that with the large majority of constituencies that have composite names, they are arranged basically the way you read them off the map west to east or north to south, and there are very few exceptions to that. Regardless, with the second suggestion we had there with Leduc as the first name in a composite, it would be more of a consistency in the change in the name and a recognition of the old name of the constituency. So that might be deemed to be appropriate in that regard.

The Chair: Okay. We understand where you're coming from very clearly. Thank you.

Any questions or comments?

Mr. Patterson: Just again, Mr. Chair, we really appreciate this as a commission. You've looked carefully at what we've done, and you've given us some specific, good, concrete examples of what you want. Thank you.

Mr. Belke: Okay. You're welcome.

The Chair: And Mr. Fjeldheim and his staff will follow up on the items you raise on this.

Mr. Belke: All right.

The Chair: Good. Thank you very much.

Mr. Belke: Thank you.

The Chair: Good.

Mr. Olthof.

Mr. Olthof: Mr. Rob Lougheed.

The Chair: I don't know about this gentleman. Welcome, Rob. We look forward to hearing your – I was going to say critique; that's not fair – views, your suggestions to improve the interim report. Thank you very much for coming.

Mr. Lougheed: Well, thank you. It's good to be here. You have before you, I believe, the copies that were distributed, with the first one being an outline of what I would propose as appropriate boundaries to consider, then some calculations on the second page outlining the populations, and then on the third page just kind of a summary of how those populations would look currently, in the interim report, and in this proposal.

In making my comments here today, certainly it's my understanding that the commission seeks to stay very close to the average for all the constituencies or as many as possible. Recognizing that Sherwood Park has grown by leaps and bounds lately and continues to do so, part of Sherwood Park, then, will have to be moved into a different constituency than the current Sherwood Park constituency. It would seem appropriate that that part of Sherwood Park that does move goes into what is currently called Clover Bar. The Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan constituency currently is really close to average, but with the addition of the Sherwood Park component to Clover Bar, then about a third of the current constituency will have to go, again, to another constituency. We recognize also that in the attempt to get constituencies close to the average, you do need some flexibility in putting numbers of people in different areas and determining all the different linkages and the bumping that goes on from one constituency to the next.

10:25

Upon reflection on your interim report it seems that the southeast portion of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, which in the interim report was to be moved into the Vegreville-Viking constituency, has more areas of common interest with Sherwood Park than does Fort Saskatchewan. Our proposal would be that Fort Saskatchewan, because of their areas of common interest – and I mentioned in my letter, that you received sometime earlier, that areas of common interest to Fort Saskatchewan with the areas to the east would include things like: currently they're in the same health authority, they have public and separate school boards which are the same, they share the RCMP detachment, the rural crime watch, the Children's Services authority, and there's a common trading area, with the residents of Lamont and Bruderheim and even down close to the Vegreville area moving through that corridor to shop and do business in Fort Saskatchewan. So they do have many mutual interests, more, I believe, than we would see with the southeast portion of Strathcona county, say, going towards Tofield, although some people would move towards Tofield for the hospital. Right in the very, very southeast corner of the county Tofield hospital is fairly close to them, and they would in fact have doctors and dentists and do some shopping in the Tofield area.

For the most part the people in the southeast portion of Strathcona county and certainly as you move a little more out of the southeast corner into the Ardrossan area, the Collingwood Cove area, and those other regions – they all move towards the west, towards Sherwood Park, and have much more in common with Sherwood

Park and the rest of the acreage country around Sherwood Park than they do with any other region to the east of them.

So I would like to suggest, then, that the constituency that I would propose would look like the one on the map, with clear boundaries: Wye Road, Clover Bar Road, and highway 16. Wye Road is the current boundary up to highway 21. Clover Bar Road, of course, would be the boundary that would take part of Sherwood Park off into the Clover Bar constituency.

Currently just north of Sherwood Park there's a very difficult boundary. In fact, some people don't know which constituency they're in. There's an intermittent creek that forms part of the boundary and a township road that forms another part of the boundary. In fact, on the voters list some people are on the wrong side, because it's not well defined. There's a small number of people, about 60 or so, in that area. So we would propose – and I would propose as well – that that be highway 16. It's a very clear boundary.

Then up along the county boundary to Fort Saskatchewan, the city of Fort Saskatchewan and the very, very north part of the county, north of highway 15, again another clear boundary defining that portion of the current Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan constituency which would move off to the east and be part of that other constituency that we talked about.

The Chair: So you are proposing that it would be Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville?

Mr. Lougheed: I would also propose that the name be Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville to identify the towns on each end. Of course, those folks may have some different views of that name, and that's something for other consultations.

Then the rest of the constituency. The name Clover Bar is a name that came about in 1930. It's an old name for the constituency. It was first called Clover Bar when Strathcona was carved off from that part and became what we now know as south Edmonton. So Clover Bar was that whole farming region and stretched up and included what was then a tiny community of Fort Saskatchewan, and I believe it may even have crossed the river at one time. But the name Clover Bar, I believe, is an old name that has been around, and it would be good to retain it as long as possible. Recognizing the growing and significant part, Sherwood Park, call that new constituency Clover Bar-Sherwood Park. It recognizes the growing portion there. As I say, 15,000 people are currently in that portion of Sherwood Park, and it's growing to about 30,000 within 10 years. So it's rapidly growing. You can see houses popping up there every day when you go down highway 21.

The numbers would be quite close in the proposed electoral division. Clover Bar-Sherwood Park would be about 35,801; Sherwood Park, 35,297; and the Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville constituency would be somewhat larger by a couple of percentage points, 36,971. Of course, as you do your deliberations, you may choose to utilize some of those numbers in other constituencies, I expect, as you consider that. That, I believe, concludes the comments that I have to make.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Rob. I think it's common knowledge that we're going to have to make some changes from the interim report in that area east of Edmonton and the service of it. It looks like you've pushed in a direction that may be very helpful. I'm sure my colleagues may have some questions, but I frankly, myself, had not thought of Fort Saskatchewan and Vegreville in the same . . . I'd just never thought of it before. It has some merit, it looks like.

Mr. Lougheed: I'm a little closer to that area than you are.

The Chair: It's a good thing you are.

Any other questions or comments?

Ms Mackay: I have a question that's not relevant to your submission. Your constituency is part of the capital region; is it not?

Mr. Lougheed: Health authority?

Ms Mackay: Well, the capital region in terms of your caucus.

Mr. Lougheed: You're right. I sit in on the capital region caucus meetings as I do the rural caucus region. The Clover Bar area is very unique in that it goes from heavy industry down to small farms to acreage country. It has a broad spectrum of citizens in there.

Ms Mackay: Well, since you're one of the few MLAs that will be making an appearance here today, at least according to our schedule, I want to ask you, then, if you have a view in terms of giving us some advice on the proposal that we've put into the interim report which would remove a seat from the capital region by taking a seat from the city of Edmonton. Do you as an MLA in the region have any view on that?

Mr. Lougheed: From discussions that I engaged in prior to the interim report – and I talked with several people – it seemed to us at that time that we had some parameters that the commission had to fall within. Virtually every constituency had to be within 25 percent of the average, and a few more remote constituencies could be, according to the court decision, I believe, within 50 percent.

The comment was made earlier – I forget which commission member mentioned it – that this is a fairly big area that I represent. In fact, it's very tiny compared to the area that some people represent. I recognize that being close to the city and being a little bit rural as well, there's a lot of traveling that I have to do compared to people that live in the city just to get around the constituency. You've got to go down to Ministik, and then, you know, an hour later you're supposed to be in Fort Saskatchewan, and then an hour later you're down in Antler Lake. So there is quite a bit of getting around the constituency. It does take time, and it's a challenge.

My feeling has been that those challenges should be recognized and taken into account in some constituencies. In the initial discussion I had a few months ago, before the interim report, it seemed appropriate that Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan could share the extra population of Sherwood Park and have, you know, two above-average constituencies. I believe, also, that other urban centres could do similarly, and that would allow the more remote areas, where there is more traveling and more challenges – even the time spent in the vehicle to get back and forth between the Legislature and those more remote areas is time when you're not available to call your constituents or have discussions with them. So those are challenges.

10:35

I believe it is appropriate to have urban constituencies a little bit bigger. I wouldn't want to see all of them plus 25 percent. Obviously you couldn't or else you'd have very, very small populations on the rural side. But I don't believe it's inappropriate to have somewhat larger populations in more urban centres.

The Chair: Any other comments or questions?

Mr. Patterson: Again, Mr. Chair, I'd just like to thank Mr. Lougheed for coming in with specific recommendations and the

map. This impresses me. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Rob.

Mr. Lougheed: Thank you.

The Chair: I now would like to ask Mr. Rod Krips, from the town of Viking, to come forward. I went over and already apologized to His Worship for having his name in one constituency and having his municipality in another, so hopefully we'll start with a cleaner slate.

Thank you very much, Rod, for coming, and we look forward to your presentation.

Mr. R. Krips: Thank you, Chairman Mr. Clark and commission members. The Viking town council thanks you and your commission for the opportunity to appear before you today. My remarks will be very brief, as I believe I've outlined everything in the report that we submitted November 14 and I would just like to highlight a few things.

The Chair: Please do.

Mr. R. Krips: As stated in our November 14 letter:

The task of your committee has not been easy, as we realize there are many more factors that must be considered besides the Federal and Provincial Legislation. Your committee is to be commended for the work that has been accomplished. It is not the intent of Council to criticize your work – but only to bring to your attention some of the local factors that you could not be aware of when redrawing the electoral map.

The purpose of appearing before you today is to highlight one particular appendix in our written submission. We feel that this sums up the importance of including the town of Viking and the eastern portion of Beaver county in the proposed electoral division of Vegreville-Viking. Appendix A sets out a number of co-operative initiatives undertaken by the communities within Beaver county. You will note that these initiatives contribute to what we call a sustainable community, a community of communities, forging partnerships that enhance our region in developing common infrastructures. Major common infrastructures include, one, the Highway 14 Regional Water Commission; two, the Beaver Regional Waste Management Services Commission; three, the Beaver ambulance authority; and four, the Beaver Foundation, which provides countywide seniors' lodges and housing.

These initiatives have evolved over a number of years of hard work by the local councils as well as extensive involvement from our government member of the Legislature. It has been a definite benefit to have the input and guidance of our MLA in these initiatives, and he has gained an intimate knowledge of our area and needs. It therefore seems reasonable that our community of Viking and the eastern portion of Beaver county remain within the boundaries of the proposed electoral division of Vegreville-Viking.

The proposed electoral division is also confusing in that the residents of the town of Viking would not live in the new division called Vegreville-Viking. Good government is rooted in good representation, and good representation is being able to select your Member of the Legislative Assembly from an area that meets a natural, common, understandable boundary. We believe that the town of Viking and the eastern portion of Beaver county meet those requirements of a natural, common, understandable boundary within the electoral boundaries of Vegreville-Viking. We ask the commission to consider our recommendations and adjust the boundaries accordingly.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Any comments or questions, panel members?
Have you had a chance to hear Mr. Lougheed?

Mr. R. Krips: I just came in halfway through his presentation.

The Chair: Would you be so kind as to have a look at his presentation and look at the idea of a Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville-Viking thing? Have a look at that, and if you'd come to one of my colleagues after and let us know your view on that.

Mr. R. Krips: Okay.

The Chair: It's rather an idea that – at least I hadn't heard it before. It seems good on the surface. We've found on this job that not everything is as it appears on the surface always, but it's an interesting concept. So if you'd look at that and then speak to one of my colleagues, perhaps Mr. Patterson. Let us know your assessment of that, and that will be helpful.

Mr. R. Krips: Excellent.

The Chair: Any questions or comments?

Mr. Patterson: Just again, as the chair has already said, we need to make an improvement in this area, so thank you.

Mr. R. Krips: Thanks very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Rod.

Mr. R. Krips: Thanks, Mr. Clark.

The Chair: Now I'd like to welcome Mayor Ken Kobly from the town of Beaumont, a rather good golfer I might add. I had the pleasant opportunity of tearing up the Beaumont golf course. It's good to see you again.

Mr. Kobly: Good morning. I must admit that the 10 strokes I gave you, after I found out how good a golfer you were, will not be given to you next year.

The Chair: I should tell you that that will make no difference in how well we listen to you.

Mr. Kobly: Mr. Clark, Mr. Clegg, Mr. Graham, Ms Mackay, Mayor Patterson, good morning. My name is Ken Kobly, and I'm presently the mayor of Beaumont. I'm currently serving my fourth term as mayor and have served on council for 15 of the last 18 years.

First, I'd like to thank the members of the commission for considering our initial presentation and incorporating our desire to remain in the same constituency as our close neighbours Devon and Leduc. It certainly reflects the community of interest that exists between our municipalities.

The purpose of our presentation this morning is to ask the members of the commission to consider again the name of the constituency. You may recall from our initial presentation that we, along with the town of Devon, requested a name change which more fully represented the makeup of the constituency, perhaps Beaumont-Leduc-Devon. Beaumont's population currently is above 7,200 and according to Statistics Canada is the fastest growing municipality on a percentage basis in the Edmonton metro area. Growth over the past five years has been approximately 20 percent. We thank the commission for taking this into consideration when

aligning the new boundaries.

As we are rapidly closing the gap in population between Beaumont and Leduc and currently account for approximately 20 percent of the population of the riding, we feel that the constituency name should reflect this. This year has been a record year for new housing starts in our town, issuing nearly 150 new permits. With the development of a new commercial site in excess of 30 acres, we believe that Beaumont will continue to be a very attractive community for new residents. There are many other constituencies in Alberta that have multiple names and properly reflect the makeup of the constituency. Such names as Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, Lac La Biche-St. Paul, and Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills come to mind.

The Chair: Thank you very much. For you good folks, I come from the riding of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. That's why the shot was there.

Mr. Kobly: As any good politician knows, you play to your audience, Mr. Chairman. Sorry; I play to my audience.

The Chair: You better play to four others.

Mr. Kobly: Our community would take great pride in being included as part of the name for our constituency. We understand that you will or have had a presentation on this matter during the second round of hearings from both Devon and the Leduc Progressive Conservative Association supporting our request. In our package that we brought with us this morning there are also letters of support from the municipality and from the association.

I would like to thank the members of the commission for their hard work and dedication during these boundary hearings. As any good politician will tell you, in these matters the desired outcome is to satisfy the irritated without irritating the satisfied. By all measures Beaumont is very satisfied with your proposals but would be even more satisfied were you to recommend a change in the name of our constituency.

If the committee might indulge me, I would also as an Albertan like to thank and congratulate Mr. Clark on the occasion of his retirement as Provincial Ethics Commissioner. His professional, ethical conduct in his public life is to be applauded and serves as a guide to all who have chosen public service to improve this province. Certainly, his service as MLA and Provincial Ethics Commissioner is a major debt owed by all Albertans to Mr. Clark and has no hope of repayment except to say thank you.

10:45

The Chair: And no more strokes.

Mr. Kobly: That one came from the heart, Mr. Clark.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Kobly: This concludes my presentation. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you very much, and a personal thank you very much.

Mr. Clegg: Well, thank you for the presentation. It's always great when you sit up here and you have different areas within the constituency actually agree, and that doesn't always happen. One wants this and one wants that. The only real problem is going to be the Speaker of the House, with these long three names, but he gets paid big dollars, so that shouldn't be a problem.

Thanks for the presentation, and it seems logical, with the growth you have in Beaumont, that it should be recognized.

Mr. Kobly: Thank you.

Mr. Patterson: I just want to say, Mr. Chair, that this is probably the closest to us getting a Christmas card that we're going to get as we go across the province. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I note that coming in this morning, you were one for two, and what you're trying to do now is go two for two. We'll give it very serious consideration. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kobly: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Just while the next group is coming forward, I note that Judge Ed Wachowich entered the room. Ed was the chairman of the last commission. I hope you're not here doing a critique of the chairman because you may not have that much paper to write upon.

Okay. Who's next? Vern Hafso and Chuck McBurney of the county of Beaver. Gentlemen, welcome, and we look forward to hearing your presentation.

Mr. Hafso: Thank you very much. I'm Vern Hafso. I'm a councillor from division 5 in Beaver county.

The Chair: Vern, can I interrupt you? I'm sorry. I apologize. I didn't introduce the members of the panel this morning in our haste to move along quickly.

To my left is Doug Graham. Doug is a lawyer from the city of Calgary. To my immediate left is Bauni Mackay from Edmonton, former president of the Alberta Teachers' Association. To my right is Glen Clegg. Glen is a former Member of the Legislative Assembly for the riding of Dunvegan and lives in the community of Fairview. To my far right is Ernie Patterson. Ernie is the illustrious mayor of Claresholm. He's been mayor down there for 33 years. I don't know whether that says something about Ernie or says something about the good folks in Claresholm. My name is Bob Clark. I am the Ethics Commissioner. I apologize for not introducing ourselves earlier.

Okay, Vern. Thank you.

Mr. Hafso: Thank you very much. As I said, I'm a councillor from Beaver county from division 5, which is the east end of Beaver county and which is part of the area that is affected by the proposed boundaries. I'd like to start this morning by saying thank you for the opportunity to address you on an issue that is so important to all of us.

Currently, as you are aware, Beaver county in its entirety is part of the Vegreville-Viking constituency. This has been a very good arrangement. Alliances and friendships have been forged, organizations and co-operative agreements have been formed, the foundation for which has been built on the fact that not only are we a community at the county level, but we share one provincial representative and one federal representative. The farther east you travel in the constituency, the stronger the sense of community becomes. Also, our constituency at present consists of an agricultural area with several small rural communities of relatively the same size with the same needs and concerns. This makes representation of the existing constituency much more consistent without favouritism of one area over another. You have in our written submission from Viking and from Beaver county some of the facts and figures that support the argument of why Viking and the rest of Beaver county should remain within the electoral division.

I would also like to provide you with some real, meaningful examples of what a difference it makes to deal with only one

provincial representative. Vegreville-Viking has been an amalgamated constituency since 1991 or 1992, and since that time a number of services and infrastructures have been rationalized. For example, prior to 1991 the very eastern end of Beaver county was part of the Vermilion-Viking constituency. In that time, because of traffic volume and need, highway 36 south of highway 16 was widened and paved, but at the constituency boundary the work stopped. The southern 17 kilometres of highway 36 connecting highway 14 remained narrow and dangerous. It was not until we had one representative for our entire region that the entire highway was completed and accidents were reduced and traffic volumes increased. This is the divisive force that we are trying to avoid.

The new proposed boundary will not only divide the county; it will also divide the town of Viking and will, as well, divide my division within the county. Since the unification of the county within one provincial electoral district, the county and municipalities within the county have been able to make great strides toward regional co-operation. This includes joint council meetings, an opportunity for all municipalities to discuss opportunities to create shared services such as fire and ambulance, the completion of the highway 14 waterline, the development of a countywide business plan and a regional economic development strategy, just to name a few.

In an effort to gather all the facts and assess the impact of the proposed changes, we have spoken to our neighbouring communities, some of which are represented by multiple provincial representatives. Their common message was that when a county or municipal district is represented by more than one MLA, they suffer from “the buck stops nowhere” syndrome. Pressing but sensitive issues such as water, waste, and infrastructure were frequently shuffled around until it was too late or the situation had reached crisis proportions. Beaver county and especially the town of Viking need to remain a cohesive unit. Too many of our regional initiatives are in their infancy and need the security of one common voice to ensure that they have the history and legacy to allow them to stand on their own merits.

I certainly hope you will seriously consider our request to maintain our common bond. Communities often enough can find reason not to co-operate. The efforts and initiatives that have taken root in Beaver county can largely be attributed to the fact that we have one provincial representative who has shown a strong commitment to regional co-operation. Without his single voice of encouragement many of our labours would have been in vain. I know that the numbers have been an issue in forming boundaries, but the main concern, I believe, in representation is to do with similar concerns and the ability to represent a region as a whole. That’s the way I find our region, with all the similar sizes of communities and the similar agricultural-based economic structure in those communities.

I would certainly thank you for your time this morning and hope you would consider our request.

The Chair: Vern, I want to thank you, and at the outset I want to assure you that we think we have worked very hard to try and follow municipal boundaries as much as possible. The bind is when we get into this numbers game that you referred to yourself, and we’ve had to make some initial proposals that in some cases come very close, especially urban municipalities, to just going around them. I know we’re going to hear a lot more about that as we go further south over the next couple of days. I wanted to assure you that we have started from the point of view of trying to maintain municipal integrity, and it just hasn’t always been possible for us to do it. That’s not judging in any way, Vern, your request, but I wanted to put that very clearly on record. I would say with a certain amount of smiling at you that

I suspect that when part of your riding was in Steve West’s riding, that didn’t hurt you too much as far as getting things done.

Mr. Hafso: No.

The Chair: Don’t take that too seriously. I was trying to be humorous.

We haven’t ruled out the possibility. Please understand that.

Glen.

10:55

Mr. Clegg: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is: what kind of numbers are we looking at here if we include Beaver county and the town of Viking? What kind of numbers are we counting here?

Mr. Hafso: The east end of the county that’s excluded from the proposed boundaries is probably in the neighbourhood of 1,800.

Mr. Clegg: And Viking?

Mr. Hafso: That’s including Viking and the rural area there. There are about 1,100 in Viking, and the rest would be in the rural area that’s not included.

The Chair: Can I ask you the same question that I asked the gentleman from Viking? Did you have a chance to hear the presentation of Mr. Lougheed?

Mr. Hafso: No, I didn’t.

The Chair: Doug, could you get the good folks from the county of Beaver a copy of Mr. Lougheed’s presentation and ask them to look at it.

And would you let Mr. Patterson know your response to the proposal.

Mr. Hafso: Okay. Did that include the entire county of Beaver?

The Chair: Did your proposal include the entire county of Beaver, Rob?

Mr. Lougheed: I believe it was Strathcona county, all of Strathcona county, with the exception of a very tiny portion in the very, very north end of my constituency.

The Chair: Then going out to Vermilion, Vegreville, and Viking; include that. So if you’d look at that and give it your quick critique for us, that would be helpful to us. If you’d let Mr. Patterson know, that would be great.

Mr. Hafso: Okay.

The Chair: Any further questions or comments?

Thank you very much.

Chuck.

Mr. McBurney: Thank you very much for allowing two of us from Beaver county to speak on this issue here.

The Chair: You’re men of few words.

Mr. McBurney: Mine won’t be as long-winded as Vern’s.

Thank you, Mr. Clark and members of the panel. My name is Chuck McBurney, and I’m the reeve of Beaver county. I was the

reeve of Beaver county back in the 1986-1992 era, and at that time we had three MLAs in our county, in the jurisdiction. I'll just make this short. We reviewed the proposed electoral division areas, boundaries, and names for Alberta. The proposal indicates that Beaver county will be split into two electoral divisions: the Vegreville-Viking constituency, the western part of the county, including the town of Tofield and the villages of Ryley and Holden, with a total estimated population of 8,000 people; and the Vermilion-Lloydminster constituency, the eastern part of the county, including the town of Viking, with a total estimated population of 2,000.

While we are cognizant of the difficult task facing the commission, we wish to advise the commission that the county and the jurisdictions it encompasses – the towns of Tofield and Viking, and the villages of Ryley and Holden – have a strong desire to remain within the same electoral division. The county, towns, and villages have been a part of the Vegreville-Viking constituency and have found it very advantageous to be in one electoral constituency. The joint projects and ventures undertaken by the county and its neighbours have been simplified with the single point of contact.

Prior to the current boundaries the county was part of three electoral division areas. The duplication of information and correspondence created additional work for the MLAs, government departments, local governments, and, in particular, the ratepayers. Maintaining contact with one MLA will strengthen the cohesiveness that has enabled the various levels of government to operate more efficiently.

The proposed highway 36 boundary divides Viking within its own corporate limits and would create unnecessary complications for continued local co-operation and intergovernmental relations. In the interest of providing a unified approach to issues and programs, the county wishes to stress its desire to align provincial electoral boundaries with municipal boundaries.

Thank you for your consideration on these concerns. I would appeal to the panel to consider keeping Beaver county as one electoral division so that we don't have a repeat of what we had when we had three MLAs trying to govern us.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Any questions or comments? Okay.

Thank you very much. We appreciate it. You will do that little bit of homework – will you? – and let everyone know.

Mr. Hafso: Yes, we will.

The Chair: Thanks very much.

Mr. Hafso: Thanks.

The Chair: I'd now like to ask Mr. Duncan Brooks to come forward and speak to us, please. Mr. Brooks is appearing on behalf of the Edmonton Gold Bar Liberal Association.

Mr. Brooks: Good morning. My name is Duncan Brooks, and I'm the president of the Edmonton-Gold Bar Liberal Association. I've been asked to make this presentation to you by the Edmonton Gold Bar Liberal Association. We appreciate the opportunity to make our position on the boundaries commission's initial report known to you and trust that our comments will be given full consideration.

We believe the commission erred in its proposal to remove a legislative seat from the city of Edmonton and that action must be taken to remedy the position taken by the commission. We acknowledge that the city of Calgary needs better representation and

should have three additional seats allocated to it. We acknowledge that the commission is facing a difficult problem of rural versus urban representation, but the difficulties involved do not necessitate a wrong decision by the commission to placate a political conundrum.

We assume the commission used the Teed approach to determine your recommendations; that is, decide what you want and find a way to achieve it. We also believe you used a flawed decision model, the matrix, to support your position. We must emphasize to you that the process the commission is going through at present is based upon the democratic rights of all Albertans, arguably the most basic democratic right; that is, bringing equity into the voting system. This is not a political process. The advice you received from Ms Teed was bad. Please ignore it. It is fundamentally wrong. It is simple, easy to apply, political. It is all of these things, but it is still wrong. A commission need not have been formed to achieve the results of the proposed approach.

The commission's report makes the claim that the city of Edmonton is the easiest place in Alberta to govern and manage for the MLAs residing there. This claim, of course, must apply to the members of the council, but the claim is astounding. A 13-member council manages the lives of 600,000 people. In fact, that number is 666,000-plus people covering the largest landmass of any city in Canada, bordered by eight cities and towns, four counties, all totally relying on the city of Edmonton's dynamic drive, industry, commercial presence, and infrastructure. The MLAs representing the city of Edmonton play an essential part in the citizens' access to government at all levels.

Let us show you a simple example of these difficulties, and we will use as a comparison the first-line government to illustrate this. In Strathcona county there are 71,986 people. They're represented by eight councillors and mayor, and the ratio of representation is 10,284 people to one councillor. In Sturgeon county there are 18,067 people. There are eight councillors and mayor, and the ratio then becomes 2,258. In Vermilion River county the number for the population is 7,525. The number of councillors and mayor is seven. The ratio of representation to population is 1,075.

In the city of Edmonton, with a population of 600,000 and a number of councillors and mayor of 13, the ratio of representation is 46,000 plus. Who is least represented, and where are the MLAs most needed? Where do councillors and MLAs experience the greatest demand upon their services? We believe that it is in the city of Edmonton, and we assume a similar situation exists in Calgary.

11:05

The demands of Edmonton's unique situation within Alberta are not recognized anywhere in the commission's report. Worse still, the very tool the commission used to reduce the complexities of their task is so poorly constructed as to render it useless due to the inbuilt biases it contains. Your decision tool – it's called the matrix in your report – we agree is the correct approach to take. It is simple to understand, can be rational in its application, and in fact is used by many people in the various situations of their day-to-day lives.

The problems within the model that the commission developed are the inherent biases that predefine the answers. The model rewards the presence of multiple layers of government as well as the quantity of government. Surely, the more representatives the people have in a riding to address their needs and concerns, the lower the impact upon the MLA, yet the model rates the exact opposite manner. The model must be constructed from the position of servicing the people of Alberta, not reward multiple layers of government or the number of elected and appointed officials an MLA has to contact.

Landmass and distance from Edmonton are rated considerations without any rationale. With modern communication and travel facilities these factors must be considered redundant. The model

fails to recognize today's communication realities relating to telephone, high-speed and dial-up Internet, radio, television, cell phones, satellite communication, fax machines, et cetera. All communication technology is readily available to each and every MLA.

The model fails to recognize the transportation systems available to all MLAs. The all-weather roads system throughout Alberta is good. There are very few communities that cannot be reached by road. Almost all communities can be reached by air service or have access to air service by fixed-wing aircraft within a reasonable distance, especially in the more isolated and rural settings. This places all communities within, say, three hours' journey of Edmonton. Regular scheduled air services are available to all regions of the province from Edmonton. The model fails to recognize this but does measure the distance from Edmonton. Why not ignore the irrelevant factor of the distance altogether?

The model places emphasis on land area. Why? It serves no democratic purpose. In times past it may have been used as an indicator of the difficulties associated with travel and thus communication, but not in modern-day Alberta. The factor should be ignored.

I must also point out that the Alberta Legislature sits very infrequently, that no MLA can reasonably claim that he doesn't have enough time to visit and service his constituents. The House sits for approximately six weeks per year, say 12 percent of their available time. This allows MLAs 85 percent of their time in their constituencies. Recently the *Edmonton Journal* published a chart of the number of sitting days in provincial Legislatures across Canada. Alberta's Legislature was very close to the least number of active days.

The commission erred in its recommendation to remove a riding from the city of Edmonton, and the commission must reverse this recommendation. Having studied the initial information prepared and published by the commission and having formed our conclusions within the guidelines established for the commission by the government of Alberta, there is no justification for the removal of a riding from the city of Edmonton. Remember that future growth is not a consideration for the commission to make under its mandate. Right or wrong, that's the way it is. If future growth were a consideration, the case would be even stronger for retaining a seat in Edmonton.

In reviewing the proposed reallocation of boundaries for the city of Edmonton ridings, we are equally alarmed by the apparent contradiction between the proposal's aims and the defined boundaries submitted by the commission. We will deal with the situation for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Historically the constituency has followed the natural boundaries surrounding it; that is, the North Saskatchewan River, Mill Creek, Whyte Avenue, and the city's eastern border, a complete, easily understood homogenous community. With few exceptions other than, say, the considerations of the French community in the southwest corner of the constituency these boundaries are recognized as correct. They meet all the considerations outlined in the commission's initial report. They also meet the numerical demands of the information packages submitted by the commission.

So what changes under the commission's proposal? The southern border of the constituency has moved north from 82nd Avenue, Whyte Avenue, to 90th Avenue, encompassing the strongest Conservative vote in the riding and transferring this to the riding to the south, a Conservative riding. If a single riding were to be removed from Edmonton, Edmonton-Mill Creek should be the first candidate due to its geographic structure, not its political considerations. The resulting reduction in population has meant that the Edmonton-Gold Bar riding has been expanded across the North

Saskatchewan River and then meanders through the Edmonton downtown core and east side to re-establish a population base very similar to its original.

The new boundaries split the traditional communities and join together communities with no commercial or social ties. It even demands that a single row of houses backing onto Commonwealth Stadium is now in Edmonton-Gold Bar while completely surrounded by neighbours in another riding. The question has to be why. The new boundary proposal isolates a community of people to the north of Commonwealth Stadium and moves them into Edmonton-Gold Bar. They are removed from their traditional and inclusive communities. These situations do not meet or comply with the Charter of Rights guidelines outlined in your initial report. We ask that the commission review their findings and reflect upon our comments. We are willing to assist you in any way we can.

We must emphasize to you that the process the commission is going through at present is based upon the democratic rights of all Albertans and arguably the most basic democratic right, bringing equity into the voting system. This is not a political process. We thank you for your time and your consideration. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Duncan, and we may very well take you up on that second- or third-last paragraph, where you offer your assistance down in that area around Commonwealth Stadium. I've looked at that.

Mr. Brooks: It's difficult.

The Chair: It's difficult. That's very nicely put. Yes, it is.

Mr. Brooks: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Glen.

Mr. Clegg: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's one part of this report where I certainly agree with you, and that is the future growth. It doesn't matter where we go in the province. Somewhere is going to grow more than somewhere else, so if we don't take that future growth into consideration – we've got enough problems without that.

I wish you would've been in Athabasca yesterday when you make the statement that the city of Edmonton and, presumably, the city of Calgary have the MLAs that are needed the greatest. I think you would've got a lot of argument in Athabasca yesterday. You talk about communications. In many areas in Lesser Slave Lake and Wabasca there are very few roads and there's very little communication, so to say that that should be absolutely no factor, I can't quite buy that. Could you explain why you believe that the people of Edmonton and Calgary have more work than, say, Lesser Slave Lake and Athabasca-Wabasca?

11:15

Mr. Brooks: I can't recall the exact amount of money, but the province at the present time is plowing hundreds of millions of dollars into the Internet system to establish it throughout the province. That is going on right now, and we're spending that money. Frankly, I haven't heard anybody complain about it, because it's probably the right way to go.

I believe if you look in the rural setting, you'll find multiple layers of government that don't exist in Edmonton. I'll suggest to you that we have such things as the Northern Alberta Development Board for instance, or the like, which are in existence and help find industry for their communities. It doesn't really exist to any degree in Edmonton. We have a development board in Edmonton, the EDC, whose role is to report to the city council and not a separate

committee. I think those sorts of boards exist throughout the rural setting. I hope I've answered your question.

Well, let's look at the communities in an area. You used Athabasca. I can't readily recall all the communities that would be in that riding, but I would suspect that there are at least six communities of reasonable size, each one with a city council, village council, summer village, whatever it may be, each one representing those people and that doesn't exist in Edmonton. The situation is far worse in Calgary; let's be honest. I mean, the city of Edmonton has 666,000 people, with approximately a million people in the greater Edmonton area. Calgary has that number of people in the city of Calgary proper. They still have 13 representatives. I'm not making a pitch here for the city of Calgary, but I understand their problem. I understand your problem, and I think you've got it wrong. That is where we're coming from.

Mr. Clegg: Well, I guess there are always two sides of a story. You think we've got it wrong; I think you've got it wrong. We'll leave it there.

Mr. Brooks: Well, it doesn't leave us much hope, does it?

The Chair: That's only one person.

Mr. Patterson: I wish that you had come in here and, as you do in the last few paragraphs of your letter, indicated where we could improve the decision that we made. What I do not like about your submission – I have to be very direct about this – is that you say that this is not a political process. I want to assure you that we did not look at any voting patterns whatsoever in making any of our decisions. We looked at all of the factors, but we did not look at that. The other interesting thing I want to say – I don't know whether I'm going to get to a question or not, so please give me a little tolerance here for just a second – is that most of our written submissions and quite a large number of our oral submissions suggested that the number of MLAs be reduced from 83 to 56, and we couldn't do that because we were limited to the 83. I just wanted to point that out. But the other thing is . . .

The Chair: And your question is?

Mr. Patterson: I guess my question is this, then. Well, I guess it isn't a question, but I'll just make this statement. I wish that you could have been . . .

Mr. Brooks: Make your point.

Mr. Patterson: I'm going to make my point this way, very bluntly and very directly. I wish you could have been at some of the rural hearings where people told us that they have no roads, no telephones, no Internet, and isn't even in the near future for them to get them. You know, as a member of this commission, trying to be fair and trying to be reasonable, I have to take all of those things into consideration.

Mr. Brooks: May I give you an answer to your question?

Mr. Patterson: Yes. Sure.

Mr. Brooks: I've traveled the west side of the province, in particular, fairly extensively. The only two communities that I've ever been to that do not have a road are Garden city – you probably do not know where that is – and Fox Lake is another one, but it has a winter road. Zama City has a road which is pretty rough, but

frankly the community is also very small and it's a fairly new community. They have street lights, a swimming pool, library, schools. The roads still are not very good. If you want to cut from Zama down to Chateh, you're on oil concession roads. I've driven to Chipewyan Lakes. There is no road from Wabasca. But we're talking of very isolated and very few communities.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thanks, Duncan.

Ms Mackay: Thank you for your presentation, Duncan. I have a question. I think we got the message pretty loud and clear that your constituency association is against Edmonton losing a seat. However, you do make the suggestion that if it does have to lose a seat, that it be the Edmonton-Mill Creek constituency. What would you suggest we do with that?

Mr. Brooks: We try to do it from a nonpolitical base. You have to understand that we're a political organization. It is the same problem that, frankly, Mr. Patterson has being a mayor. He's a politician.

The Chair: You know, it's not all that bad being a politician.

Carry on, Duncan.

Mr. Brooks: Oh, no. I wouldn't be interested in it if I thought it was a bad thing, but the reality is that we try to look at where, if this is a decision that has to be made, geographically it is easiest to make. There is one riding in all of Edmonton which is completely split, and that is Edmonton-Mill Creek. The southern portion is adjacent to Mill Woods. The northern portion is adjacent to Gold Bar and the Strathcona area, Dr. Pannu's riding. In between those two pockets of population there are only 403 voters listed on the registry, very, very few because it's an industrial area, and it really shows no sign of ever being anything else but an industrial area. That is our rationale in that recommendation. It is nothing more. We can't find another riding in Edmonton like that.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Graham: I just want to understand what you're saying clearly. To boil it all down, what you're suggesting is that we should take another riding out of rural Alberta to put back into Edmonton?

Mr. Brooks: Yes, I am.

Mr. Graham: That's what I thought you were saying. Do you understand that if we did that, the quotient for the city of Edmonton would then be lower than the rural ridings?

Mr. Brooks: If it remains where it is – and that's essentially what we're saying – it meets all the criteria established in your initial information package that was published by the commission.

Mr. Graham: But it would be lower than the rural ridings if we did that – you understand that – but that's what you want?

Mr. Brooks: Well, would it be within the boundaries established by the commission, the plus or minus 25 percent?

Mr. Graham: Yes, it would.

Mr. Brooks: Therefore, it meets all the criteria required.

Mr. Graham: But it would be lower than the rural ridings.

Mr. Brooks: It would still be within the criteria required. That's the only answer I can give you; isn't it?

Mr. Graham: Before you go, I really have to make this comment. There's no way of getting around it. What you've suggested is that we came to a conclusion and then justified it. I can assure you that that's not what happened, and quite frankly I'm offended.

Mr. Brooks: Okay. I'm quite willing to refer you back to your own report, which was published. In your own report you will find that there is a reference to Ms Teed, and you claim in there that it was the very advantageous way, I think you refer to it, to follow. It only leads anybody reading your report to the conclusion that that is what you did.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

Mr. Brooks: Thank you.

The Chair: There may be some agreement to disagree. I appreciate your time, Duncan. Thank you very much.

What I'd like to do is take a five-minute break, and then I'll ask Bauni Mackay to become the chair because I have to go and make a presentation for the Ethics Commissioner's office on the budget for next year before the Leg. Offices Committee. We have two more presentations before lunch. That'll be the St. Albert PC Association and Mr. John Szumlas on behalf of the Edmonton-Gold Bar PC Association. We'll reconvene in five minutes, and then we'll have at it.

[The commission adjourned from 11:25 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.]

The Chair: Okay, ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Paul Chalifoux and Ken Allred from the St. Albert constituency association are here, and then you'll hear the melodious tones of John Szumlas after that. I apologize, gentlemen, for ducking out part way through your presentation, but the Ethics Commissioner's office has to have a budget for next year. Gentlemen, we await your comments.

Mr. Allred: My name is Ken Allred. I'm the president of the St. Albert Progressive Conservative Constituency Association. I noticed you mentioned the melodious tones of John Szumlas. Our presenter is going to be equally as melodious. I'd like to present Paul Chalifoux, who chaired our special committee to review your report and make submissions earlier.

Mr. Chalifoux: Thank you, Ken. Does that mean I'm going to do this in rap?

First of all, I'll introduce myself as director of the PC Association in St. Albert and chair of the electoral boundaries review committee. We do have another member of that committee in the hall, Bill Shields, who is a director of the PC Association as well.

Our member of the Legislative Assembly, Mary O'Neill, may come by. She does have committee work on right now, and it depends on the circumstances.

The Chair: That's where I'm going.

Mr. Chalifoux: Then I gather from that comment that she probably won't come by. On her behalf I express our regrets.

Let me start with some introductory comments. Given the terms of reference and the legal framework you were given to undertake

the provincial electoral boundaries review, we believe that you did a commendable job. It is noted that you were required to use 83 electoral divisions, the 2001 Canada census for population, and you stayed within the 25 percent variance from calculated average for electoral divisions. This gave you a range of 26,963 to 44,939 people based on a calculated average of 35,951, and you only used two of the four special consideration situations, which allow you 50 percent variation from the calculated average. Furthermore, we believe that your use of the six-criteria matrix as a tool to measure effective representation was a rational way of comparing the difficulty of representing one electoral division relative to another division. As a result, we believe that you did a commendable job given the difficulties you encountered.

[Ms Mackay in the chair]

We have table 1, which follows in our presentation, which gives a comparative overview of the proposed electoral divisions. I would just like to highlight a few points in that table for you. There are four categories which you have chosen to create your framework. One was major cities, and we note that given the parameters that you had to work with, in Calgary you are proposing 23 ridings, 27.7 percent of the ridings or seats, and that would give them an average population of 38,212. If you go across in that row, you can see the data as it relates to Calgary. If you look at their total population in the 2001 census, 878,866, it was 29.5 percent of the Alberta population. In short, you are proposing that they have 27.7 percent of the constituencies, or electoral divisions, to represent 29.5 percent of the Alberta population.

Similarly, in Edmonton, going across in that row, 18 ridings, or constituencies, would represent 21.7 percent of the ridings, and their population is 22.3 percent. So there's a fairly close relationship in our view. When you combine the two major cities, you are proposing 49.4 percent of the constituencies for the two major cities, and they constitute 51.8 percent of the population.

Similarly, in the urbanized category, which is where the St. Albert constituency fits, you are proposing 21 constituencies, which is 25.3 percent of the constituencies, or electoral divisions, and the combined population of the urbanized seats is 25.1 percent, with a very close relationship between percentage of constituencies and population of the province.

Now, St. Albert itself, the constituency which we represent, is one riding. You are proposing 39,160 in that population, which is the second highest of all the urbanized seats that you have identified. Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, which is of interest to us because we have a proportion of our citizens which are in that urbanized riding, would have a population average of 37,657. When you look at or compare the proposed populations of those two electoral divisions, they compare quite closely to the average populations of the major cities as well as the category that follows, the rural.

In the rural category you are proposing 19 electoral divisions, or 22.8 percent of the constituencies, to represent 21.3 percent of the overall Alberta population. Close relationship. The average size, from our perspective, is fairly reasonable given the circumstances.

The special categories. You only have two, and we recognize that to be a reality in the Alberta context, where we have very few people who live in very sparsely populated parts of the province. The data there in terms of the average size of the constituency at 26,077 is, we believe, an anomaly, but it's an understandable anomaly.

Now, when you talk about democracy, you talk about representation by population as an underlying principle. So we did a quick analysis, and we arbitrarily said that if you gave an Edmonton vote a base value of one, given the proposal that you are

making at this stage, a Calgary vote would be 0.97, an urbanized vote would be 1.04, a rural vote would be 1.1, and of course the special division votes would be 1.42, but there are very few people that are involved in that particular category. Our conclusion is that looking at representation by population as a background principle, you've been very respectful of that given the circumstances.

Turning a little closer to home – that is, in the St. Albert situation – we offer some observations both local, to St. Albert, and regional. In 2001 the city of St. Albert's population exceeded 53,000 people. The proposed boundary change for the St. Albert electoral division will place approximately 14,000 residents of the northwest sector of St. Albert in the Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert electoral division, very similar to the current situation.

Another observation. The population of the proposed St. Albert electoral division at 39,160 is the second largest of the urbanized category, second only to the proposed Wood Buffalo seat. It's 9.6 percent above the urbanized category average and 8.9 percent above the provincial average of 35,951. From our perspective we believe that it is right to not add any more population to the St. Albert constituency with the current constituency with its proposed size of 39,160.

11:40

The proposed Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert seat has the Alexander reserve removed, at least the proposal has, and the northwest residents of St. Albert east of Dawson Road added to it. Now, that proposed electoral division will have a population of 5.4 percent above the urbanized category average and 4.7 percent above the provincial average. The portion of the riding within St. Albert represents 37.2 percent of its total population.

The proposed St. Albert riding has not changed greatly. It is essentially a status quo situation given the bigger picture. It is the second-highest population of the urbanized category, and it exceeds Edmonton's average size by 2,153. Now the "lost" St. Albert residents – those are the ones that we see, that aren't connected to the Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert seat – are aggregated with the other northwest residents of St. Albert, and they form a large proportion of the Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert electoral division, over one-third of the population, 37.2 percent.

Now, our conclusion as a board: the St. Albert PC Constituency Association accepts the proposed boundary adjustments as they affect the city of St. Albert. We recognize that our 2001 population of 53,000 is too small to warrant two urban St. Albert seats, and the population is too large for one seat to properly represent the whole city. We accept the aggregation of the northwest St. Albert residents in the Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert electoral division instead of their inclusion in a bordering Edmonton seat because the proposed arrangement recognizes that these St. Albert residents have common interests outside of Edmonton's, and they are easier to represent in the proposed arrangements. I just draw your attention to the fact that this is a basic principle in your framework that you used from the beginning of your exercise.

When electoral boundaries are reviewed next, in eight to 10 years, the possibility may exist for the city of St. Albert to be represented by one or two urban seats depending on its future population and the number of electoral divisions established for that review. If two electoral divisions are required for St. Albert in the next review, this year's proposed arrangement will enable future electoral divisions to be easily divided into west and east seats or north and south seats using either St. Albert Road or highway 2 or the Sturgeon River as boundaries. Either way, the northwest residents outside of the St. Albert constituency boundaries at present will continue to be in the same division, and there will be less disruption for them in terms of their representation. If only one urban seat is required in the future,

the northwest residents will welcome being reunited with the other residents from St. Albert.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and comment on your work to date. We believe your proposal does a good job of enabling St. Albert residents to continue to represent their interests considering the circumstance that they represent more than one but less than two urban electoral divisions. Thank you, and I'm open and Ken is open to questions if you have any.

The Acting Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much for your presentation. I think you've outlined your position very clearly.

Do we have questions?

Mr. Patterson: I just want to say, Madam Chairperson, thank you very much. It's one of very few presentations that have totally agreed with us.

Mr. Chalifoux: Well, we don't totally agree, but we recognize that this is best given the circumstances.

Mr. Patterson: I was hoping you wouldn't kind of take that back, Paul.

Mr. Chalifoux: Qualify it.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Mr. Clegg?

Mr. Clegg: No questions, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Graham: I just want to thank you for the mathematical work you've done, which I intend to stow away for future reference. I note that you didn't include on your chart the last calculations you did, I don't believe.

Mr. Chalifoux: I'll give you that.

Mr. Graham: Or are they on the chart? The weighting of the votes, the .9 and so forth. Is that here somewhere?

Mr. Chalifoux: I'll give you this copy.

Mr. Allred: We can get them for you.

Mr. Graham: If you could just repeat them, I wouldn't mind, and then I can just jot them down.

Mr. Allred: Unfortunately, we had to do a revision to that table, and at the last minute we forgot to add that little piece. My apologies.

Mr. Chalifoux: So just for comparison's sake to analyze the rep-by-pop principle, we arbitrarily assigned an Edmonton vote value at 1.0, gave it a base value of 1.0, and given the proposal, a Calgary vote would be 0.97, an urbanized vote would be 1.04, a rural vote 1.1, and a special division vote 1.42. We recognize that that's very few people and the circumstances are significantly different. So from our perspective there was respect for the rep-by-pop principle in what's proposed to this point.

Mr. Graham: Thank you very much.

The Acting Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Allred: Perhaps I could make a concluding remark if I might. There's a similar process going on at the same time with the federal government, and we would certainly like to commend your approach in seeking public input before you prepare your report. We thought your report was very well prepared. The matrix: despite some anomalies you've tried to follow that matrix as best you can, and we certainly think you did a commendable job. Certainly there are going to be some difficulties, but that's what you're there for. To analyze the situation and do the best you can, and we certainly felt that your report was a commendable job and your whole process was commendable.

So thank you.

The Acting Chair: Okay. Thank you.

We'll move on to the last speaker for this morning, and that's Mr. John Szumlas, please. You're the president of the Edmonton-Gold Bar PC Constituency Association.

Mr. Szumlas: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, members of the commission. I'm puzzled, yet pleasantly surprised, that the chair referenced a melodious presentation, so to not disappoint you, I will not sing my presentation. I'm sure Mayor Patterson is ecstatic at that statement.

Madam Chair, members of the commission, my name is John Szumlas, and I'm here representing two entities. First, my wife, and I think that's probably the one that I will deal with first, because my wife and I live in the impacted area of the boundaries and we do believe that on reflection and with care and consideration the commission will consider the implications of a minor boundary adjustment. The second is in my capacity with the Edmonton-Gold Bar PC Association.

So I will deal with the first issue now, because it's very critical to underscore that when you as commissioners determine to issue a document – and we, too, wish to compliment not only the commission but the commission staff in presenting what we feel is a very well constructed, logical sequence to arrive, outside of two elements, at effective representation in the province.

The one that we would ask first that you look at is the southern boundary of Edmonton-Gold Bar, where currently it's being proposed that that boundary carry on from Connors Road on 90th Avenue through a small jog up and then over to the edge of the city. Since the creation of the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar I believe the southernmost boundary of our constituency has been very respectful and mindful of the community leagues that exist in our area, and that boundary has been Whyte Avenue, or 82nd Avenue. Our humble request is that it be returned from 90th Avenue eight short blocks to the south to Whyte Avenue principally because of three reasons.

11:50

First is that Edmonton-Gold Bar's community league of Edmonton-Kenilworth, if the boundaries as proposed are carried forward to the next election, would be severed in half. There is no community of interest that flows with Edmonton-King Edward Park, which is the community league that is past the industrial centre. I believe that the individual from the Liberal association made some reference to the fact that Whyte Avenue is a natural boundary and is a boundary that would be respectful of Edmonton-Kenilworth as a community league.

The second is what we would probably call the inventive suggestion of crossing the North Saskatchewan River at only one location. That is the Low Level bridge. That is our only access to the north side of the North Saskatchewan River to take in this small segment of the old Edmonton-Highlands constituency. We're puzzled by that because there traditionally had been no affinity, no

relationships, no community of interest. Furthermore, until the 50th Street bridge is built, it would be limited to only one access point, and that would be crossing the Low Level across through a different constituency to come in and to take that area. So we're going: well, that's puzzling and confusing. We would ask that you reconsider the move of adding to the north and taking away from the south. We think that you retain that which is part of the south and traditionally has been Edmonton-Gold Bar. Not only community leagues but communities of interest will remain intact. If you require additional population, then you can return to the 1993 boundaries, which included the region around Bonnie Doon.

The third and final one and the reason why I thought I better choose this as the last item is that my wife and I live a hundred feet south of the proposed boundary of Edmonton-Gold Bar. We know that the commissioners will look with care and consideration at my wife's petition to continue to be part of Edmonton-Gold Bar as she is quite active in Edmonton-Kenilworth. That community, we feel, should continue to be part of the Edmonton-Gold Bar constituency.

To change direction, our plea and our request is that the commissioners seriously reconsider the removal of a seat from our capital city, being the city of Edmonton. We propose an alternative, and that alternative, frankly, Madam Chairman, members of the commission, is that the commission enlist the wisdom of its staff, enlist the wisdom of others to confirm that in the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton there are completely different and distinct planning, annexation, movements relative to growth footprints.

In the city of Edmonton's case we have a number of very, very independent communities around it. We will continue to have those independent communities around our city. I'm not going to comment on that any further. But in the case of the city of Calgary their history since the '50s has been to track their development and then annex that which is in its way. So given its population growth, its population growth has modeled very much the city of Edmonton's metropolitan population growth. The only distinction is that in the city of Edmonton's case it's jurisdictional boundaries have been restrained by the other communities and other municipal corporations that they abut. In the city of Calgary's case they annex it.

You do have two vacant, special municipalities, so you can preserve – and I'm very much a strong advocate of preserving that responsible representation that keeps in mind all of the various organizations. I think, reading the report, you know, that you as commissioners were ever mindful of the fact that our MLAs from those regions outside of urban or metropolitan centres have enormous responsibilities, enormous tasks, and I respect that. I'm not saying, "Take from a rural," but I am suggesting that an urban/rural municipality, which in a few short weeks, months, likely no later than two or three years will become a fully urbanized seat in the city of Calgary, would be a way to respond to the matrix that you have laid out and provide that special consideration constituency for the city of Calgary.

You do have some capacity to move in that way in respecting the 83 boundaries, and you do and will preserve the 19 seats which this city not only deserves but must maintain in representing the good residents of the city of Edmonton. So a suggestion that we put before you is to keep mindful of growth patterns and annexation activities that have traditionally been the case.

In the case of Calgary their subdivisions and their human settlement and planning programs are very much targeted to move and then annex. That's their pattern of behaviour, and that's fine. I think what's necessary for the commission to consider is that an urban/rural seat, or a 'rurban' seat, as they're commonly referred to, for the city of Calgary would fall within your matrix and your goals of achieving effective and adequate representation.

So in summary, Madam Chairman and members of the commission, our asks are twofold. One is that the southern boundary of Edmonton-Gold Bar be returned to its traditional and logical location of being Whyte Avenue. Reconsider the addition of this little pimple that you have placed on the top end of Edmonton-Gold Bar, recognizing that there's only one transportation link – and that's the Low Level bridge – for us to access that, and consider whether or not it makes much more sense to access some of that Bonnie Doon community if you feel that you need to increase our numbers. The second is a plea – and we know you have an onerous responsibility – to maintain the 19 seats here in our capital city of Edmonton.

On that note, I do, on behalf of my wife – she asked me to say this – wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a very thoughtful deliberation. We do look forward to maintaining our residence in Edmonton-Gold Bar at the next provincial election. If there are any questions, we'll attempt to answer them.

Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Okay. Well, say Merry Christmas to your wife, too, and thank you for a reasoned presentation. I'm sure there are some questions with your very intriguing suggestion about a 'rurban' Calgary seat.

Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. John would be disappointed if I didn't respond somewhat to his presentation, because he and I have kind of been having a few go-rounds lately in different capacities. But anyway, thank you very much, and thank you for the Christmas wishes. You came close to giving us a Christmas card but not quite.

I just want to point out, first of all, that the majority of our submissions across the province in writing and probably orally indicated that the number of MLAs should really be reduced to 56 from 83, but we couldn't do anything with that because of our guideline. Now to my question, Madam Chair. When you're talking about these changes to Edmonton-Gold Bar, first of all, in this small neighbourhood how many people are we talking about roughly?

Mr. Szumlas: Oh, you know, I can't give you precision, but the last number we had was approximately 800 to 1,100 people. We're not talking about anything that is going to distort our population. There were more people who were proposed to be added in that northern – how do we kindly put that? – annexation that crosses us across the river into the coliseum area, where we had no affinity.

Mr. Patterson: So you're saying, if I might, Madam Chairperson, that that small northern area should go out of Edmonton-Gold Bar – just to get this straight in my mind – and then the boundary be put back down to 82nd Avenue. You're estimating 800 to 1,100 people.

12:00

Mr. Szumlas: Your Worship, through the chair, the key piece is that changing both of those will have minor consequence to Edmonton-Gold Bar, and it'll make my wife happy.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you.

The Acting Chair: And that's important.

Mr. Szumlas: Trust me.

The Acting Chair: Mr. Clegg.

Mr. Clegg: Thanks, Madam Chairman. Certainly, Ernie stole my

question. To me minor changes, if they're going to keep both sides happy, are something that we can certainly look at. Obviously, when you make major changes, it doesn't just affect the next constituency; it affects maybe right across the province. So that's certainly something. Thanks for your presentation, and thanks, Peggy. It was such a good one, I'm sure she drew it up.

Mr. Szumlas: Thank you very much, Glen.

Mr. Clegg, through the chair to yourself, there's no doubt, I think, that one of the fundamental needs to do what you are you doing now is to allow minor tweaking to be identified. It's very critical. So we do compliment – and it is a Christmas card to my good friend the mayor of Claresholm – that you did a good job. I think that in my covering letter I indicate that it's that very, very challenging responsibility of balancing mystery and facts. So, you know, we do want to compliment not only the chair but yourself, Madam Interim Chair, and members of the commission for allowing us an opportunity to give you some minor suggestions that would make it work.

When it comes to the loss of a seat in the city of Edmonton, you know, we do want to speak on the side of the interim chair, because she is correct in her interim report relative to the fundamental need to be not only forward-thinking but also mindful and respectful of the reality of the perceptions. I think, looking at our good friends in the south, Calgary's equation, that very quickly their 'rurban' seat, rural/urban seat, will become an urban seat. That may be a solution to solve what we believe is a very serious concern – that's a major concern – with the proposition that's proposed of taking away from the good residents of the city of Edmonton one of their electoral votes.

The Acting Chair: Okay.

Mr. Graham: You're going to have to be a little more direct with me because I'm slower than the other people on the panel here. I would like you – because I guess you're the last speaker before lunch – to just flesh out what you're saying. I didn't fully understand it. When you're talking about this 'rurban' seat in Calgary and how that would work, would that then result in a transfer, allow Edmonton to retain its seats? Are you suggesting, then, that Calgary on some border encompass a 'rurban' constituency to balance out? Is that where you're going? I just wanted to make sure I understood it.

Mr. Szumlas: Through the chair to Mr. Graham. The concept of a 'rurban' seat was spoken to by the eloquent speakers just before me. The city of St. Albert prior to the 1993 election, I believe, likely in the 1997 election for sure, took an urban municipal corporation and separated that so there would be one whose residents or electors were exclusively residents of the city of St. Albert. Then they established a second seat, which is a 'rurban' seat, which would have a portion of the residents of the city of St. Albert and a portion of the rural riding that abutted it to the north. In the case of Medicine Hat it was a similar riding, where we have the city of Medicine Hat allocated to a strictly urban seat and a rural/urban seat. So it effectively provides for matching the requirements of your matrix.

The city of Calgary's case. You go down into Calgary-Shaw, which I believe is listed at about 103,000. I'm just going, you know, from the top of my head, but I believe they have a huge population. If one travels, as I'm sure you do every day, on the gridlock in the city of Calgary, you'll notice that there is an enormous amount of subdivisions that have now been established south of highway 22X, and they are heading in a particular direction. The good folks of Okotoks and the good folks of those municipalities, you know, very

much are sensing the move of Calgary towards their way in the same fashion they did with Forest Lawn, the same fashion they did with Bowness, the same fashion they did with Springbank, the same fashion they did with Midnapore. All of those, quote, municipal jurisdictions at one point in time, you know, are now part of the city of Calgary. They've developed a culture called the city of Calgary.

In the city of Edmonton's case we have, you know, very strong and very voiced communities who feel that they are St. Albert, they are Sherwood Park, they are Leduc, they are Spruce Grove/Stony Plain. That's for a different debate.

In the case of the city of Calgary you as commissioners can be a little bold and a little courageous and say: well, listen; in Calgary's case their pattern of planning and land use allocation historically has been settle, annex, settle, annex, annex, settle. That's their pattern of behaviour, and that's fine. So given that knowledge, you can say: "Well, listen. We have two special municipalities that can be plus or minus 50 percent – plus or minus 50 percent." Historically, we've always used minus 50 percent, below the provincial average. We may want to take one of our special constituencies and tap into the growth patterns. To direct you, the city of Calgary land use planning department can give you all of the subdivisions that have been approved and that are likely under construction as they speak. Do you go northeast, you know, from Springbank into the Rocky View MD area? Do you go south and southwest into Foothills, or do you go east or west? Calgary gives you tremendous potential to go any one of the four directions.

Mr. Graham: That was going to be my next question, and maybe you want to make a subsequent submission because you can still give us a map or something. In what direction would this 'urban' riding, then, head out?

Mr. Szumlas: Well, I think that if it's an issue that intrigues the commission – I don't know if I have time, but I'll give you an undertaking, since I'm eminently reasonable, as my good friend the mayor of Claresholm says – I can see if I can, within the next 48 hours or so, give you a one-pager, identify the likely direction. I think the key message that we wish to convey and leave with you is that you can be creative in responding to the realities of the number. As my good friend the mayor indicated, you know, you are restricted to 83 constituencies as per the legislation. Therefore, there was no comment on my opinion relative to the numbers or the establishment of a bicameral Legislature. I'm a strong advocate that a bicameral Legislature, conceived and permitted under the Alberta Act, allows us to deal with both geography and the other. But that's not what your marching orders were, so let's not spend time on that.

I think it's critical to underscore that it's not acceptable for this commission to recommend to our Legislature that they remove one seat from the city of Edmonton. We feel that that's not acceptable, and we're providing you with some suggestions, some hints, some opportunities so that you can meet not only the needs of we who live in the city of Edmonton but also those who live throughout the province, who need adequate and effective representation. That's balancing those poor people like my good friend Mr. Clegg, who had to travel from Dunvegan to the Legislature. Huge distances.

You know, I respect the fact that you have done a very good job, and I commend you with those two suggestions that you think about.

Mr. Graham: Thank you.

The Acting Chair: Mr. Patterson has a question.

Mr. Patterson: You just mentioned the Alberta Act, and you mentioned something which I wasn't quite aware of: the bicameral.

I'm familiar with the Alberta Act, but it's a long time since I've looked at it. One of the problems we've heard over and over again – and we recognize that for the next commission it's going to be almost an impossible situation – is where we have the urban growth and the decreasing rural growth. So I'm really interested in that reference to the bicameral because we do have a section in our report trying to alert the government. Something has to happen here to recognize this rural/urban. So when you submit that other proposal, would you mind making reference to that too? I think that would be important to put in our report, and I thank you for that.

12:10

Mr. Szumlas: Thank you very much, through the chair to Mayor Patterson. You know, we must acknowledge that all residents of the province of Alberta will not only find bicameral representation distasteful but will not support more politicians, and we accept that. But I think if the number is 83 or if the number is 79 or is 75, using a bicameral system where you have one component of our Legislature who is elected strictly on numbers, whether that number is 100,000 voters or 80,000 voters, frankly, as long as it's equal, that's what is necessary.

But necessary to place as a second and fundamental component is representation that deals with geography or regions, because there is a difference between the good people in Claresholm and Taber, and their issues are completely different from the issues that face the good people of Dunvegan or Spirit River and, again, different from the good people of Edmonton and Calgary. Keeping that in mind, since we do have a bicameral capacity in our Alberta Act to say, "Well, listen; we have regional interests that need to be represented, but we also have a population requirement," and to satisfy the columnists and the pundits and the experts and those who, you know, have no what I would call knowledge in their disrespect of our political system, you need to lower the number and say: "Listen; here is what we give to you. We'll give you less politicians but politicians that are effective, that are equal, and that have in place that necessary component of being elected by the people." You have no capacity to do that. I respect the legislation.

But I think that as a side comment relative to the next group, if you've got a problem this year, it's going to pale in comparison to the problem of the next group that will have to address this because it's no different than the people before and the people before that. We've had a series of commissions. That's why the "special" concept had to come into place, because it was absolutely impossible to represent, as did our good friend Boomer Adair, that huge part of northern Alberta, or Mike and Pearl. There are huge parts up there where there are residents who deserve to be heard, who need to be visited. Yes, there are only 80 in Cadotte Lake and 90 in Trout Lake, in areas where most Albertans, 98 percent of Albertans, have never been to. But those people need to have access to their MLA, and those people need to know that if they've got an issue, their MLA will come and visit them. Those of us who live in Edmonton, where we can drive down the congested Whitemud or drive down 50th Street, you know, we can visit with our member at the Legislative Assembly. We have to keep that in mind, so I will give you a couple of comments on that as well, Mayor Patterson.

I've taken a lot of your time. I apologize.

The Acting Chair: Well, thank you very much, and thank you to all of you who have sat through this and listened. We will now adjourn until 2 o'clock, and at that time Mr. Clark will be back in the chair.

[The meeting adjourned from 12:14 p.m. to 1:51 p.m.]

[Mr. Clark in the chair]

The Chair: Okay, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to call the session together this afternoon. I'd like to start with a few introductory comments to introduce my colleagues, and then we're off to a situation where I think we have 10 or 11 presenters this afternoon. We look forward to their input.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission is established under Alberta law after every two elections, and this commission was established in March of this year. Two of the members are appointed by the leader of the government; two of the members are appointed by the Leader of the Official Opposition after discussion with the other opposition parties.

I'm not going to give you the full load, but there are some things that I want to put on the table. The legislation, as far as this commission is concerned, is that there are to be 83 ridings. If we were to listen to the first 300 presentations that we heard across the province earlier, the preponderance of those people said that there should be less than 83 ridings, but the legislation has said that there will be 83 ridings. There can be a variance of up to 25 percent in the population within those ridings, but the key is that it has to be done in a manner that enables people to have effective representation.

The legislation also calls for up to four special ridings, and in those ridings you can have less than 50 percent of the provincial average. We presently have two of those ridings. One is the Athabasca-Wabasca riding, where we were last night, and the other one is the Lesser Slave Lake area.

The third factor that we have to keep in mind is the Canadian Bill of Rights. The Canadian Bill of Rights guarantees to Canadians and to Albertans, as does the Alberta legislation, effective representation. I guess the point I want to make here very clearly is that this isn't a question of just representation by population. It's a question of effective representation.

If you look at page 6 of our report, you will see a summary of basically the factors for how we dealt with those issues. In summary, it can be put this way:

The principles of effective representation seem to the Commission to be as follows:

1. The tradition of Canada is "effective representation," not absolute parity as in the U.S.
2. The process of achieving effective representation may involve diluting the political force of some votes but not unduly and not without reason.
3. The balancing of these interests is a delicate one . . .

And I can assure you we have found that out.

. . . which involves an examination in depth of the social history, geography and demography of communities in every sense of the word.

So that's been, I guess, the overarching kind of approach which the commission has attempted to take.

The commission is also bound by taking the 2001 Canada census. We've been to, I think, 30 communities across Alberta, and we haven't met a community yet where that isn't going to grow, and that's the way it should be. The fact is that we're bound to take the last census, the 2001 Stats Canada census. That made the population at that time 2.983 million, and if you divide that by 83, you get a quotient of 35,951. Obviously, you're not going to have that number of people in every riding. It just wouldn't be possible. So that's kind of the background I want to give you.

The next comment I'd like to make deals with what has happened since the commission started. I indicated that we started in March, and of the people who were appointed to work on the commission, for some reason the Ethics Commissioner was appointed to be the chairman. Under the legislation it can be the Auditor General, the Ethics Commissioner, a member of the judiciary, or the head of an academic institution, and I guess it was the Ethics Commissioner's turn to be the chairman.

I'd like to introduce to you on my far right Ernie Patterson. Ernie

is the mayor of Claresholm. He's been the mayor for some 30 years, 32 years to be exact, and he's also the first vice-president of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. To my right is Glen Clegg. Glen was the Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Dunvegan riding for three or four terms and has been in local politics for a number of years. He lives at Fairview but represented the Dunvegan area: Fairview and Spirit River. On my immediate left is Bauni Mackay from the city of Edmonton. Those of you who are educators know that Bauni was the very successful president of the Alberta Teachers' Association. A very accomplished educator, Bauni is here from Edmonton. To my far left is Doug Graham. Doug is a well-known and well-respected lawyer from the city of Calgary. Myself, Bob Clark, I happen to live at a little place called Carstairs, which is about 40 minutes north of Calgary. We're the five who are on the panel.

We started hearings in May of this year. We met in Calgary, Olds, Red Deer, and Edmonton. In early June we were in St. Paul, Wainwright, Drumheller, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, and Wetaskiwin. Then in the last week of June we were at Westlock, Edson, Slave Lake, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, and Peace River.

After that trek was finished, we came to the conclusions. The conclusions are in this document, the interim report. We made that report available to the Speaker I believe early in September, and the Speaker then released it to the Legislature. The second part of the legislation calls for a second round of hearings, so we sent out copies of this to everyone who'd made presentations, every group, and then we advertised. We are right now in the midst of holding the second day of hearings in four locations.

We were at Athabasca yesterday in the afternoon and evening. We're here today. We have a full day today. We're in Red Deer tomorrow morning, then we're in Calgary late tomorrow afternoon, and that should finish the hearings.

Our plan is that shortly after Christmas the commission will get together, come to some conclusions, and then have a final report ready to go to the printers in the latter part of January. I hope to have the report in the Speaker's hands the 1st of March. Then, mercifully, our job is done. This is not the kind of job that gets you any Christmas cards. We did get – what was it? – a pin last night from one of the municipalities up north, but that's the closest we've come to getting anything like Christmas cards. We knew that when we took it on, and we're certainly not complaining. But that's the procedure. Our responsibilities will be finished the day that the report goes to the Speaker.

Following that, it's then in the hands of the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta as to what they do with the report. Under the law there will have to be new boundaries for the next provincial election unless that provincial election is awfully quick, and I don't think any of us anticipate that. So the Legislature may take our recommendations; they may not. With the last commission report, under Mr. Justice Wachowich, the Legislature took and passed the majority of the recommendations, and things have moved along from there.

We have a number of submissions this afternoon, and we're going to ask the people to tell us succinctly what they want. We're here looking for suggestions, alternatives, a better way to do what we've done or what we haven't done. Then my colleagues, if they're true to form at all, will certainly have some questions. I've threatened them with their lives if they get involved in arguments, because we're here to listen to people's views and to explore those views. Then following the 10-minute presentation we'll have questions and then move on to the next presenter.

We had a full morning. Mr. Olthof, who's the first presenter this afternoon?

2:00

Mr. Olthof: Reg Woelfle from the Sherwood Park Liberal Association.

The Chair: Good afternoon, Reg.

Mr. Woelfle: Good afternoon.

The Chair: I want you to know that we haven't lost anybody at one of these hearings yet, and we're sure you're not going to be the first. We look forward to hearing your presentation.

Mr. Woelfle: That's good news.

I believe I handed the packet of information to the individual back there, and he passed it on to each of the panel members. Just to make a quick comment about what is in the packet, basically it is a follow-up to the submission that was made initially by the Sherwood Park Liberal Association by a different individual and also some maps for the area. I took the liberty of including the statistics from which I got the maps; in other words, the 2001 census information. Therefore, that gives you some indication that I haven't picked the numbers out of the air. They're accurate, and I've done the divisions based on the population statistics there, knowing that, as you said in your own remarks, there is some variance because we're two years later from that point. But there is a trend indicated there, I think, in those population figures.

The Chair: Bearing in mind that we have to use those 2001 stats, it seems like not many communities think that they're right.

Mr. Woelfle: I'm sure. I can appreciate that.

Before I introduce myself a little bit, I would like to indicate that the population figures that I'm going to come to and that the whole presentation is based on are an urban/rural mix of fairly equal value in terms of the representatives as they relate to the Sherwood Park constituency and as they relate to the Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan constituency. My figures tell me that they're pretty close. I'm proposing a Sherwood Park-South and a Sherwood Park-North constituency, and it would end up including a population of about 35,000, 36,000 people – 35,800, actually – in Sherwood Park-South and a population of about 33,200 in Sherwood Park-North. As I say, it's a mixture of rural and urban kind of thing.

Myself, I'm here representing this case on behalf of the Sherwood Park Liberal Association, but also I'm here as a citizen exercising what I feel is a democratic right, and that is to speak and be heard. With regard to myself living in the east part of Sherwood Park, when I looked at the map that came from the commission, I'm one of the individuals who would be a small population of Sherwood Park who'd be a part of the Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan constituency. That didn't seem like very good representation for me, considering, you know, what the economics and the social and cultural flows are in those areas.

The brief that is included here really is based on the initial presentation. We consider those suggestions and proposals there valid. The conclusions in that initial proposal are valid, and they're an extension of that initial proposal. The initial part here is concerned with the commission's proposed boundaries for Sherwood Park. As I said, I was one of those citizens who felt suddenly – I looked and said: it cuts urban Sherwood Park into two uneven portions. I was the one that was in the eastern portion of it on the map. I don't know if you have a copy of it; I have it here. A line ran down – that's the rural part – the urban part of Sherwood Park, ran down Clover Bar Road, and that put me in a very small segment in the eastern part of Sherwood Park, really quite isolated from the other part of Sherwood Park, I felt.

We felt that it divided the Strathcona county residents unevenly in the sense that there was a part taken out of it, particularly the Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan part of it, to be included with the constituency of – what was it? – Vegreville-Viking. Actually, that did not fit well, as far as we're concerned, with the citizens of a municipal constituency in itself. In other words, here's a municipal jurisdiction, the county of Strathcona, and it's being divided electorally differently. So it placed residents from Ardrossan, Half Moon Lake, south Cooking Lake, north Cooking Lake, Antler Lake, Collingwood Cove, Hastings Lake, and many other rural acreage areas into the Vegreville-Viking constituency. Of course, there's no commonality there or limited commonality, geographically just alone. You know, you have Elk Island park on the east side of the county of Strathcona municipal jurisdiction.

I felt that in some cases it didn't follow natural boundaries in terms of landmarks or roadways, particularly in the southern part of the county. For example, it separated Fountain Creek Estates I and II into two different constituencies. It came down some boundaries here through the middle, then made a little jog at the bottom here, and then came out here on Highway 21. Having said that, we feel that there's room for some improvement.

We're proposing the creation of a Sherwood Park-South and a Sherwood Park-North, somewhat similar, I guess, to two other jurisdictions in the province, say, Lethbridge and Red Deer, which have a north and a south component and a similar population of about 70,000 people kind of thing. It indicates here in the proposal the exact divisions for Sherwood Park-North: the lines going down Sherwood Park Drive in Sherwood Park, going north of Granada Boulevard in Sherwood Park, going east of Clover Bar Road in Sherwood Park, and then going south into the county.

The Chair: That's what you're proposing right there?

Mr. Woelfle: Yeah. Right there, yeah.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Woelfle: Going north of Highway 630, and so on. Okay? So I won't go into that part of it because you can see it on the map there. I don't want to go into that. I think you read it here in terms of the proposal as well.

The Chair: I understand it.

Mr. Woelfle: Sherwood Park-South, again, also has similar divisions. It includes part of Sherwood Park and, again, a fairly equal part of the county itself. So you've got a rural and urban component here in both cases.

It proposes that the city of Fort Saskatchewan and the northern Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan residents would actually be moved into the Vegreville-Viking division. What occurs there is that you have a similar population in terms of the northern Fort Saskatchewan county resident count, if you will, to the count that is in the southern part of the county here, getting down into the Cooking Lake area and so on, the Ardrossan area, that you're proposing to move over to Vegreville-Viking.

The Chair: Reg, you might be interested in knowing that this morning we had a presentation urging us to move Fort Saskatchewan into Vermilion and to get Viking back into the riding, which they're named after. We asked several groups to look at that, and you might check with young Doug before you leave to have a look at that proposal and give it your Good Housekeeping seal of approval or otherwise.

Mr. Woelfle: Okay. I have to indicate that I'm aware of those initiatives.

The Chair: Oh, good. Okay.

Mr. Woelfle: I talked to at least one of the municipal leaders in Fort Saskatchewan. Having been familiar with the area of Fort Saskatchewan, as I understand the population there, I think that the vast majority of the population would certainly be more interested in being with Vegreville-Viking than they would be with a Sherwood Park/ southern Strathcona county kind of arrangement.

The Chair: So this is what you want us to very seriously consider?

Mr. Woelfle: Yes.

The Chair: We'll certainly look at it. One thing I like about it very much, Reg: it's very well outlined, so we understand exactly what you have in mind. That's extremely helpful to us because we're now at the stage where we need to look at these proposals and then try to fit them all together. So that's extremely helpful.

Mr. Woelfle: Thank you.

I won't spend too much time. What do you wish me to touch on? A few brief . . .

The Chair: Just a few because your ten minutes are virtually expired.

Mr. Woelfle: Expired; have they?

Anyway, we're proposing here that there are benefits to this proposal, that are written here in the document. We're saying in conclusion that there are a number of considerations that we feel our plan takes into account. I'd like to re-emphasize two. One of them indicates that consideration is given to retaining a sense of community and common concerns of residents. In other words, if you're dealing with the municipal jurisdiction of the county of Sherwood Park, you keep it also as a constituency for electoral purposes as opposed to dividing it up. I think that's where we're coming from. Their business in that south part of that county is in Sherwood Park, even Edmonton for that matter. It is not in Vegreville-Viking on a frequent basis.

2:10

It also creates divisions in a fair and equitable manner without alienating citizens. As I said, that takes me back to the initial population count, where we're indicating that there's a fairly equitable urban/rural split. The hamlet of Sherwood Park itself is divided reasonably equally so that I as a resident of east Sherwood Park, if you will, can feel that my legislative needs are being looked after a little more succinctly by a representative who has a fairly strong tie to Sherwood Park. At the same time, the county is divided fairly equally, too, so their interests are looked after as well.

I guess just to indicate – and this is just a citizen making a comment. You started off by saying that many presenters have indicated to you that 83 representatives in the Legislature are too much. I agree. I agree because we have come to a point in communication and technology that allows people to make contact with constituents on a much easier basis than, let's say, when we were talking about setting constituency boundaries 20 years ago, 30 years ago, 50 years ago. I guess I would look at it and say that there are many effective ways to represent people, and I think 83 is just a tad much in terms of what's available in other provinces.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

Any questions or comments?

Mr. Patterson: Just a brief comment, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your presentation. The majority of presenters, many in writing and quite a few orally, have said 56 members. That's what they would like to see the Legislature down to, but we can't go there because that's out of our mandate.

Mr. Woelfle: Of course. I understand that, yes. I guess I just took it as an opportunity to indicate to people who are in a position to communicate something.

The Chair: We will certainly keep that in mind.

Mr. Woelfle: Okay.

The Chair: Any other questions or comments?

Mr. Graham: A very, very good proposal. You've obviously done an awful lot of work. Be assured that it's going to be considered.

Mr. Woelfle: I thank you for that.

The Chair: Good. Thank you very much, Reg.

Mr. Woelfle: You bet. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Next presenter, Doug.

Mr. Olthof: Mayor Bill Smith, city of Edmonton.

The Chair: Your Worship.

Mr. Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Thompson from the city clerk's office is passing out some copies of my remarks.

Mr. Chairman, Your Worship Mayor Patterson, Mr. Clegg, Ms Mackay and Mr. Graham, I certainly thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of city council and the people of Edmonton. I have an important message to deliver, and it's a very, very simple message. I don't need a map or anything for you to understand this.

The Chair: I think I've even read about this message.

Mr. Smith: Well, I hope it was the right one.

Thank you for taking the time, all of you, because I know this is a tough one for you.

The commission's recommendation to reduce Edmonton's ridings from 19 to 18 is a flagrant disregard for one of the most important principles of democracy: equality of voting power. Eighteen ridings in Edmonton would result in 37,000 people per riding on average. Now, this is much higher than rural Alberta, where there are about 33,500 people per riding. In my opinion, the recommendation suggests that rural votes should have more weight and power than urban votes. So my question to the commission is this: why should 33,500 rural Albertans have as much provincial political power as 37,000 Edmontonians?

If you divide Edmonton's population by the average population per electoral division in Alberta, Edmonton would have 18.53 seats, which would be difficult.

The Chair: Very difficult.

Mr. Smith: But in fairness, Mr. Chairman, this should be rounded

up and not down, especially when you consider our rapidly growing population. In Edmonton we're not asking for preference; we're not asking for a special deal; we're asking for fair treatment, and that fair treatment in our mind means equal voting power.

Mr. Chairman, another significant factor that needs to be recognized is that the challenge of representing urban Alberta is as great or greater than exists in rural Alberta, and let me just touch on a couple of reasons. We have more special interest groups, more cultural diversity, different languages spoken. We have more special-needs groups, more at-risk populations. In our city the range of issues requiring MLA attention is much broader when you consider the complex issues of transportation, affordable housing, social services, policing, and crime prevention. In addition, as the largest urban centre serving the northern half of our province, Edmonton faces a set of challenges unique to this province and unique to our MLAs. All of these factors are more reason for equal representation.

Now, I certainly recognize that rural MLAs have a greater geographic challenge than urban counterparts, but I also suggest, Mr. Chairman, that that can be managed, and it can be managed through the provision of additional constituency resources and by effective use of modern communications technology. The democratic rights of Edmontonians should not be undermined simply to accommodate travel of rural MLAs. Edmontonians are concerned. We do not want to lose our rightful share of voting power. Alberta's electoral boundaries won't be examined again for probably another 10 years, and by that time the difference in riding sizes between Edmonton and the rurals will be staggering.

So, Mr. Chairman, my message to you and to the commission: do not take a seat away from Edmonton. Keep it at 19. Keep 19 MLAs for Edmonton because it's the right thing to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the commission for listening to my presentation.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Your Worship.
Who has the first comment or question?

Ms Mackay: Well, thank you, first of all, Mayor Smith, for being here and for taking time to make the presentation. It's helpful. I wonder if you could give us one concrete example of where a voice in the provincial Legislature has a bearing on what happens in the city of Edmonton. In other words, we always think of the city of Edmonton as being run by city council, but is there an example where it would be really important to have as strong a voice in the Legislature for Edmonton as is possible?

Mr. Smith: Well, Ms Mackay, I should ask the question in reverse: why take it away? But let me answer your question. Representation for the fastest growing city, who led the country in economic growth the last two years in a row – we need to have that voice in the Legislature. There's no question in my mind. What this is about – to me it's not about distribution; it's about taking one away from Edmonton. You are reducing Edmonton. All we're saying is that we want the status quo. We want to remain where we are, and we recognize the challenges that exist, for example, in Calgary, and I don't have any problem with that. What I'm saying is that Edmonton has far more challenges than many and probably all of the rural areas, so I guess I'm here saying: do not take it away from us.

2:20

The Chair: Mr. Clegg.

Mr. Clegg: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mayor Smith. I'm certainly not here in a position to argue, because most of your points I totally agree with, but there are a couple of things.

We've just come from Athabasca last night, with about 40 delegations. When you make the statements on more interest groups, more special-needs groups – and I understand that you have a lot. I don't want to argue that point, but if you go to Athabasca with that massive area – and I'm not saying who has the most work to do, but it's just a matter of time to get to the people. I think that their needs are there in rural, and I think that they're there in urban. I really do think that. But it's the matter of time. I know, Mr. Smith, that when somebody wants to see Mayor Smith, they don't want to see some representative. They want to see you. So how do you justify that there are more special needs and more transportation needs in – and I'm not going to pick on Edmonton. I can pick on Calgary. I know there are lots of needs, but there are certainly lots of needs in rural Alberta too.

Mr. Smith: Thanks, Mr. Clegg, for the question. I'll answer it really in two ways. First of all, Edmonton, by the nature of where we are, acts – and I'll use this term – like a funnel from the north. In other words, people come to Edmonton for services because that's where the services are, whether it's social services, housing, jobs, whatever, not to say that there aren't jobs in Athabasca. It is a natural funnel for aboriginals from the N.W.T. and northern Alberta down to Edmonton because we do have the services here. As a matter of fact, even in relationship to Calgary it's different. So we need that representation here to deal with that. In other words, we as Edmonton are not always dealing with Edmontonians.

That also applies to crime. Calgary and Edmonton probably represent, I would say, 70 percent of the crime in this province, because it's in two major cities. The bad guys go mostly to the bigger centres. That's where more of the action is. It doesn't mean that there aren't all of those problems in any centre in Alberta; there are. There are just a lot more of them here, and we need to keep that representation.

Mr. Clegg: Thank you, Mayor.

The Chair: Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mayor Smith, thank you very much for coming. I also want to thank you for making your presentation in a very straightforward and courteous manner. That's appreciated. Now, you talk about 18.53 and that we should round up. I just wondered what you would think of the idea if we were to take in part of another constituency, not naming any one, on the borders of Edmonton and put that in with Edmonton to bring things up. Part of the problem we've got – your good friend and companion Mayor Bronconnier is going to be furious with us because he didn't get four, and we've got rural people upset because we're taking away their ridings. I'm sure you realize the bind we're in, but I just wondered what you would think of that as an idea.

Mr. Smith: I might think it's okay. I'm not sure how the other people would think it was.

The Chair: You're a shrewd politician, sir.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mayor, for that. It might be a possibility. I guess I'd have to look at it. The important thing is that it be maintained as a city riding. If it were divided, I'm not sure how it could work, but as long as it was recognized as a city riding. Once again it's just important that for a city that's growing as fast as Edmonton and not to look at this thing again for 10 years, we would be severely disadvantaged, I believe, if we didn't maintain the 19.

Mr. Patterson: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Bill, could I ask you – and this is not meant to be smarty.

Mr. Smith: I've never known you to ever ask those kinds of questions, Mr. Clark.

The Chair: Smart questions. Okay. Then I'll put it to you this way. Last year when the budget came down, you and the mayor of Calgary were able to get together with the Premier and the Treasurer and get the budget changed in two days. How many MLAs is that with? Bill, I saw that as a Albertan. I've kind of watched politics for a long time, and I've never seen that happen before, and I gave you great credit and the mayor of Calgary great credit for doing that.

Mr. Smith: Are you referring to the fuel tax?

The Chair: I'm referring to the changes that were made in the budget a couple of days after the budget came down.

Mr. Smith: Well, this was the fuel tax, and of course you'll understand fairness.

The Chair: That's what I'm trying to understand.

Mr. Smith: We did have an agreement and a contract, and Mayor Duerr and I were the ones that negotiated that, and it was based on allowing the two major cities to have sustainable funding for transportation. In other words, we kind of got out of their hair, and they decided on this 5 cents a litre, and we all agreed to it. Then the budget deliberations came around, and they thought they would arbitrarily take it out. My argument back to them was that either we had an agreement or we didn't, and I won the argument on that principle.

The Chair: Again, my point, Bill, is that likely, other than you and the mayor of Calgary, there is no one else who's got that kind of influence who can go to the province.

Mr. Smith: I'm not sure it was that. This was a fair and equitable way to handle the challenges for the two major cities for sustainable funding for transportation. The government liked the idea. When we presented it, the Premier and the cabinet liked it and adopted it. Our subsequent argument was about the fact that they decided to take it away, and I didn't think that was fair. So we still are in that same position right now. That's why we need to keep 19.

The Chair: Okay. Very well done.

Any questions from any of my colleagues?

Mayor Smith, thank you very, very much.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the panel. We appreciate the time very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Olthof: Gary Masyk, MLA, Edmonton-Norwood.

The Chair: Hi, Gary.

Mr. Masyk: Good afternoon. I felt like I should jump into the debate there on the 5 cents a litre.

The Chair: I just want to say to the people here today that when the changes were being proposed for the interim report, as the commission chair I went to the four members who were, I guess you

would say, most drastically affected, Gary being one of them. I went and talked to Gary and told him what was going to be in the report, and he was a true gentleman, and I want the record to show that.

Another thing, Gary. I don't think I told you this. I was a member of the Legislature in 1961. I was elected in '60, and in '61 there was redistribution. I woke up one morning, and those idiots on the Electoral Boundaries Commission had just wiped out the riding I represented. So I have some sympathy for where you're at. We look forward to your presentation.

Mr. Masyk: Well, as an MLA you can do one of two things: nothing or you can come here and bring your best foot forward. So representing 31,000 people, I think your estimates are a little bit wrong. Nevertheless, it's a growing issue.

First of all, before I get into it, I want to express concern about the 2001 census, which is already obsolete. Now, when the election rolls around in 2005, it's going to be that much more obsolete, so I want you to take that into consideration before we go further.

Secondly, Chairman Clark, the sentiments of the discussion we had in my office I'll probably take the commission to task on later on, so you can wrap up.

The Chair: That's fair ball.

Mr. Masyk: I'll explain my position to counter that later on.

I understand that we have 10 minutes. I have to excuse myself for not being here earlier. My secretary didn't show up because of the freezing rain, so I held down the fort. There might be some repetition. I don't know. Nevertheless, that's the reason.

The Chair: The chair will watch the clock but not too carefully, but don't test my patience.

Mr. Masyk: Okay. Thank you very much. You each have a copy, I presume, distributed to you.

The Chair: Yes, we have.

Mr. Masyk: Okay. I'll go on by reading it slowly and distinctly and clearly and crisply. I'd begin by saying that while I understand that the city of Calgary is growing and some changes may be in order with regard to the present electoral boundaries, it seems inconceivable that a constituency in the rapidly growing and thriving Alberta capital city is considered to be subtracted. Edmonton, according to the commission's own representation formula, presently needs more than 18 seats. I might add that Mayor Smith is somewhat conservative. I was always lobbying for 20 seats when this commission first went forth in early spring, and he was happy with 19, but I was always expecting that because of the growth and because of the formula and because of the ratio that it's growing by, we should be looking at 20 seats. But this commission rounded the number down to 18 without giving a reasonable reason for it.

2:30

Clearly not enough thought was given to Edmonton's rapidly growing population and a local economy which is booming. Not taking into account Edmonton's projected population growth is simply wrong. Common sense would tell us that the electoral boundaries in Edmonton should be left alone because if these proposed changes go through, it will immediately be left underrepresented.

Furthermore, to even consider the subtraction of Edmonton-Norwood is just drastically mistaken. Edmonton-Norwood has major unique aspects and thus faces many unique challenges, a constituency where predominantly hardworking blue-collar people

have a very strong sense of compassion for one another. Daily life in Edmonton-Norwood is not without significant challenges facing its children, seniors, and young families. I say this because I live it. I go out into the constituency, the phone calls come in, the letters come in, so I know this is a fact. Because of this, the people of Edmonton-Norwood require an especially strong representative in the Legislature to voice their concerns to all Albertans. Snubbing Edmonton-Norwood would be striking out the constituency with one of the most striking histories in the province.

Edmonton-Norwood is by no means a modern area. It is as established an area as any in the province. It's been home to vibrant communities, businesses, schools for as long a time as Edmonton has been a city. Over a quarter of the buildings in Edmonton-Norwood were built before World War II, and it's truly a beautiful area.

Another characteristic of this great constituency is the ethnic diversity you'll find within it. Edmonton-Norwood is home to many descendants of Alberta's early immigrant population. There are significant populations of Ukrainians, Germans, British origins, aboriginals, Russians. I might also add that I'm a mix of all of these origins of equal share: the aboriginal, the Ukrainian, the Belarus-Russian, and French also. So I'm a very diverse individual to fit into these needs. Also, if you look further, what you'll find is that Edmonton-Norwood is also home to a newer wave of immigrants that arrived in more recent decades. All of these diverse backgrounds make it one of Alberta's most culturally diverse constituencies that requires and deserves special care. I call Edmonton-Norwood miniature Alberta.

Edmonton-Norwood is also home to a great many seniors. We owe this very vulnerable group special care and protection for what they've contributed to this province.

This commission did not take into consideration the closeness of the Edmonton-Norwood constituency to the Legislature of this province. The boundaries of Edmonton-Norwood begin mere blocks away from the Alberta Legislature Building, the bricks and mortar. This stresses how much Edmonton-Norwood is at the heart of Alberta. The geographic proximity of Edmonton-Norwood to Government Centre should serve as the democratic barometer. I noticed in the report that Bauni Mackay had made some notes on that. I believe it was her. Nevertheless, on the negative side, because it was close, it would be the reverse; you would almost think that you'd get more representation because it was close. However, I don't really see the relevance in it, but I just want to make a note of it.

If Edmonton-Norwood is facing a problem, then you can generally assume that the problem is widespread in the province. As opposed to simply doing away with it, Edmonton-Norwood is a constituency that is definitely worth keeping an eye on. While I understand that it's very difficult to draw boundary lines – and I know your job; like, I honestly appreciate it. You're doing yours and I'm doing mine. But we would guarantee the exact same number of voters for each constituency. The proposed boundaries do on the other hand guarantee that the demographic majority of Edmonton residents would be in essence shoved aside into areas where ideals that won them over are decisively different. This seems to be both inconceivable and unacceptable to me, to fail them.

Now these people and their constituency are proposed to be shoved into three other constituencies where all the elected members in those areas hold decisively different ideals and opinions than mine. I ask you: what sense does that make? I honestly cannot think of a more blatant slap in the face to the people of Edmonton-Norwood than this one. Edmonton-Norwood should stand up and act on this one for being literally swallowed up. Also, I do not apologize for saying that I think Edmonton-Norwood is being shoved aside because the commission is under the assumption that

the people in the constituency with the lowest annual income in the province will not put up a fight, more so because the thought likely prevails that many people in Norwood do not care or possibly do not even have an idea that this is happening to them.

I can attest to that because I did some foot research. I went up and down the streets, and people either didn't know what it meant – after I explained it to them, they were outraged – or people said: well, the commission will do what they want anyway; save your breath. So you have a diverse area of rationale behind, you know, whether to put up a fight or coming here. I mean, if it was a medical issue, there would be a protest outside, but I think this is as important.

I do not apologize for saying that I think I'm being singled out because I'm a rookie Member of the Legislative Assembly. While I know that more steps are needed to improve the communities of Edmonton-Norwood, in the past 21 months we've made great strides to improve the situation in Norwood, and I do not plan on ceasing. I want all residents of Edmonton-Norwood, including those who did not and will not vote for me, to know now that I will do whatever I can to save the long-established constituency. There are voices within this very worthy constituency, and I think that they and their constituency are worth saving.

It is inconceivable to me that doing away with this long-established constituency has been considered. The constituency has one-of-a-kind characteristics, one-of-a-kind needs that require the leadership of someone they placed in charge of serving these needs. Again, instead of pushing Edmonton-Norwood aside, instead of chewing it up and spitting its people out, we must keep a special eye on it and the people who live within it.

This is the written submission that I'm submitting. I hope it makes sense to you. But what really troubles me, Mr. Commissioner, is the sentiments of our little conversation we had at my office. What I said and what we agreed on was regarding – and I don't know if you were speaking on behalf of everybody, but I'll say what I have to say.

The Chair: No. I'm just talking on behalf of myself.

Mr. Masyk: Okay. At that time? [interjection] Okay. I'll continue on.

You were the bearer of the bad news at that time. So as you've pointed out, you know what that's like. Nevertheless, I drew a conclusion that Edmonton-Norwood was singled out for the simple fact that it was a Conservative riding. I also pointed out in discussion with the chairman that it couldn't be Edmonton-Highlands or Edmonton-Strathcona. Lord forbid, that's two NDPs. There are only two of them. I also noted in the sentiments of the conversation that it couldn't be a Liberal riding because there are only seven of them.

So I drew a conclusion that the sentiments of that to be true, so I took further steps. I met with the Premier and Mr. Elzinga privately, and I told them that on that logic I was proposing to go to the Speaker's office and resign as a government MLA and sit as an independent. That way we will surely save Edmonton-Norwood. The Premier looked at me and stopped me in my tracks and said that the reverse would be true. I said, "Well, forgive me, but I'm a junior MLA; I don't really know all the ropes," which I don't. Maybe that was a move in the wrong direction; maybe it wasn't. Nevertheless, that's what I did do. I believe in being up-front and honest about it, as you do, Mr. Clark, being the Ethics Commissioner. However, I think that this constituency is worth saving at any cost, and I'm prepared to do it.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that, Gary. Questions or comments?

Mr. Patterson: MLA Gary, thank you for coming this afternoon. I also want to thank you for presenting your case in a very passionate and dedicated manner. I know you care from what you've said and how you've said it. I want to assure you that from all of the accounts and discussions that I was involved in, we didn't single you out because you were a rookie MLA, and I don't believe we singled Edmonton-Norwood out because of its mix of population.

To back that up, probably the influence that it might have had on that, I want to say this to you – and I hope I'm not saying something wrong, Mr. Chair – but we kind of started with the centre of the city and worked out, and of course Norwood is in the centre of the city. That's how we started. Of course, that's not saying that we did the right thing, but I want to give you that information because it troubles me that you might be thinking of the other two reasons. So by starting in the centre of the city and eliminating a constituency, we then worked on all the others on the way out, and I thought that I should pass that on to you.

I'm glad that you have come and made your presentation. In my long term as mayor of Claresholm if I've made any mark, it's because I care about the little person, the person who can't help themselves. You've touched my heart. Thank you.

2:40

Mr. Masyk: I appreciate that. I also was on a learning curve, being an MLA. Originally I'm from rural Alberta, a farming community. I come from a family farm, and I'll guarantee you that I had to shift gears to understand how people live and how they need to live in a needy area, and I'll tell you that I'd never seen what I've seen, ever. You know, it was always there. I just never noticed it until it became part of my life. If I'm going to take taxpayers' money and receive a paycheque, well, then, I'd better come up to the task and do what I have to do, including my presentation here, the best way I know how. But I do appreciate it, so we're somewhat on the same page.

Mr. Patterson: If I just might, I hope that what I've told you, then, takes away your thinking along the other two lines. That's how we started, and of course you just happened to be there right in the centre.

The Chair: Okay. Any other questions, comments?

Ms Mackay: Just thank you for your presentation. I mean, you've made some really good points, I think.

Mr. Masyk: I want to thank you also, Bauni. You put up a good defence regarding Edmonton and Edmonton-Norwood. Is it okay if I draw a conclusion? I was just wondering. Because most of the members are south and you're the only one north, is that why that transpired, or am I just guessing again?

Ms Mackay: Mr. Clegg is from the north.

Mr. Masyk: Yeah. That's right, but I didn't see anything positive regarding Edmonton from . . .

The Chair: Well, I'd be remiss if I didn't say – I should have said this when the mayor was here – that Bauni has laboured long and hard for the views she expressed in her minority report, and Edmontonians, I'm sure, are very grateful for that.

Mr. Masyk: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have to be champions anyway. We know about overturning rocks and digging in. I mean, if you lose the field, you lose the war. Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks very much.

Mr. Olthof: Liliane Maisonneuve.

The Chair: Hello, Liliane. Thank you for coming this afternoon.

Mme. Maisonneuve: Thank you.

The Chair: We look forward to your presentation.

Mme. Maisonneuve: Well, actually, I don't know why I'm here because when I saw the new boundaries for Edmonton-Gold Bar going across the river to take in Edmonton-Norwood, I didn't know why I had made the first presentation, but anyway I'm here again.

The Chair: Good show, and we're here again too.

Mme. Maisonneuve: I have a farm in Peace River. In the last presentation I had mentioned that the Dunvegan riding didn't take in some of the Francophone areas, and now I've heard that the town of St. Isidore and the rural part of St. Isidore are still separated. Is that right?

Mr. Clegg: Dunvegan will be taking that over.

Mme. Maisonneuve: And will St. Isidore and the rural part of St. Isidore be put back together?

Mr. Clegg: Well, St. Isidore and part of the east Peace – I'm using the wrong terms there, but we're going to take a look at that and likely that whole area.

Mme. Maisonneuve: Okay.

The Chair: Okay, Liliane.

Mme. Maisonneuve: I'm here on behalf of myself as a citizen. I live in the Francophone area of Edmonton. I'm also here for the Association canadienne-française, the French-Canadian association, the regional office of Edmonton. I also represent La Société Acadienne, whose person could not be here today. That's the Francophones Acadiennes, that have an association on the south side also.

As you realize, the new statistics are out on the 2001 census, and there is an increase in population of Francophones in Alberta, one of the only provinces. We're a diverse community on the south side of Edmonton. We have Franco-Albertans that were born here. We have people from Quebec that are moving in. We also have people from the French-speaking African countries. So it's become a very diverse cultural group even if we have the same language. That's why when I saw that the boundaries would go across the river, taking in Edmonton-Norwood, which – and I agree with the MLA – is disenfranchising people that are maybe at a disadvantage already, then having Edmonton-Gold Bar be part of the riding, I think it's really unacceptable.

In 1993 Susan Green presented herself as a Conservative candidate. The riding used to go to Mill Creek, taking in the Faculte Saint-Jean, but because many Francophones vote Liberal, there was gerrymandering that went on. The riding was split, and that part from the Faculte Saint-Jean went to the Strathcona area. She didn't win anyway. It didn't help. [interjections] We worked hard.

From that point on, that whole section was put in with Edmonton-Strathcona, which has no common community of interests. Now, since I came to do the presentation, 92 Avenue, where the Gabrielle-Roy Francophone public school is, that whole area, has been put in

Edmonton-Mill Woods. So the Francophone community now, instead of being split in two, is split in three. I'm just wondering, you know. I don't know if we'd do that to Stettler or to Fairview: split it in three. That's what you're doing to this community. Most of the people come from different areas, from St. Paul and from the north. Then there are many immigrants, too, who arrive and who not only have to learn English but who have to learn a different culture and customs. They're happy to be in the Francophone community, but they're being disenfranchised too because we will have three MLAs. What does that do? I think that people don't get attached to the MLA. There's one that works a little bit here and there, and we don't really have a representative. So I'm just wondering what is the recourse after this.

A professor from the Faculte Saint-Jean was interviewed. He's a political science professor. He said, you know, that this was done purposely to divide the Francophone community.

The Chair: Well, I suspect that that's not the first time that professor has been wrong.

Mme. Maisonneuve: Well, he's quite a well-known professor.

It is disturbing. You know, if you had Stettler or Fairview divided into three, how would that be? It's very hard if you have the common language, common community of interests to have part of it across the river and another part with Edmonton-Mill Creek and another part with Edmonton-Strathcona, even taking away from Edmonton-Norwood and putting some into it from Edmonton-Gold Bar.

There was an article in the *Calgary Herald*, and I want to quote it. Isn't it strange that the *Calgary Herald* has commented on the situation in Edmonton? They say here, "Instead of tackling the long-standing bias in favour of rural communities" with Calgary's population and Edmonton's population growing, this "leaves both cities with far less representation – an average of [37,000] citizens per riding – than rural ridings, which would have an average" of 33,000 citizens, as the mayor has said. Two out of three Albertans live in Calgary and Edmonton. Two out of three. But they would have less than half the number of total ridings, only 41 of 83. I'm not a great mathematician, but 41 out of 83 seats?

2:50

The Chair: I think you're making your point, though.

Mme. Maisonneuve: And three-quarters of the people are living in Calgary and Edmonton.

It also says: "Alberta's reasons for favouring rural voters no longer apply. New technology and better transportation make representing large areas more feasible." I must say that I did agree with the way you cut the province, the northern part. I've lived in the Peace River region, and I was happy to see that you divided it into two instead of three long divisions. I think that was a good decision. The others, I think maybe a person would have to look over.

So it says: "Instead of bold strokes . . . the boundaries commission had opted for timidity. As a result, it has failed to position Alberta for the future." Just as the mayor had said. "Voters and MLAs should demand a recount."

That's my presentation. I don't know what is the recourse for our community after this. Do you go to the Premier?

The Chair: Liliane, our report will be in the Speaker's hands around the 1st of March. Then it's in the hands of the Legislature. You're a pretty shrewd politician yourself. You understand that you have to approach the three parties and go from there. The commission is finished as soon as we hand the report in, Liliane.

Mme. Maisonneuve: So it's in March?

The Chair: The 1st of March, yes.

Mme. Maisonneuve: So as a citizen would it be possible to have recourse to the courts if I felt that I'm not being well represented?

The Chair: Sure it is. You always have that access.

Mme. Maisonneuve: Okay.

The Chair: That's why when we're dealing with this issue, the issue is not parity of voters; the issue is effective representation. That's why you have a variance. If you look at what areas are easiest to serve, it's my view – and I don't speak on behalf of all members of the commission but most of them I think – that Edmonton should be the easiest area to serve, because all government services are here and the Legislature is here. Members don't have to travel far. I think Calgary is the second easiest place to serve because they can be there within an hour airplanewise and almost all the services are there. Then you get the corridor. Then you get the 'rurban' areas like Grande Prairie plus the rural area around it. Then you get the areas like where we were last night. You get Athabasca and places like that, where there's no population centre perhaps more than 3,000 or 4,000.

So if you look at the results, ideally you'd have Edmonton with the largest number of voters per constituency. But we've got Calgary with the largest number of voters and then Edmonton, then the corridor, then the 'rurbans', and then the rural rurals. That's kind of how we've ranked them now.

We've written this report clearly understanding that there's a possibility of a court challenge. That's why we spend a great deal of time in the report talking not about rep-by-pop, because that's not the criteria, but about giving people the ability to have effective representation.

Sorry for that little speech.

Mme. Maisonneuve: I've lived in the rural area. Mr. Clegg was my representative. I can say that with the fairs, the farm organizations, I saw my MLA more and I had more contact with him than I do here in the city. Because you live in the city, it doesn't mean that you see them more often.

The Chair: Okay.

Who has a question? Mr. Clegg.

Mr. Clegg: Well, thank you for the comment. I don't expect any Christmas cards, but thanks for that comment.

Mme. Maisonneuve: It's true, though.

Mr. Clegg: You did have a good MLA in Dunvegan. There's no question about that.

Liliane, I want to assure you that this commission did not ever make any decisions based on politics. In your case you said that we were trying to divide the Francophones. That was never ever a decision. If you have specifically an area, then you should get it into the electoral office or to Doug, and we will certainly take a look at it because in Edmonton-Gold Bar we are looking at something now. So you get that proposal in.

Mme. Maisonneuve: Yes. Well, we did send the letters.

The Chair: Liliane, will you get a map from young Doug over there or Tom and circle this area that you see as the Francophone

community that we've sliced and diced, to use your term, clearly mark it out, and we'll have another look at that.

Mme. Maisonneuve: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Clegg: Thanks, Liliane. Good to see you again.

The Chair: I see that we're right on time, so let's take a five-minute break.

[The commission adjourned from 2:56 p.m. to 3:03 p.m.]

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Hayden, I think we heard from you the first day this commission started its work in Calgary, and we're now hearing you on the second-last day. So we look forward to what's changed.

Mr. Hayden: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was hoping that I would have the last word, but I guess we're close to it. It was interesting to get together with you today. I had a staff member that was going to come up with me and bring me the submissions that you have before you, but they got into some walnuts and were allergic to them and had a reaction, so I raced up here without the submissions. That staff member is here with us today, and they're looking a lot better. They made it through the traffic.

The Chair: Well, that's good. Thanks to that staff member.

Mr. Hayden: Just as a quick review, of course, the AAMD and C represents all 68 rural municipal governments in the province, and our basic mandate is to represent those municipal councils outside of urban centres and to help provide quality service to their ratepayers in the most efficient possible way. But, of course, we also represent the interests of about half a million Alberta citizens who live and work in rural Alberta. It's our strong belief that participation in the government's decision-making process is key for communities to survive and to thrive, and that is why our association has fought so hard over the past 15 years to try and promote effective representation for rural Albertans in the Legislature.

I'd first like to acknowledge that the commission has gone a long way towards recognizing this principle in its interim report, and I thank you for that. It's done an excellent job of identifying the many challenges of balancing effective representation against the demands for representation by population, and of course this all comes at a time when rapid population growth is occurring in many of our urban areas in Alberta. We especially welcome the commission's call for a broader public dialogue on rural representation and your willingness to talk openly about the fact that many rural Albertans feel left out of the political process.

At the end of the day, though, while there's a lot of praise about the interim report and the work that went into it, our association believes that the commission has fallen short by endorsing what constitutes a cautious move away from the effective representation that we have suggested for rural Albertans. We hope that in this presentation we can get across some of the feelings rural Albertans have of being marginalized from the process and give you a number of solid reasons to reverse that trend.

For years now rural Albertans have slowly but surely lost influence within the Legislature as the number of MLAs from rural areas has decreased and urban representation has increased. Of course, while this may seem to be the way of the world and a simple reflection of population trends over the past 70 years or so, most rural Albertans feel that the constant decline in the number of rural

electoral divisions has reached the practical limit. Rural constituencies are now so large that their MLAs are having a very difficult time in maintaining contact with their constituents. Those constituents now are reporting through to us that they're feeling frustrated about the possible closures of local hospitals, schools, and government offices. Of course, it's no longer just possible closures; those closures already are taking place, and it's a concern of that continued trend. They are also concerned about the equity of various provincial funding programs.

So, in short, rural Albertans feel that the provincial government is increasingly urban focused and that it neither understands nor represents their interests to the level that they feel is necessary. One sign of the frustration is the call by many rural Albertans for drastic changes to our political structures. The mayors and Reeves of southeastern Alberta have urged you to consider recommending a provincial Senate based on geographic area or a similar solution. Others would like to see the total number of seats in the Legislature increased beyond 83 so that the current number of rural seats can be kept the same to enable those representatives to stay in touch with their people. The AAMD and C hasn't received any formal direction from our members on either of those proposals, but they do reveal a sense of alienation among many rural Albertans.

What we do have, however, is a resolution that was just passed at our fall convention in November, and it asks the commission to reconsider its proposed boundaries with a view to avoiding splitting up the municipalities between electoral divisions and to try and provide stability for local constituencies. The resolution also says that the commission should reconsider the proposed boundaries to make effective representation possible by recognizing the unique circumstances of rural Alberta. Following from that, we believe that the commission should consider several specific points. The central message of our resolution and what we're trying to get across to you today is to protect the current level of representation.

As I said previously, the commission has done an excellent job of trying to address the concerns about how difficult it is to represent most rural constituencies, and the difficulty of the representation matrix that you've developed does in fact correctly identify such factors as the geographic area, population density, the number of local authorities, the proportion of the population that depends on provincial programs, and the distance to the Legislature. We agree wholeheartedly that this matrix should be a critical factor in determining the boundaries for electoral divisions.

Unfortunately, we don't think the commission went quite far enough in recognizing the importance of the matrix. Ultimately, the commission failed to make full use of this tool for ensuring continued effective representation for rural Albertans. One indication of that is how the new rural electoral divisions range from a plus 3 to a plus 17 on the difficulty of representation matrix, while the division in the major cities category ranges from a minus 3 to a minus 18. In our view, the principle of effective representation would be better served if the variance between the rural and major cities were reduced to a much smaller range. The practical result of this, and one that's fully justified by the difficulty of representation matrix, would be to maintain the current number of rural constituencies.

I'd also like to point out that this would not create any significant conflict with the representation principle currently contained in the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. As I know you are aware, the act allows for the variation in electoral division population of no more than 25 percent from the provincial average. However, as proposed in the interim report, the range of deviation from the provincial average populations for the new rural constituency average is only approximately 9 percent. So we feel that there's lots of room there. That's well below the 25 percent limit set out in the

act.

3:10

Reallocating an additional electoral division to rural Alberta which would keep the current level of representation wouldn't require a significant increase in this variance. What it would do is send a clear signal to rural Albertans that their voice still matters at the Legislature. With regard to the issue of municipal boundaries and the boundaries of the proposed electoral divisions, as our resolution shows, many of the rural municipal councils are very concerned that the new boundaries as proposed by the commission often split individual municipalities into two or more electoral divisions. For us municipal boundaries are a very important indicator of community interest, as, of course, has been stated by the Supreme Court of Canada in its decision on the electoral boundaries in Saskatchewan.

The Chair: Jack, just on that point. You may not have been here when I commented this morning. We have really tried to adhere to municipal boundaries as much as we can, but we found ourselves in some situations where we had to just not do what we wanted to, really, but to just deal with the population issues. We hear exactly what you're saying. I know we're going to hear tomorrow in Red Deer from the Lacombe/Ponoka area, but it just has to be done on some occasions. At least, that's where we were when we reviewed it. It isn't that we wanted to. It's just that with the numbers game you had to do some of that.

Mr. Hayden: I appreciate that it's a difficult task, and I think that the resolution, in fact, was either from the county of Lacombe or the county of Ponoka, as I recall, but they found that they weren't, of course, the only ones that were affected by this. We do have an understanding and realize that in some instances it's unavoidable. But I think that in some cases and in the case of the county of Lacombe, as an example – I believe they went into four different constituencies.

The Chair: At least three.

Mr. Hayden: Yeah. So that's a real variance from what they've enjoyed in the past. In light of the strong community interest tied to those municipal boundaries, we would still urge that you revisit it and have a look just to see if there's anything that you could possibly do, because the community breakup feeling is definitely out there, and we're definitely hearing about it.

Funding for constituency offices of course is a concern. We're very pleased to see that your recommendation to the Legislature is to consider an increase in provincial funding to constituency offices, and we feel that that will do a lot to help rural MLAs maintain contact with their constituents and should help people in rural communities get their views across better on a face-to-face basis. That's a key factor in reducing feelings of alienation, I think, felt by many rural Albertans.

So to sum up, the 2002 and 2003 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission clearly put a lot of hard work and a great deal of thought into your work and into developing these interim recommendations, and we certainly do want to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to your commission for the efforts, particularly in identifying and quantifying the challenges that are involved in representing rural Alberta. You've completed most of the task the Legislature has given you, and you've done exceedingly well. We'd simply urge the commission to take that extra step to amend your recommendations to at least retain the current number of rural electoral divisions and base individual division boundaries as closely as possible on existing municipal boundaries. With those

two especially important changes, the commission, in our minds, will have accomplished a great deal by making it easier to represent rural and northern Albertans and also to safeguard the right to full participation in shaping the future of our province.

With that, I will thank you very much for your time, and I'm open to any questions you might have.

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

Any comments or questions?

Mr. Patterson: Thank you, Jack, for coming and making a presentation, and thank you for giving us as many compliments as you have. I'm particularly pleased that you have noted our suggestions about a second House, and it came up this morning. We're going to get some more research on a bicameral or second House in the Alberta act. I just want your reaction to this, however. In some parts of rural Alberta when we brought this up, the immediate reaction was no. "No, no, no. Please no more politicians." That fits in, of course, with the fact that the majority of oral and written submissions on one central topic indicated that we should go down to 56 MLAs. Basically, is your association prepared to help solve this?

Mr. Hayden: No question. What we need is effective representation, and "effective" is what needs to guide the numbers; the numbers don't need to guide "effective." As I said in our remarks, we don't have a resolution that deals specifically with that Senate-type operation. It's just a matter that I brought to your attention because it was not just my rural reeves that brought this to the table. It was urban mayors in the smaller communities, and that feeling of alienation was there. We're a very, very big province, and when you talk about effective and how it affects the people that we represent – I spoke to you about the half-million people that are represented in the small communities of rural Alberta. But to give you an indication of how we can feel so far away from things, my 68 members are 93 percent of the provincial land base, yet in actual counties and MDs they're only 15 percent of the population. They are 100 percent of the extraction of the resources that make this province rich and put up with all the complications and implications that come from that. So that brings us down to effective. We need to have our voice at the table. As you see in the report, Ernie, we're not suggesting more representation. We've seen it dwindle away over the years, and we're just saying that it's time to hold the line.

Ms Mackay: I might have asked you this question the last time you presented, but if you keep all of the rural seats, how do you compensate, then, for the, well, pretty astronomical growth in both of the large cities? What would you suggest happen there?

Mr. Hayden: It may in fact be time to create more seats. That may in fact be the situation. What I bring to you today is not a concern about necessarily being overpowered by the urban vote. Let's face it; that's already taken place. The population shift is dramatic in this province, and we fully understand that, but we want access in rural Alberta to an MLA that we can speak to face-to-face and make sure that those people get to the table. While we hold the numbers the same, where they're reduced is always in rural Alberta, and the shift continues to get larger and the effective representation continues to be hurt. So it's not so much a concern with the numbers that they have in the cities; it's that we've got to have access to our MLAs in rural Alberta, and that, quite frankly, is disappearing. For most of Albertans it's a long-distance phone call. I know that we can use the RITE number and whatnot, but it literally is a long-distance phone call, and it's quite a trek.

The Chair: So I take it that you wouldn't have any objection if the Legislature decided to go to 85?

Mr. Hayden: No. If that's what you have to do in order to have effective representation so that my people can get to see them, then I think that's what we have to do, and that, in fact, probably would be cheaper than this other level that's been spoken of. I haven't had a chance to go into it and see all the positives and negatives on it.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chair, if I could just make this comment. The reason why we're suggesting this is because we want the Legislature to take a look – nothing we can do about it – for the next commission. Something has to happen, because in 10 years from now this urban/rural situation is going to be far, far worse. That's why we're – at least if we can get a debate going as to what the answer is. Well, maybe it's more MLAs, or maybe it's a bicameral House, but at least we want that discussed and debated.

The Chair: The debate has to start.

Mr. Hayden: I think that's an excellent idea. We see shifts. It depends on what area of the province that you go to, but with the baby boomers starting to retire now, we're experiencing some growth in a number of hamlets, which really shocks me. We've got hamlets that are full now, where people have moved out there from the city in order to retire and take advantage of a little of the equity that they can get out of their homes and whatnot. Trends are difficult to follow, but I think that we will see more people in rural Alberta. But I don't think, comparatively speaking, that the numbers are going to increase as in the urban centres because of how popular this province is, for one thing, and I expect that boom to continue.

3:20

The Chair: Jack, as I thank you for your presentation I should tell you that as we got across the province, we were never in a community that didn't tell us that it was going to grow. I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Mr. Hayden: You're welcome.

Mr. Olthof: Ken Balko from the Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview Progressive Conservative Constituency Association.

The Chair: Good afternoon, Ken.

Mr. Balko: Good afternoon. This being early, it must mean that it's going well.

The Chair: No. I wouldn't say that there's unanimous agreement to that. It's just moving along.

Mr. Balko: Basically, I'd like to place before the commission for their information information to consider prior to making a final decision with respect to the boundaries of the Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview constituency. During the presentation I'm not going to address the issue of the retention or the abolishment of the Edmonton-Norwood constituency. I have to deal with it, but I'm not going to address the issue per se.

In looking at the commission's report and reviewing all matters, we felt that we had to bring to the commission's attention three areas which we felt were not maybe completely explored, that being common community interests, geographical features, and the population within the area and neighbouring constituencies.

The Beverly/Clareview and Norwood communities are very distinct in their nature. The Norwood community, even the extended

Norwood community, came into existence in the 1940s and '50s and developed to, let's say, its full extent by the end of the 1960s. On the other hand, the Beverly community, though coming into existence at approximately the same time as Norwood, has always been separated from Norwood by the Highlands community, which is quite a distance. The people at that time were not even involved in the same, let's say, communities, but a lot of the people in Norwood and Highlands were probably workers at Gainers, Maple Leaf, et cetera, at the time, where it wasn't that way in the Beverly community. The Clareview community came into existence in the early '70s and, of course, has extended north from the Beverly community. Many of the children of people who were raised in Beverly purchased homes, et cetera, to the north.

Now, from a city neighbourhood perspective no associations have existed between the communities of Norwood and Beverly. From the same perspective, there has been no association between the communities that the commission is proposing to transfer from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview over to Edmonton-Manning. The boundaries in respect to the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, the sports teams, school boundaries, et cetera, have always been along Fort Road/Manning freeway and down sort of the 66th Street corridor, and that has made Highlands, Beverly, Clareview, Bannerman, and up that way have one community focus, while Norwood community is more connected to the Edmonton-Highlands and Edmonton-Glenarry constituencies.

As far as geographical features the Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview constituency is separated from Edmonton-Norwood by the Fort Road and Manning freeway, the Edmonton LRT line, the Canadian National Railway line, and a large commercial area. From the Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview to the Edmonton-Norwood constituency is approximately 16 city blocks, or over 4 kilometres, and believe it or not, there is not a roadway that has joined Clareview to Norwood. One has to go down 129th Avenue, over to the Fort Road, then go sort of southwest to get to Norwood. Then, of course, if you live in Beverly, you've got to go either through the Highlands or take the Yellowhead freeway. I've illustrated that on map 3 of the presentation.

The Chair: Map 3?

Mr. Balko: Map 3, yes. There actually is, as I said, quite a large commercial area there, and if one were to even try to look at the number of voters in that area, I think it's so minimal that it's almost negligible. There's the odd old house in there.

Populationwise I realize that the commission has to look at and balance that issue because of the discrepancies between the various constituencies. Now, we know that a lot of the existing constituencies have to be increased, including Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. However, we believe the redistribution proposed by the boundaries commission ignores the fact of the population increase in the Edmonton-Manning and Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview communities. The proposed redistribution would restrict Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview from future expansion, would make it like other inner-city constituencies because it would be transferring all areas for growth to the Edmonton-Manning constituency.

Transferring that portion of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview north of 137th Avenue to Edmonton-Manning places an inordinate amount of residential expansion into one constituency. In the proposed area for transfer to Edmonton-Manning from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview there are approximately 1,000 new multiple-housing units that will be on the market by September 2003, never mind the numerous single-family homes. To give you an example, right at Clareview LRT there is a 300-unit condominium coming up. Approval has been granted for a 136-unit apartment, and by the Wal-

Mart store, which is about three blocks down, another 135- or 136-unit apartment will be going up plus 65 new homes. That is just that area. If one goes a little further north into that Fraser community, Kirkness, there is massive development there and apartments and condominiums.

Now, this doesn't even take into account that if we go to the west of Manning freeway and go north in Edmonton-Manning along from approximately 140th there, because there is the Miller community that has come up, now they are working and putting in the sewers and whatnot for development up to 167th Avenue. So that is going to have a massive population in it, and I believe it was 400 condominium and rental units that went up in Miller alone within probably the last year. I would suspect that by the time the next election comes along, the population of Edmonton-Manning again will be in excess of the 41,000, even, that it was. I'd just like to bring that to your attention.

I don't feel that just coming here and giving you the information without, let's say, presenting some alternatives is . . .

The Chair: Telling us what we might do.

Mr. Balko: What could be done.

As I said, I'm not addressing the Edmonton-Norwood issue, but I have to look at it, that the constituency may be abolished, and it may not. Now, if it was to be abolished, there are a couple of other alternatives. Transferring all the polls of Edmonton-Manning constituency east of the Manning freeway, which is highway 15, to Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview would, in fact, probably bring the numbers up to the right amount. Or if you wish to keep us landlocked, as I would say, because we can't expand, another method of doing it would be to transfer the Edmonton-Highlands polls 53 to 67 to Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, and that's indicated on map 5. The redistribution of the Edmonton-Norwood constituency, then, could be between Edmonton-Highlands, Edmonton-Centre, Edmonton-Calder, and Edmonton-Glengarry. Now, if it were done in this manner, we feel that it would result in continued community interests for all constituencies affected and the population could be balanced, and I'll elaborate on that in a moment.

Now, based on the retention of the Edmonton-Norwood constituency, a transfer of Edmonton-Manning polls 1 to 9 to Edmonton-Norwood . . .

3:30

The Chair: Ken, could I just interrupt you for a moment?

Mr. Balko: Sure.

The Chair: Have you had any talks with the people in Edmonton-Manning about this idea?

Mr. Balko: No, I haven't spoken to anybody in Edmonton-Manning. I've tried to contact them but didn't get them.

The transfer of polls 1 to 9 from Edmonton-Manning to Edmonton-Norwood would of course increase their population. Again I'm saying: transfer all Edmonton-Manning polls east of the Manning freeway to Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Now, a transfer of all or part of polls 1 to 10 and poll 35 from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview to Edmonton-Highlands could increase their population if we, in fact, were given north of 137 Avenue and the existing portion of Edmonton-Manning that is directly north of us. I suspect there would have to be other adjustments to some of the other existing constituencies around that.

To give you a quick idea of how easy it could be, if you look at the areas on map 2, polls 1 to 10 and 35 over to Edmonton-Highlands, I'm saying that there is a natural division on 122nd Street

that would actually split 50 percent of those polls, you know, depending on the numbers.

In conclusion, I'd just like to state that I think the redistribution as put forward did not give complete credence to the community interests, and it would create another constituency that has no possibility for growth, for residential development, which you can then pull parts off, let's say, in later years to add to the inner-city constituencies, while you've made one constituency overly large in its residential expansion.

Just as an aside, if you were to combine the Edmonton-Norwood constituency with Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, you would create a very high-needs constituency. HR and E's facts indicate that Edmonton-Norwood and Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview are respectively one and two when it comes to AISH and SFI recipients in the province when it goes by constituencies. So you would in essence be placing an awful burden on one constituency. Presently I know from the constituency office that two-thirds of the calls in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview are in respect to SFI issues, AISH issues, EI, which, of course, we can move elsewhere, and student finance.

I hope that the commission will consider what we've put forward and that we can maintain common community interests for all the communities affected. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ken. The very good part about this is that you've got some positive proposals that we can take a look at and try and work through.

Mr. Balko: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any questions or comments? Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and I really do appreciate your precision here, but am I getting mixed up? You refer to Edmonton-Highlands, Edmonton-Centre, Edmonton-Calder, and Edmonton-Glengarry. Are you referring to Edmonton-Glenora?

Mr. Balko: No.

Mr. Patterson: You're talking about the old constituency.

Mr. Balko: The old constituency, yes.

Mr. Patterson: Oh, okay.

Mr. Balko: Also, the name would not fit if we kept it Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview like at the present.

Mr. Patterson: Then if I might, Mr. Chair, ask a second question. As you got towards the end of your presentation, I felt that you were recommending that we should consider retaining Edmonton-Norwood and then making changes to it.

Mr. Balko: No. I put forward alternatives if it were to be abolished. The second one was if it's to be retained. We're not saying it should or should not be retained. What we're saying is that if the commission elects to retain it, there has to be a way to spread everything out.

Mr. Patterson: You don't have a feeling one way or the other. You're just giving us two alternatives. That's how I'm taking it.

Mr. Balko: It's not that we don't have a feeling one way or the other. I believe the commission has heard an awful lot on the issue. You know, to keep on pounding at that point would not have been

really in our interest. Yes, I would like to see the representation be equal if the population is there and retained.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you.

Ms Mackay: So can I just clarify then? In your report I don't really see you making a statement about the loss of a seat in Edmonton, so does your constituency association think that it's okay for that to happen, or do you have a position at all?

Mr. Balko: We have the position that it should not happen.

Ms Mackay: That we should retain the 19 seats?

Mr. Balko: They should be retained, yes.

Ms Mackay: Okay. That's what I just wanted to clarify. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. I think that exhausts the questions and comments, Ken. Thank you very much.

Mr. Balko: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Appreciate your help.

Mr. Balko: You're welcome.

Mr. Olthof: Hugh MacDonald.

The Chair: Hugh, how are you today?

Mr. MacDonald: Fine. Thank you, Mr. Clark. Mr. Clegg.

The Chair: You know Ernie Patterson?

Mr. MacDonald: Yes.

The Chair: Bauni?

Mr. MacDonald: Yes.

The Chair: And Doug Graham.

Mr. MacDonald: Good afternoon, Mr. Graham.

The Chair: Okay. We're in your hands, sir, as long as you stick fairly close to the clock.

Mr. MacDonald: Okay. And the clock is?

The Chair: Oh, 10-ish minutes or 15.

Mr. MacDonald: Okay. A man who has seldom anything to say never has to defend himself politically; right, Mr. Clark?

The Chair: I'll be the judge later.

Mr. MacDonald: Okay.

The Chair: You're on, sir. You're using your time.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much. I would like to extend my best wishes to the committee.

Now, this is a quote.

City regions, like cities themselves, pack a lot of economic life into surprisingly small geographic compass . . . When regional populations are especially heavily concentrated, we find the concentrations are owing to city regions. The exceptionally heavily populated southeastern part of England, for example, is not only owing to the population of London and its suburbs, but also to the London city region.

These are the words of Jane Jacobs, the author of *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life*. In light of the decisions that your commission is going to make, Mr. Clark, I think Edmonton and the surrounding region applies here to the work of Jane Jacobs.

Now, the Electoral Boundaries Commission report has recommended that the city of Edmonton, the capital of Alberta and one of the two largest economic centres in our province, lose a seat as part of the redistribution of ridings in Alberta. This is unacceptable for a number of reasons, which I will detail in my presentation on behalf of the Alberta Liberal caucus.

The Alberta Liberal caucus realizes that the criteria used by the Electoral Boundaries Commission are mandated in the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. However, the interpretation, flexibility, and application of these criteria appear to be at the broad discretion of the commission.

According to the 2001 census the population of the city of Edmonton reached 666,104. This figure is up 49,798 from 1996, a 1.8 percent increase over the last six years, or if one were to visualize Commonwealth Stadium, it's almost full of people coming to this city in that short period of time.

According to the city of Edmonton's annual report the population of the city is expected to top over 702,200 only four years from now. This would represent a further 5.4 percent increase in the city's population. According to the population quota set by the Electoral Boundaries Commission each riding should have roughly 35,900 citizens, give or take 25 percent. Using this quota, Edmonton should have 18.53 seats in the provincial Legislature. Under the current proposals of redrawn boundaries Edmonton's ridings are on average 3 percent over that set quota. Currently other urbanized areas are 1 percent under quota and rural areas are 7 percent under the quota. If the population grows the expected 5.4 percent or more, the average Edmonton riding in the redrawn scheme will be 9 percent over the quota in just three short years.

3:40

Why this discrimination against the city of Edmonton? I don't understand it. Even considering the current population, Edmonton should not be losing a seat. If we consider federal riding distribution as laid out in the Constitution of Canada, it is clearly indicated that if the distribution of seats is not a whole number but exceeds .5 of a seat, it should be considered one whole seat. If we take this as a precedent in sourcing for electoral district redistribution for a British-style parliamentary system in Canada, under the population quotas set out by the boundaries commission Edmonton should receive 19.53 seats by 2006 or, rounded up to the whole number, 20 seats. If we proceed with the 18-seat suggestion, in three years Edmonton will be underrepresented by two seats in the provincial Legislature.

Edmonton-Riverview was brought to the Legislature in the 1996 commission because the population quota allocated Edmonton two seats. However, only one was brought in at that time. The 1996 Electoral Boundaries Commission also left Edmonton unrepresented by one seat. According to the 1991 census and the 1995 official population list of Municipal Affairs Edmonton's population was 616,741 and 626,999 respectively. The quota that was determined for the average constituency population was 30,780. This would mean that according to the representation-by-population factor Edmonton should have had 20 seats. Again, one seat to which the

city was entitled was not granted, although Edmonton did gain one seat.

According to the 1991 census the population growth of Edmonton between the 1991 census and the previous census was 7.4 percent. The increase between the 2001 census and the 1996 census was 8.1 percent, a greater population increase, yet Edmonton is expected to lose a seat. Further, with the population increases expected in the next few years, Edmonton losing a seat makes even less sense.

Be mindful of the quote from Jane Jacobs. Edmonton is one of the two major economic centres in Alberta. It serves as an economic and business attraction to nearly 1 million people within the city and outside its boundaries. The highway 2 mentality is no doubt the chief cause of the unusual economic development and special attention the Edmonton/Calgary 80-kilometre-wide corridor gets from the provincial government. The city of Edmonton should not lose representation because of the lack of long-term economic planning by the provincial government to maintain the economic vibrancy of small town, rural Alberta.

According to the Conference Board of Canada in an October 2002 news release Edmonton's real economic activity grew over 5 percent. This was far above projected levels. It is expected that economic growth next year will continue with an estimated 4 percent growth. Over the next four years it is expected that Edmonton's economic growth will be an average of 3.4 percent per year. Given this information, the effects of phenomenal economic success and the projected population growth, it is illogical that Edmonton should lose a seat.

Like the rural areas of Alberta major urban centres such as Edmonton have unique issues when it comes to representation in the Legislature. While the rural areas are suffering due to people leaving small communities, agricultural disasters, and loss of unique country businesses, urban areas are also facing serious concerns. These include high rates of poverty, housing crunches, traffic congestion, and crime, to name a few. According to the interim report on page 23 it is stated that rural alienation is a concern.

It could be argued that cities, too, can suffer from alienation in cases where rural issues are given priority over urban issues. Cities are the primary areas where recent immigrants locate. As a result, there are larger demographic and representation factors involved when helping people acquire government services in urban centres than there would be in the relatively homogenous born-in-Canada population of rural Alberta. Examples of this might include assistance with setting up Alberta health care, community-based services, and introduction to the public education system for children.

Cities also have large concentrations of people living on fixed means. This means that urban MLAs deal more with concerns over human resource programs such as SFI, AISH, and WCB benefits. Additionally, cities serve as centres for seniors who use seniors' programs such as the Alberta seniors' benefits, seniors' housing, and home care. Urban members often have constituencies that exceed the quotas for provincial ridings, and rural members often represent areas that fall below the quota for provincial ridings. Urban MLAs, therefore, are dealing with more people, which in turn means a proportionate increase in assistance required for their constituencies.

In addition to specific areas of demographic differences between rural and urban constituencies the Electoral Boundaries Commission listed several factors they believe make up suitable criteria for effective representation: geographic area, population, population density, number of households, elected body, reserves or Metis settlements, distances from the Legislature. The first, geographic area, is really becoming less of an important issue or measure than it once was. Technological advances such as e-mail, fax machines, the advent of videophones and videoconferencing, and even

dedicated telephones and cell phones have changed the dynamic of representation.

Alberta has allocated \$54 million to the Supernet and another \$121 million is yet to come, according to the 2002-2003 estimates of the Department of Innovation and Science. One of the purposes of the Supernet is to bring on-line government services to Albertans, particularly in rural Alberta. If we placed a dedicated computer in every rural public library for the purpose of contacting the local member and/or their constituency office and gaining access to government services, then this would close the geographical gap even further. I think it's an idea that, hopefully, the government will explore, because they're doing so much of their information distribution on-line now. We have a very high rate of Internet use in this province, I believe the highest in Canada, but we have a long way to go yet, and I think at every public library there should be a dedicated terminal for the use of the citizens to contact their member.

As criteria, geographic areas have also become increasingly obsolete with the design and construction of all-weather, high-speed highways and the increasing use of air transportation. The government and its MLAs have shown that they definitely have no fear of flying. According to the Department of Infrastructure annual report for this year government planes made over 1,700 trips. It should also be noted that our electoral system is based on representation by population, not representation by geographic area. Moose and bears cannot vote and do not need to be represented; however, their habitat needs to be protected by sound environmental policies.

The second criteria of population is beyond reproach, and we fully agree with the idea that population is of great importance in determining constituency boundaries. Population density, however, is a different story. The degree of similarity in populations both culturally and socially should be a larger factor of consideration.

The final criteria of geographical distance from the Legislature is obsolete when it comes to representation. The government has several aircraft to shuttle MLAs around the province, and ministers are provided with vehicles for travel purposes.

In conclusion, it is inappropriate for the city of Edmonton to be losing a seat in the provincial Legislature. Edmonton's population as it stands now should allow it to keep at least 19 seats. Further, the projected population for 2006 is expected to be sufficient to allow 24 seats in the Legislature. By cutting one seat from the existing boundaries, we will be shortchanging Edmonton by two seats for the near future. What would Frank Oliver say about this interim report?

Edmonton's diversity and demographic makeup also make it improper for Edmonton to be losing representation. Although we are not saying that it is more difficult for an urban MLA to represent his or her riding than a rural MLA, the issues faced by urban members are just as unique as those faced by rural members. It is therefore inappropriate to accord less stature to urban members and urban representation than is accorded to rural members and representation.

3:50

Finally, the choice of factors used to determine representation needs to be looked at again. In 1995-96, when these factors were brought into being, technological advances such as the Internet were still in their infancy. Seven years later the world has become yet again a smaller place. Communications have improved as much if not more over that time than if they were to draw a comparison with the seven years before 1995. Geographical distance from the Legislature is a nonissue. Geographical distance concerns with very few exceptions have become more antiquated.

We need to look again at what the electoral boundaries of this province should look at. I believe that the commission to date has

been guided by the requirements of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. However, the commission in my view has the flexibility to consider other population statistics than the most recent census of population, referred to in section 19(3) of the Statistics Act of Canada.

Edmonton not only deserves to maintain its present representation; it should be gaining an additional seat as well. I will be very surprised if citizens do not step forward and challenge this commission in the courts if the proposals go through as presented in the interim report.

Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Thank you.

Who has the first question of Mr. MacDonald?

Mr. Clegg: Well, thank you, Hugh. It's good to see you again. Some of your remarks when you go over your figures – certainly you did a great job of presenting your report. Keep in mind a couple of factors. We were in Athabasca last night, and I think from some of your remarks that you should have been there to listen, because when you talk about distance from the Legislature and the massive area that some ridings have, I don't think you'd have much success in convincing those people that geography and the size of the constituency have no bearing, are nonissues. I think you'd have trouble with that.

The Chair: The question is?

Mr. Clegg: I want to ask a question. With the figures you use, Edmonton should retain the 19 seats, and I'm not going to argue about that, but they are still about – and I'm using round figures – 1,200 as an average below Calgary. Could you remark on that, please? Even with the 18, they're still 1,200 below the constituencies of Calgary.

Mr. MacDonald: Calgary in my view should not be getting two seats; it should be getting three. Edmonton should not be losing a seat. When you consider the discretion that you have, other than Stats Canada you can have a look at other statistical information in regards to the current population of this city and the projected population. Barely the ink was dry on your report and the city had grown again.

As far as the good citizens of Athabasca are concerned, I have no problem with increasing the Members' Services budget for those places. I have no problem with government planes transporting, say, an MLA from Athabasca to Fort Chip or over to Wabasca or wherever he or she may have to go in order to do their duties as an elected representative. But distances, as the information age has grown, have shrunk. I can see the day when the Members' Services Committee in the Assembly would have an increased budget for some of those areas over, say, the constituency budget of Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Clegg: Thank you, Hugh.

The Chair: Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for coming today. I would draw your attention to page 6 of our report, where we quote:

In determining population, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act (Section 12(1)) requires the Commission to use "the most recent decennial census of population referred to in section 19(3) of the Statistics Act (Canada)" plus "the population on Indian Reserves that were not included in the census, as provided by the Department

of Indian and Northern Affairs (Canada)".

Now, the problem we've had is that in order to obey the law and follow the mandate set for us by the Legislature and that's very definite in the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, we can't use or take into consideration any other population projections, growth, or other factors than the 2001 census. So that has put us in a real bind, and I'm going to ask your reaction to this in a minute. In Calgary they believe that under that section they should have four seats. We have rural Alberta saying: don't take away our seats.

The Chair: And your question is?

Mr. Patterson: I'm going to get to that, Mr. Chair.

Now you're saying that Edmonton should have two more. Mr. MacDonald, would you not recognize that we are limited by the act, that we can't break the law? It's very clear there. I just wanted your reaction to that.

Mr. MacDonald: Well, the first thing I would like to correct, Mr. Patterson, is the fact that in Edmonton it's not two seats, as you referred to. It's maintaining what we have and gaining an additional seat. That's not two more seats.

I would ask you to please go to page 44 of the interim report, Redistribution Rules, part 2. I'm quoting section 12(2) of the act: "If, in the opinion of the Commission, there is some other province-wide census that is more recent," and I can go on. I believe the commission has the discretion to look at other statistical information than the most recent census information, as referred to in section 19(3) of the Statistics Act, and for that reason I say that you have broad powers – wide, sweeping, broad powers. I don't think you're limited at all as to what you said in reference to page 6.

Mr. Patterson: If I might, Mr. Chair. This is where our problem is. As the chair has said many times, everywhere we've gone, everybody's going to grow. Nobody is going to decrease in population. That's what we've been told everywhere we've been. But there is no other, more recent provincewide census than the 2001. There are individual ones.

The Chair: I think you've made your point, Ernie, and Hugh has responded. I would say that we have a difference of views.

Mr. Patterson: Right.

The Chair: Anyone else have a question or comment?

Mr. Graham: Yes, just to clarify. Mr. MacDonald, as I understand your position, what you're saying is that it's basically strict representation by population.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes.

Mr. Graham: That's basically your position.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes.

Mr. Graham: There should be no other factors whatsoever taken into consideration. It's strict rep-by-pop.

Mr. MacDonald: There are certainly other factors to be taken into consideration. When one considers the growth of this city, the last Electoral Boundaries Commission gave this city, when it had a period of stable or almost stagnant economic growth, an additional seat in the Legislative Assembly. Then, poof, six years later,

halfway through, hopefully, a sustained economic boom, it's seen fit to take that representation away.

Mr. Graham: But on the basis of the population, say. I just want to understand what you're saying. I don't want to argue with you.

Mr. MacDonald: On the basis of population growth, current growth and future growth, Edmonton certainly should not lose a seat, and I as a member of the opposition – the government has had some economic policies. There has been robust growth on either side, east and west, of highway 2.

Mr. Graham: You don't have to answer my question if you don't want to. That's okay. I just want to understand your position.

So the result of it all would be, as I understand it: you would take four seats out of rural Alberta, give them to Calgary and environs, and leave Edmonton the way it is. Is that where you're at?

Mr. MacDonald: That's your job to determine that.

Mr. Graham: But is that where you're at? Is that what you want done?

Mr. MacDonald: I want to maintain Edmonton's representation. I would like to see it certainly increase by one. If one only travels through eastern and southeastern Alberta and sees the significant economic decline, unfortunately, in some of those towns, the reality is that those areas are shrinking in population. Alberta is the province – and it's mentioned in here – that has been perhaps the slowest in Canada to urbanize, but now that it's started, it is urbanizing at a remarkable rate. I don't believe that has been reflected in this interim report.

4:00

Mr. Graham: So leave Edmonton the way it is. Add three seats into Calgary, and one seat around Calgary, where it is now. That's what you'd like done?

Mr. MacDonald: I never really thought about the merits of Calgary-Spruce Meadows, the new one. But certainly one has to respect the dramatic growth in Calgary, and people are living in the urban centres in Alberta, the two large cities.

The Chair: Okay. Any other questions, comments?
Hugh, thank you very much.

Mr. MacDonald: Okay. Thank you, and the very best to you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, and the best to you.

Mr. MacDonald: Okay. Thank you. I hope I didn't blow my time.

The Chair: If we had thought you would, we'd have blown you. Thanks, Hugh.

Mr. Olthof: John Patrick Day.

The Chair: Mr. Day, as I recall, you're one of the people who did a great amount of work last time. I've looked at your report this time, and you've done a great deal of work in your brief to us also. Thank you.

Mr. Day: Well, thank you for those kind words, Mr. Chairman. In view of a lot of what's going to be said, I would like to start on a

couple of rather crucial points. Regard them as a bit of a Christmas card if you like.

The first is that you made a point – I know it's been made privately and was made once to the commission today – that is correct, that this process compares very favourably to the federal process and, indeed, previous provincial processes here. I would say that it's been a great benefit being able to hear some of the presentations, being able to read a number of the presentations in the first round of hearings, and I imagine a number of the other presenters would share that view. It's also, I might say, something that I've mentioned to your federal counterparts.

The Chair: Okay. You've got a lot of material here.

Mr. Day: And we won't read it all to you, you'll be delighted to hear.

The Chair: No, you won't.

Mr. Day: Anyway, you already, I think, would gather the three points. My first and most basic one is that the commission ought not to have reduced Edmonton by a seat. The second one is that if you aren't going to accept that argument, the seat that should have gone was not Edmonton-Norwood. And the third one, which I'm not going to spend much time on, is that even if you were going to eliminate Edmonton-Norwood, the disposition of communities is really not very good.

The Chair: It's unsound.

Mr. Day: It's unsound, yes. The truth is that in terms of the maps that have come at you, of course the one that we are in fact arguing for is the map associated with part 6. The larger maps are there in case you want to look at a larger scale map.

The Chair: Okay. And these are the ridings as you see them, Mr. Day?

Mr. Day: That is correct, yes. The part 6. You've got part 7 there.

The Chair: Part 7? Where is part 6?

Mr. Day: It should look like that. I'll give you my copy, Mr. Chairman.

Ms Mackay: I've got part 6. Have you got part 6?

The Chair: No. I've got part 7.

Ms Mackay: You've got two 7s. I've got two 6s.

The Chair: Okay; there. We've got it straightened out.

Ms Mackay: There you are.

The Chair: Thanks, Bauni.
Sorry, Mr. Day.

Mr. Day: No sweat.

The Chair: So we're looking at map 6?

Mr. Day: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Day: I've detailed the arguments that I'm putting in behind the proposition that Edmonton should not have reduced Edmonton's representation at length under section 5 of my presentation. I think probably a good summary of it is that the commission, not to my surprise although to the surprise of some others, followed a series of criteria which has worked well in previous redistributions. A comment has been made that the next boundary commission may be in serious trouble. My proposition is that you have already run into that trouble, which is why I spoke to the size of the Legislature in the preliminary round.

I would add that I've considered and I would again bring to you the possibility of recommending a legislative council, a second House. The difficulty, as I said then, is that when you limit the size of the table or, indeed, you reduce the size of the table, people are going to lose their places at the table, and in the end it becomes much more difficult to justify giving people places at the table that they don't already have.

In previous go-arounds the patterns of growth or the fact that there was an increase in the legislative size has allowed something of a trade-off. The metropolitan cities got something. They didn't get as much as they were really entitled to get, but they got something. The rest of the province lost something, but they didn't lose as much as they might have. So there was not something that improved them necessarily, but there was a more or less reasonable, equitable share of pain.

What's happened with this dynamic is that it now leads to a result where in order to give somebody something which they're not really entitled to have by population, you are taking away something which somebody already has and which they are, strictly speaking, entitled to have, and that creates a very different dynamic in many ways. A possibly unintended statement is that you citizens of Edmonton are not worthy of being represented in your provincial Legislature according to your numbers, and you never, ever will be. The effect of the proposal is, in fact, to move away from equity. You're moving from a differential of 2 percent – admittedly, it's under – to 4 percent, which is over. The previous applications of the matrices and so on did work towards equity. This one moves away from it. It creates a different dynamic.

The commission has, of course, spent a lot of time on the issue of effective representation. It's been usually argued, as my friend from the rural municipalities has argued and which subsequent commissions have heard repeated many times. Consequently, it is rather strongly important to point out a number of things that, for instance, Mr. Masyk pointed out this afternoon. In the end, we have to understand effective representation as meaning the needs of the electors: what they expect out of all elected representatives and their means of getting it.

I've tried to make an argument in sections 5.4 to 5.7 that would illustrate those points. We can go into that in some detail. I'd say that the basic single difference is this: to a great many electors, government is government is government. It doesn't matter whether it's local or provincial or federal. The first hint that you've got when you've got a run-in with the public is: hit my elected representative. Well, in the countryside it is frequently easy. I suggest that it is probably fairly easy in the town of Carstairs or the town of Claresholm to catch up with the mayor almost on a day-to-day basis, a little more difficult in the municipal districts and counties. Incidentally, when I'm saying all of this, of course I do recognize, as I hope the commission understands, the special circumstances of the Slave Lake-Peace River area. That simply doesn't apply in the cities, or if it does, you then have to start looking at the role of community leagues. You have to start looking at the role of school councils as becoming stand-ins for municipal governments. In many ways they play the same role in the roles of provincial members'

lives as do rural councils and school boards outside Edmonton and Calgary.

I would say that one of the reasons why I have raised it – I looked with some interest at the proposals to reduce the number of members of the Legislature. They don't take into account, in fact, the demands electors have of elected representatives. I'd have said that the one argument that seems to hold up for reduction is economy, but the work that elected representatives do would then be done by somebody else. You would pay a very pretty penny if you tried to get somebody from private industry to do it. You'd pay less pretty a penny, but it's still more, if you have somebody in the public service do it. It's not even clear to me that there is that much to be had by economy. The other thing is, of course, the business of accountability. We have these ways of holding elected representatives to account, which is not so easy with private agencies or the public service: we call them elections.

Anyway, that is probably sufficient for my statement, Mr. Chairman. I would certainly welcome any questions that may come.

4:10

The Chair: Do you want to move now on to the Norwood issue, if you would, please?

Mr. Day: Yes. Right. The basic point is that under section 14(i), (k), and (l) Norwood is one of the most obvious constituencies to maintain on the basis of commonality of interest, community of interest, common identity. You have a core set of communities that have worked closely and well together for decades. You have neighbouring communities of similar nature that can be added to it. I mentioned in my first go-around the McCauley and the Belvedere neighbourhoods as a possibility; Belvedere now in Edmonton-Manning, McCauley now in Edmonton-Highlands.

If we are going to look at what have been called scissors-and-paste constituencies, given the obvious dividing line of the river, the second obvious one that you have is this minicity of about 93,000 in the southeast of Edmonton, which is otherwise as isolated from the rest of Edmonton as from the rest of the province. There are three scissors-and-paste constituencies: there is Edmonton-Mill Creek, there's Edmonton-Riverview, and there's Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. Edmonton-Riverview actually is the most justifiable of them for all the reasons that Dr. Kevin Taft gave you in the first round. Edmonton-Mill Creek: it's difficult to do anything else with it unless you were to take areas from outside Edmonton and add them to Mill Woods. The 93,000 is just not quite enough for three seats any way you look at it, so necessarily you're going to have a chunk of that area and a chunk of older neighbourhoods in south Edmonton. Beverly-Clareview is something of an amalgam of the historic town of Beverly, which still maintains a certain identity, and the much newer area of Clareview. Those would be the three that you would look at as the ones that are the most diverse and arguably scissors-and-paste constituencies, and that's the basis of the argument.

Did you wish me to go further than that, Mr. Chair, or is that sufficient for the moment?

The Chair: Any questions on that? Then do you want to move on to "if the demise of the Edmonton-Norwood . . . is unavoidable, the disposition of communities in the area is extremely unsound."

Mr. Day: Yes.

The Chair: It seems that we've heard that on more than one occasion today.

Mr. Day: Well, first of all, you're dividing the McCauley

community between three constituencies. If we were going to accept the initial proposals as a basis for operation, the McCauley constituency should entirely be within the proposed Edmonton-Highlands. Alberta Avenue is similarly divided, and again I would suggest that they should both be in Edmonton-Highlands, if this is what you're going to do.

I would certainly endorse everything that has been said about Gold Bar to you earlier today with the possible exception of the Riverdale community, and even that is trying to argue a commonality of interest between river flat communities rather than with Edmonton-Gold Bar as a whole. Edmonton-Gold Bar, as proposed, simply cannot remotely be thought to meet the provisions of sections 14(i) and (k) of the act.

The Sprucewood and Westwood communities left in Calder would be pretty much isolated from any part of Edmonton-Calder. If they can't be put in something that's recognizable as a Norwood constituency, the Sprucewood and Westwood communities probably should be placed in Edmonton-Centre.

It's hard to get across to a nonresident of Edmonton the extent of psychological distance involved with the airport. It really is the other side of the world to, you know, the communities involved. I would have said that if the commission finds that placing all of the Boyle Street, Alberta Avenue, and McCauley neighbourhoods in Edmonton-Highlands made that constituency too large, then the neighbourhoods that I would associate with the historic town of Beverly that are now in Highlands, which are Beverly Heights and Rundle Heights, should be placed in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

I've just thrown a few quick ones out in part about the rest of the province. Edmontonians always wade into danger talking about Calgary, although I do so with less hesitation since my mother's family has one way or another been resident in Calgary since 1903. I would certainly say that Calgary is entitled to at least one more seat on the grounds of population. I would note that if the commission's proposals were to be left as they were, you have two constituencies, Calgary-North Hill and Calgary-Mountain View, with electorates in excess of 30,000, which are, in fact, larger than some constituencies which the commission has already deemed to be too large. At first glance it would suggest that some of the associations of communities, particularly those in the proposed Calgary-Bow and Calgary-North West, seem at least to outside eyes a little unreasonable or unsound perhaps. We might agree.

I would suggest that if the commission can see its way to do it, it should consider whether it cannot treat what is now the hamlet of Fort McMurray in a way similar to Grande Prairie and divide it between two constituencies: the larger part of Fort McMurray associated with the Fort Chipewyan area, the southern end of it with perhaps Lac La Biche-St. Paul. I may be wrong in this, but I seem to note that the town of Elk Point has been divided rather evenly between Lac La Biche-St. Paul and Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

The Chair: You're not wrong.

Mr. Day: Okay. You already know about Viking.

The last point is just a quick glance at the map. I would have thought that the Cadotte Lake-Lubicon Lake area would seem to more naturally be part of the Lesser Slave Lake constituency than Peace River.

The Chair: If my memory is accurate – and correct me – we had representation in Slave Lake, I believe it was, to do that.

Mr. Day: Oh, okay.

The Chair: But we have to go back down and look at it and see if

it's as wise a move as it appeared at the time.

Mr. Day: Right.

Ms Mackay: John, I don't have any questions. I just want to commend you on the amount of work you have done, and I believe you're here sort of representing the Edmonton-Glenora constituency as well; are you not?

Mr. Day: Well, I understand that John Ogle, who helped me with the maps, is doing that.

Ms Mackay: Yes, but I just thank you for having that kind of interest and putting that kind of effort and, you know, doing such an analysis of the whole report. It's mind-boggling. It is. It's really mind-boggling that you've done that amount of work, and I just say thank you.

Mr. Day: You're welcome.

The Chair: I echo Bauni's comments, John. I spent one weekend reading all the briefs we have that have come in, and when I made a comment earlier today about the tremendous amount of work that you've done here in the city of Edmonton, this must be like – I'm a bit of a hockey nut; you must be almost a bit of a population, demographer, or election boundaries nut.

Mr. Day: A little bit.

The Chair: A little bit. Well, I'll tell you, it's very much appreciated and very well done.

Glen.

Mr. Clegg: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to congratulate you for the work. You know, I haven't been a good boy all year, so I don't need any Christmas cards or books for Christmas. I've certainly got lots of information to study. Thank you, John. Not many people take the interest that you have. Thanks for all your work.

Mr. Day: Thinking of books, Mr. Chair, if I might. In your first round you mentioned that all of you collectively are going to need the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job. Of course, I referred to King Solomon in my submission, and I suppose that you might now be reflecting on a passage in the book of Job about: would that my enemy had written a book that I might answer him.

Of course, I have presented you, Mr. Chairman, though possibly not the other commissioners, with another document. What it is, as promised, is the analysis of the 83 existing provincial electoral divisions produced by the Treasury department using 1996 census data. They may be able to come up with the equivalence of 2001 data now because I understand that Stats Canada began releasing those a day or two ago. So you may have a couple of matrices to work with.

4:20

The Chair: The stats people over at Alberta Finance have just been tremendously helpful to us. One of the real eye-openers for us is to sit down and say: well, if we move it this way or this way or this way or this way, what happens? How many people do you move? What's the impact? I understand that Saskatchewan started this dreadful process, and they were doing that by hand. They ended up coming over and getting the people at Alberta Finance to help them over there, and I'm glad that Alberta did that.

Mr. Patterson: Just knowing John for a long time, I'm not at all surprised by the amount of work that he's done here. You think you're a bit of a hockey nut. I've known John for years. He's just absolutely totally into this sort of analysis. Thank you.

Mr. Graham: John, I just want to echo my fellow members on the panel. I think you've done just an excellent job. As a Calgarian I want to say that you're right: there is a problem in Calgary-Bow, Calgary-North West. We've identified it too. We continue to work on it, and I hope to do better next time.

Mr. Day: Well, I'm sure you'll be given some assistance from some presenters in Calgary.

The Chair: Tomorrow evening.
Thank you, John, very much.

Mr. Day: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Fjeldheim, who is next?

Mr. Fjeldheim: One moment.

The Chair: Well, let's take a five-minute break, then.

[The commission adjourned from 4:22 p.m. to 4:32 p.m.]

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Fjeldheim, who's next?

Mr. Fjeldheim: Next is Mr. David Despius. David, you're representing yourself, I believe you said. He's just come forward this afternoon to speak.

The Chair: David told me he had a very short presentation to make to us, and then Laurie Blakeman is next.
David.

Mr. Despius: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I'm speaking from the point of view of a resident in the present Edmonton-Norwood constituency, as this has been of some controversy within the city of Edmonton. First of all, I must commend the commission on the very difficult role you have to play in finding where to draw these electoral divisions. I am also aware that the commission has received a petition from an acquaintance of mine Mrs. Gloria Kereliuk, and she's a resident within the Balwin community within the Edmonton-Norwood constituency, which is north of the CNR right-of-way. We see it as a natural boundary within our constituency that actually provides a physical degree of separation between two very different communities, different in the sense that they don't belong with the communities south of the tracks. The socioeconomic disparity between these peoples and the community-based issues are very divergent.

The issue with her petition, though, was that it – and she had in excess of 600 area residents within her community – posed a question: what new constituency would you like to be a member of in the event that Edmonton-Norwood would be dissolved? The respondents were asked: would you like to be in the new proposed Edmonton-Decore or the reconfigured Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview as proposed in the preliminary report? The overall respondents responded in favour of becoming part of Edmonton-Decore because they would be within the same area council, and from a community point of view I could respect that. That's a community-based response rather than someone from outside the community expressing their interests, and I thought that was rather important to

bring to the table this afternoon.

Furthermore, in her cover letter she had indicated that 66th Street, being a major arterial road and a division line between these area councils within the community league framework within our city, provides a degree of commonality within Edmonton-Decore. They have the same patterns of recreation, same patterns of retail, schooling, you name it. They see them more a part of being contiguous within the proposed boundary east of 97th Street but west of 66th Street, all north of the CNR.

Apart from myself as a resident within the Sprucewood community and as a member chair within that community league, we respect the commission's finding of using 97th Street as a division because this is in accordance with the ward system boundaries within the municipal elections within this city. We have always had a degree of confusion with people at election time when the provincial writ is dropped, what poll they should be voting in. It also happens to be a federal boundary, 97th Street, between the Edmonton west and Edmonton east federal riding associations. So we thought, as it was mentioned earlier this afternoon, that the matrix and using other electoral divisions as a guiding factor were very prudent aspects of that.

Again, the communities of Westwood and Spruce Avenue are within a different area council as far as community leagues. We have similar economic criteria to the rest of Edmonton-Highlands, but apart from that if one was to look at the voter participation rates within the various polls within Edmonton-Norwood as it is now, you'll find that the ones that are earmarked for Edmonton-Highlands have had a markedly lower voter participation rate, and that's reflective of some of the socioeconomic problems within the community there.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, David. Appreciate you taking that time and giving us your views on it. You're right on the ground.

Mr. Despius: Thank you very much. Good day.

Mr. Olthof: Laurie Blakeman.

The Chair: You'll notice that Mr. Fjeldheim and I are being especially nice to Ms Blakeman today, not that we aren't always, because she's on the Leg. Offices Committee, and we've been over there for budgets today.

Laurie, welcome, and we look forward to what you have to tell us.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. I have asked that you be given maps, and I will actually refer to those maps at the end of my presentation. If you'll allow me, I'm going to start global and move to local.

I would like to talk about three things today. The first is Edmonton maintaining its 19 seats at a minimum. Secondly, as a neighbour to the Boyle-McCauley area that is under consideration to be added to the Edmonton-Gold Bar constituency, I'd like to make some comments about what I think the effect of those proposed changes might be. Thirdly, I'm appearing before you again to petition to have one small boundary moved over; thus, you get coloured maps this time. I should have done that last time. You did ask me, so I'm trying again.

The Chair: Okay. Keep Edmonton at 19 seats.

Ms Blakeman: Yes, most definitely. I think it's important as an Edmonton MLA and as a native Edmontonian to strongly advocate for 19 seats in Edmonton. Edmonton is growing. We have the

percentages to show us that. Yes, it's growing slower than Calgary, but that doesn't mean we should be penalized by losing a seat. It is growing. In my constituency I will have experienced a growth of about 2,000 souls by the time I hit the end of this fiscal year. So in two years I will have added an additional 2,000 people to my riding. Now, I do have a lot of inflow happening, and that may not be applicable to all ridings, but certainly I'm showing growth, and I know other areas in Edmonton are as well. I don't think we should be rolling the average down to 18 seats. We should be maintaining the 19 seats at a minimum.

4:40

I urge the commission to face the fact that more people are living in urban ridings, and we need that representation. Edmonton is the capital city of this province. We need enough MLAs in this city to be able to argue both on behalf of Edmonton citizens but also because we're the capital city. I as an MLA have had to stand up and argue in the Legislature for certain activities like the Archives not to be moved out of the capital city. That requires a certain number of local MLAs to be arguing for that kind of thing, and I think it's important that we take that into consideration. I think that it is, well, I have written, unfair, unjust, and just plain wrong to bias boundaries in favour of declining rural population. I think we have that population in the cities. We know there's a consistent growth of people living in the urban ridings, and I think that our MLA population needs to reflect that.

I think that there is an argument that technology can be used to help address some of the challenges that are met in the rural ridings, but I have not heard an argument that will convince me as to why one of my constituent's votes should be worth less than someone who lives in a rural riding. We're talking about a downgrading of democracy on the one hand versus the ability to use technology to address a problem on the other. If it means that we have to lose a rural riding in order to keep one in Edmonton, then I say so be it. I think it's important that we recognize those urban ridings and the continued move of people from rural areas into the urban areas.

The Chair: Okay. I think we got the message there, Laurie.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you.

Now to move my focus a little narrower. I have a good working knowledge of the residents of Boyle-McCauley. Under your proposal you're looking at taking a pie-shaped wedge out of eastern downtown, east of my current riding, and attaching it across the river to Edmonton-Gold Bar. I wouldn't normally be up here arguing on behalf of my colleague from Edmonton-Gold Bar, because he's more than able to argue it by himself, but I know these people. They will often come to my office for help just because they turned the wrong direction and I ended up with them. Of course, I refer them back to their own riding. But I need to impress upon the commission members that this is a very high-needs, low-ability population. They require a lot of help, and I am not seeing how that is going to function for them.

Is there an expectation that Edmonton-Gold Bar would be given sufficient money to have two constituency offices, one on the north side of the river to address this high-needs population and its current one on the south side, or is there an expectation that the office would get moved in order to service these people? There is no question that they need a high degree of assistance, and I think it is unfair to penalize them when they are so vulnerable. Certainly, it is again a changing inner-city neighbourhood, but from what I've seen, it is many years before they will reach that level of self-sufficiency that some of the surrounding areas have been able to achieve.

There are no direct bus routes from Boyle-McCauley across to Edmonton-Gold Bar. There would be an expectation that they

would either have to walk or take a bus into the centre of downtown and then transfer in order to be able to get across the river. This is not a community with a lot of resources behind it, so I'm most concerned that they would in effect be stranded. So what's going to happen then? Well, they're going to either walk over to Edmonton-Centre or they're going to walk over to Edmonton-Highlands.

Whatever was trying to be achieved by assigning that particular slice of population over to Edmonton-Gold Bar I don't think will be achieved because the constituency offices of Edmonton-Highlands, perhaps Edmonton-Norwood if it still exists, and Edmonton-Centre are going to have to deal with their populations anyway, and none of us will be paid to do it. None of us will be receiving a constituency budget that would be taking those people into consideration. So I ask you to go back to the drawing board on this one. I think we are making vulnerable people more vulnerable and taking away their access to help.

The Chair: That's to add McCauley and Boyle into Edmonton-Centre?

Ms Blakeman: I'm not asking for them, and I know that puts you in a difficult position. This is a very high-needs population. I already deal with arguably one of the most diverse populations.

The Chair: You're saying to treat them tenderly then?

Ms Blakeman: I don't think they should be attached to Edmonton-Gold Bar. If you have to give them to me, fine. Split them between me and Edmonton-Highlands, but I'm not advocating that by any means. I just think it's wrong to attach them to a constituency across the river that has nothing in common with them. These are very divergent communities.

Finally to the maps. I don't know how to describe the two of them. The one with just the yellow on it is all of the proposed boundaries that the commission is suggesting plus the one small change that I'm suggesting on the larger map. When you look at the larger map, I've got three pink squares. Those represent high-rise apartment buildings, and the way the boundary is now, the current boundary in red, running down, well, pretty much the centre of the page but to the left, you can see that these apartment buildings are half a block out of my riding. They're a long way away from the nearest other residential population in what is currently Edmonton-Highlands and would not be Edmonton-Gold Bar under what you're considering.

I'm just asking for the commission to move the 101st Street boundary over by two blocks to the 99th Street, what's also called Hull Street, boundary to pick up those two residences plus the one I already have, which is called MacDonald Estates. So we have these three residences that are stuck in the middle of downtown and nobody else around them, and it's easier for me to take them and attach them to my people. I don't want to see them stranded, so I'm suggesting that just for a way of dealing with them, and in a lot of cases I'm dealing with these people anyway. So to make it official, I'm asking that the boundary be changed as I've shown it.

Now, you seem to be also talking about 97th Street as a dividing line. As you can see, that's just one more block over, and if that works for you, that's fine. I'm not picking up any more residences by doing that. If it works for your boundary better, that's okay with me.

The Chair: I take it that there are only three places where people live in that area.

Ms Blakeman: That's correct, yeah. What you've got there is city

hall, Winston Churchill Square, the central library. Okay? That's what it is.

The Chair: I'm with you.

Ms Blakeman: That's why I'm asking for it. They really are stranded in the middle of no other residential area.

I'm happy to take questions if you have them for me.

Mr. Clegg: Well, thanks, Laurie. I'm not going to go into Edmonton keeping 19 seats, but I am going to go into – because I'm very interested – what you first proposed here when you talked about Edmonton-Gold Bar. Have you any idea of the amount of people we're talking here? Like, you said that it should go into either yours or into . . .

The Chair: Edmonton-Highlands, not into Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Ms Blakeman: Actually, I didn't say that it should go into either mine or Edmonton-Highlands. What I said was that it should not go into Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Clegg: Well, okay, but it has to go one place or the other, I think, if I read the map right.

But my real question is how many people we're talking here. Do you have any idea?

Ms Blakeman: I think it's 3,000 or 4,000, 3,000 maybe. It's highly transient, so you don't get a good count. It's very old housing stock. You've got a lot of boarding rooms in there, and it's very difficult to track who you've actually got on the ground at any one time. There is an older community, again with old housing stock, that is starting to be bought up by people with very limited means who are doing their best to move the crack houses out and to actually create communities for themselves, but it's tough going. You know, this was the famous neighbourhood when I grew up: 97th Street. Ooh, boogeyman, bad place to go, wrong side of the tracks. So in the 20 and 30 years since I was a young woman and would be hearing that kind of thing, it has come along, but it's still highly transient, a very difficult place to live, and very high needs, very poor, a high urban aboriginal population.

Mr. Clegg: Thanks, Laurie.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chair, I'd just like to say that I do like your idea here of moving over to 97th Street. There's nothing in that area anyway, but it's a more clearly defined boundary than the one that's proposed, and I agree totally with your MacDonald Estates when I look out my hotel room window and look at that building. It would be left totally, absolutely out. I'm not quite as familiar with the City Square Tower and the . . .

4:50

Ms Blakeman: It's the Churchill seniors' residence. The City Centre Tower has had a number of different names in its life. It's directly across from the CN Tower, and then across the street from it and sideways from city hall is the Churchill seniors' residence.

Mr. Patterson: Right. Now I've got it. Okay. I can see what you're saying there. Otherwise, they're just . . .

Ms Blakeman: They're stranded.

Mr. Patterson: Yes.
Thank you.

The Chair: That seems like a very sensible proposition to me, Laurie.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you.

The Chair: Anyone else?
Thanks, Laurie, very much.

Mr. Olthof: Jason Krips.

The Chair: Good afternoon, Jason.

Mr. J. Krips: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the panel. Thank you very much for hearing from us. This will be short and sweet.

The Chair: Just give us a minute. We're getting ourselves organized, Jason, we think.

Mr. J. Krips: No problem.

The Chair: Maybe you better take that card down in front of you. If someone calls you Laurie, I'm not sure if you'd be flattered or Laurie would be.

Thank you very much for coming and meeting with us. We appreciate that, and we look forward to your presentation. I'm sure we'll have some questions or comments. At least, if we don't, it'll be very unusual.

Mr. J. Krips: Excellent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the panel, I thank you very much for hearing from me. I will make my comments as short and sweet as I can because I know this a long and arduous process for yourselves, and you're winding down session 2 before session 3 starts for you.

On November 14 we submitted a response to the interim report that the panel has circulated, and the nuts and bolts of where we're coming from is that we basically like what the commission has done in the interim report. We believe that it preserves and enhances the factors of our constituency, including preserving the fact that it's a 'urban' constituency, enhancing the constituency's community of interest, enhancing the natural boundary lines, and minimizing voter confusion.

There is one minor exception to that, and that pertains to the Alexander First Nation reserve. Presently, under the current boundaries the Alexander First Nation reserve resides within our constituency. The proposed change would have them reside outside of the constituency. However, the federal government recently has reached an agreement, a land deal, with the Alexander First Nation, and this land agreement gives the reserve an option to purchase land. That land would actually still reside within our constituency, but with the proposed change the reserve as it presently exists now would be in Whitecourt-Ste. Anne. We simply ask that the reserve be added back into the boundaries of the Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert constituency to basically preserve the reserve as it is and as it may be in the future under this land agreement.

With the exception of that, we agree with the addition of the portion of St. Albert that has been added to our proposed riding. We think it fits naturally with how the roadways work within that area of St. Albert, and it actually, I believe, will reduce voter confusion that presently exists within our constituency with the present boundaries.

My understanding on the reserve issue is that the Alexander First Nation reserve has submitted a letter or a document of some sort. Unfortunately, I don't have custody of that nor have I seen that, so in terms of actual details of the land agreement or anything I can't

speak to that. I just know that that was the position of the reserve, and we indicated to the reserve that we would bring that matter forward to the panel for your consideration.

The Chair: Offhand I don't recall any reason why we would have made that change, taking it out of the riding. You're really saying: we'd like to have them put back in.

Mr. J. Krips: Yes. Exactly. We believe that that can be done without carving out any other area that you've already added, simply because the population of the reserve is about a thousand people or so, so that certainly wouldn't take us close to the 25 percent mark. We believe that that change can be done without any further changes. We certainly like the rest of what you're proposing for our constituency.

The Chair: Mr. Forgrave, will you please make note of that request? We'll attempt to follow that up.

Mr. J. Krips: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the panel.

The Chair: Do any of you have questions or comments?

Mr. Graham: No. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thanks, Jason.

Mr. J. Krips: Thank you.

The Chair: Oh, there are.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chair, I think the reason why we had done it is because Whitecourt-Ste. Anne is below, and we thought that this would help a little bit.

The Chair: Ah, I suspected that. Those kinds of things do happen. We'll still have a look at it; okay?

Mr. J. Krips: Excellent. Okay.

The Chair: Thanks, Ernie.

Mr. J. Krips: Mr. Patterson – sorry – your comment was that it was originally done because . . .

Mr. Patterson: Well, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne is low population-wise, and I can remember our discussion that this would help them out, but when it's a thousand people, I guess it's not going to really make us or break us one way or the other. That is what happened.

Mr. J. Krips: Thank you. Sorry; I just didn't hear that.

The Chair: Thanks very much, Jason. We appreciate it.

Mr. J. Krips: Thank you for your attention.

Mr. Olthof: David Kucherawy, mayor of the town of Vegreville.

The Chair: David, welcome. Thank you very much for coming. How are the roads?

Mr. Kucherawy: Wet, chaotic with traffic in the city.

The Chair: But not frozen?

Mr. Kucherawy: No. And worse with no parking in this area.

The Chair: David, we thank you very much for coming. How long have you been mayor?

Mr. Kucherawy: I'm going into my third term.

The Chair: Did you have the experience of having Alberta's chief election officer on your council for a period of time?

Mr. Kucherawy: I did.

The Chair: The commission's sympathy goes out to you.

Mr. Kucherawy: Yes. Thank you. They were trying, and I did live through it very well. I grayed up a little more, but that's fine.

The Chair: All right. We look forward to your presentation, David.

Mr. Kucherawy: My presentation is relatively simple. I'd just like to thank you for extending the opportunity to make a presentation on the electoral divisions proposed in the interim report and in particular the rural electoral division of Vegreville-Viking.

The town of Vegreville council has reviewed the interim report and supports the proposed structure that maintains the Vegreville-Viking division as a rural electoral division. We do have some misgivings about the loss of the easterly portion of the existing division – namely, the communities of Viking and Two Hills – and would favour all or part of their retention within the division, realizing that their exclusion is the result of balancing within the matrix you have to deal with. I do have one point to make on that, but I will make it at the end of my presentation.

The exclusion of our easterly neighbours is not the reason that we request to make a presentation. The reason is that we heard and understood that a proposal will be made to change the westerly boundaries to include the city of Fort Saskatchewan in the division, and I don't know if that happened or not.

The Chair: That has happened.

Mr. Kucherawy: We are not in favour of this possible change and feel it important to voice our views at this time.

Considering the population composite, geographic area, and other variable factors, the proposed boundaries provide for a reasonable balance for a rural electoral division, the category we are included in and prefer to be associated with. The inclusion of a major urban centre would change the division from a rural to urban designation, categories that are recognized in this review. We believe that the elected representative would be faced with challenges, one being the lobbying for an additional constituency office and its costs. Time spent in the division outside of the office may be affected due to the extra time that would be required and, in turn, influence the effective representation that we presently have. We do not feel that a change from a rural to an urban division as a part of this review is required. As mentioned in the report, the urban/rural split issue will have to be addressed in the future; however, for the present we feel that it is important to maintain the rural divisions. I thank you for hearing our views on that presentation.

There is one on the eastern boundaries. On page 92, I will indicate it to the gentleman here, I think the description has got a slight error to it: the north boundaries of section 11 and 12 to the east boundary of range 12. If you stick with that, it sort of throws things off, so I think that either the numbers have to be reversed or east

referred to west. If you follow the map, you'll see what I mean on that one, because I lost myself when I tried. That's the only comment I have.

5:00

The Chair: Mr. Fjeldheim is waving his hand. I assume he's caught that.

Mr. Fjeldheim: Got that.

Mr. Kucherawy: Yes. With that, I'm open for questions if you have any on my brief.

The Chair: We did have, David, a presentation today that we will include that really Sherwood Park and Clover Bar would kind of become two constituencies and go down to south of Sherwood Park, and then we'd take Fort Saskatchewan over to Vegreville and include Viking, too, so it would be kind of that shape. It was a presentation that was made this morning. We had some allusion to it yesterday in Athabasca, I believe, also.

My question is – I give other people heck for not asking questions – what's your population of Vegreville and surrounding area?

Mr. Kucherawy: The population of Vegreville is 5,300 and some odd. The total riding which is proposed – I think I've referred to it – I believe is around 30-some thousand.

The Chair: What about your trading area around there?

Mr. Kucherawy: Trading area of about 25,000. You do not catch the trading area moving westerly, unfortunately, because Elk Island park is a natural barrier to that. We do trade mainly to the east, north, and south of us.

The Chair: And what's the population of Fort Saskatchewan?

Mr. Kucherawy: Probably close to 14,000. It is definitely a city status.

The Chair: So it would be a situation of, quite frankly, you'd have almost half the population of the constituency, 40 percent of the population, in Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Kucherawy: It would. What you have now is a real nice blend and composite which actually enhances our rural component, because we are moving into an area where there are a lot of acreage owners and everything else, which are more rural by nature as it may be, a larger population base, a population that is growing, actually, which will not affect this adversely in the future. To all of a sudden move into a mass amount of population which is very much urban designated – we see a lot of problems with that. There would not be a need for an office in Fort Saskatchewan. Lobbying efforts, as we know politics, would dictate that there is one.

Right now with what you have proposed, that need is not there, because anything to the west can actually be contacting the legislative office which is in existence now, and that is a trading pattern for them. So if they did want that representation, that would be done very easily and not to their, you know, disadvantage, as it may be. Anything on the other side of the park would still have the Vegreville office, that would actually be very easily accessible with the proper trading patterns. So what you have now is a very nice happy medium type of thing.

The Chair: Okay. Any comments or questions?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chair, I do have one.

Thank you for coming today. I appreciate that. When I look at my map and you're saying that you've lost Viking . . .

Mr. Kucherawy: Yes. Well, according to the proposal it comes down 36. My understanding is that anything east of 36 will be in Vermilion-Lloydminster. Anything west of 36 will be in Vegreville-Viking. I do have a concern with that structure, as well, because the Caledonia hotel and the Esso station are on the west side of 36 and they are part of the town, yet you're splitting the town by doing that. So it's either include them or totally exclude them.

The Chair: We've heard that previously today. We've asked for forgiveness, and we're making the proper adjustment. I think it's important to have the constituency of the town in the constituency whose name is on it.

Mr. Kucherawy: It is. Like I say, they are part of our trading population. I realize that by doing things like that, we are looking at adversely affecting population bases according to the matrix, which is going to the east, but I don't know if there is a happy solution to actually resolving it and keeping everything on a fair playing field. There really isn't. It's a tough job, and I don't envy any of you for sitting there. I've read through some of this, and my goodness.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Kucherawy, I know how you feel because in the last electoral boundaries distribution a small portion of the town of Claresholm had to travel 25 kilometres north to vote. That didn't go over very well.

The Chair: Any further questions or comments?

David, thank you very much. Once again, our pleasure at your coming, and we know what you had to put up with.

Mr. Kucherawy: Thank you very much.

Mr. Olthof: Mr. Chairman, I have no other speakers.

The Chair: Okay. What time do we start this evening?

Mr. Olthof: Six-thirty.

The Chair: How many do we have on the agenda tonight?

Mr. Olthof: Six.

The Chair: Six for tonight starting at 6:30?

Mr. Olthof: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. This session is adjourned, then, until 6:30 tonight.

Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned from 5:06 p.m. to 6:34 p.m.]

The Chair: Mr. Olthof?

Mr. Olthof: John Ogle.

The Chair: John, I've seen you here most of the day, I'm sure.

Mr. Ogle: Well, all afternoon, yes. I was here watching Mr. Day

in amazement.

The Chair: Well, now he's going to watch you in amazement too, I'm sure.

Mr. Ogle: I doubt it.

The Chair: I asked John if he'd come first, and he said: well, I'm never prepared, so, yes, I will. So I'll have to remind John of the 10-minute rule. Okay, John.

Mr. Ogle: Thank you. Thank you all for this opportunity. My name is John Ogle, as you can see, and I am here representing the Edmonton-Glenora Liberal Association. I have been deputed to do this, quite willingly actually.

Rather than bore you with dull repetition of all that's gone before, let me just say that Edmonton-Glenora Liberals are dismayed with the reduction of 19 to 18 seats proposed in the interim report, and they're even more dismayed with the elimination of the Edmonton-Norwood constituency and would ask that you very seriously reconsider that recommendation of yours. If necessary, we would certainly support an increase in the number of MLAs in the Legislature if that is the only way to keep Edmonton's current 19 and possibly a larger increase and go to 20.

I noticed earlier, Mr. Chairman, that you asked about the incorporation of rural populations into urban constituencies. I have got no instructions from the Glenora Liberals, but my own feeling is that I would not be averse to that. In fact, I would quite welcome it if it meant that we could come to more – I won't say rational – equivalency, that all of the votes would have equal weight.

I really have got nothing more to add to this. I don't really enjoy the sound of my own voice. So thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, John. I take it, if I could summarize it, that you're very upset with the loss of a seat in Edmonton. You request that we should reconsider that. You would support going to 84 seats if that were a way to retain the seat in Edmonton, and you see nothing wrong with the inclusion of a part of a rural area into Edmonton to possibly make that possible.

Mr. Ogle: I wish I had put it that way, sir. Yes, very much so.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Ogle: Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Any questions or comments?

Okay. Thanks, John, very much. Tell the Glenora Liberals that they were well represented; will you?

Mr. Ogle: I've been watching John Day.

The Chair: Okay. All right.

Mr. Olthof: Brian Mason.

The Chair: I'd like to welcome Mr. Brian Mason, ably accompanied by Mr. John Kolkman. Welcome, gentlemen. I've noticed that John has been here all day, so I'm sure he's briefed you well, Brian, on what's been going on.

Mr. Mason: He made me turn off the radio in the car, Mr. Chairman, and filled me in, yes.

The Chair: Well, Brian, thanks for coming, and we look forward to your presentation.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the commission. I'd like to thank you once again for the opportunity to appear at this second round of public hearings.

The New Democrat opposition recognizes that the redistribution of ridings in a manner that is fair, logical, and respectful of communities is a very difficult task, and we hope that this submission is helpful as input to the commission's final report. Following the release of the commission's interim report, we consulted with several community groups to identify concerns that they may have. Recommendations in this submission reflect the concerns raised by these community groups.

In drawing the interim electoral map, the commission relied heavily on a matrix that is clearly weighted towards rural representation. The matrix includes variables of geographic area, population density, rural-to-urban ratios, and number of elected bodies for municipalities: school boards, that sort of thing. In so doing, the matrix ignores other equally important variables that impact on effective representation, including levels of poverty, linguistic diversity, illiteracy rates, and reliance on social supports. Alberta Finance collects detailed demographic data on provincial ridings that include this information. The commission should re-examine whether the matrix is a useful tool in its current form. Because the matrix overemphasizes the difficulty of representing rural areas, the commission concluded that a seat should be eliminated from Edmonton.

6:40

The New Democrat opposition believes that the overriding principle should be to keep all ridings as close as possible to the average in population. According to the principle of equality of voting power Edmonton's population in 2001 warranted more than 18 and a half ridings. Further, Edmonton has been growing rapidly since the 2001 census, and this growth is forecast to continue for years to come. Therefore, by reducing the number of seats in Edmonton, the commission would cause Edmonton to be underrepresented until after the census in 2011 and through at least two provincial elections. We therefore recommend that Edmonton retain its existing 19 seats in the Legislature.

Currently Edmonton's inner city is divided between three ridings: Edmonton-Centre, Edmonton-Norwood, and Edmonton-Highlands. The interim report proposes that Edmonton-Gold Bar cross the river and take in the central communities of Riverdale and Boyle Street as well as parts of McCauley and Parkdale/Cromdale. In addition, Edmonton-Centre, Edmonton-Highlands, and Edmonton-Calder would represent parts of the inner city.

These central neighbourhoods share a community of interest. These include ethnically diverse populations and a high percentage of residents who live in rental accommodation. By diluting the inner city by further dividing it between more ridings with higher population, the commission's recommendations will reduce the ability of inner-city residents to have an influence on decisions made in the provincial Legislature. The commission should aim to hold the number of MLAs representing Edmonton's inner city at no more than the current number.

In particular, residents of Edmonton's inner city would be better represented if the riding of Edmonton-Norwood is retained. Thirty-one percent of Edmonton-Norwood residents do not speak English at home. This represents communication barriers to all MLAs, making it more difficult to have effective representation with their constituents. As well, family incomes in that riding are 38 percent below the provincial average. Therefore, residents of Edmonton-Norwood may rely more on government services and thus depend

more on the assistance and advocacy provided by their MLA. We therefore recommend that Edmonton-Norwood not be eliminated.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission interim map of constituency boundaries violates the principle of communities of interest. The boundaries proposed in the interim report would bisect some central communities. For instance, the community of Parkdale/Cromdale will be split between Edmonton-Highlands and Edmonton-Gold Bar. The community of McCauley will be split between Edmonton-Centre and Edmonton-Gold Bar. Further, McCauley will be separated from the neighbouring community of Boyle Street, with which it shares many common interests such as the *Boyle McCauley News* and the Boyle-McCauley Health Centre.

Edmonton's Francophone community located in Bonnie Doon and the surrounding communities will be increasingly fragmented by the interim map by moving Kenilworth into Edmonton-Mill Creek and Idylwyld into Edmonton-Strathcona. This runs contrary to the community's desire to be divided between fewer ridings in the Legislative Assembly. Fragmenting a visible and active community such as the Francophone community as it exists in Edmonton-Strathcona would be detrimental to that community's development and to the ability of their MLA to represent their concerns. The Francophone community would be better served by retaining the community of Bonnie Doon in Edmonton-Strathcona and the communities of Idylwyld and Kenilworth in Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Voter confusion is lessened if as few people as possible are shifted to new ridings as a result of redistribution. For example, under the proposed map Edmonton-Strathcona will lose the community of Ritchie to Edmonton-Mill Creek and gain the community of Idylwyld from Edmonton-Gold Bar. To reduce voter confusion and because populations are similar, it would be preferable for Idylwyld to remain in Edmonton-Gold Bar and for Ritchie to remain in Edmonton-Strathcona. We therefore recommend that constituency boundaries should be redrawn to respect community boundaries, to maintain communities of interest, and to retain existing boundaries wherever possible.

To summarize, the New Democrats recommend that the commission in drawing the final electoral map not reduce the number of seats in Edmonton and, specifically, that the riding of Edmonton-Norwood not be eliminated.

Just in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, we recognize the very difficult task that the commission faces in trying to make everything fit, and by making suggestions, we in no way want to indicate that we believe that your task is a simple one.

Thank you.

The Chair: I'm relieved to hear that, Brian. I know from previous discussions with you and John that that's not your view, and I appreciate your presentation.

Mr. Clegg.

Mr. Clegg: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hi, Brian. I'm glad you're here. I don't want to get into retaining the seat at the present time, because seemingly we've heard so many different angles of this: if you go to one riding or go to rural and urban. You're recommending some of these changes. Brian, you mentioned different communities. Although we try to keep communities together that have a common interest, it's sometimes impossible. Have you got numbers? Would this make a big shift in population if this occurred?

Mr. Mason: We don't have specific numbers or specific boundary proposals here. I think we could probably provide them to you. We have done enough work to be comfortable that within your parameters, if it were accepted that Edmonton-Norwood was going

to be lost, which we don't support – we're just dealing with the question of not violating community boundaries, if that's your question.

Mr. Clegg: Yes, it is.

Mr. Mason: Yes. It would be possible to draw them following community league boundaries and have it fall within your parameters with the plus or minus within the range.

Mr. Clegg: Thank you.

The Chair: Brian, on page 3 you make a suggestion about Idylwyld and Ritchie. What you're talking about there is just flipping them back.

Mr. Mason: That's right.

The Chair: Is that right, John?

Mr. Kolkman: That's correct. I mean, essentially, that would restore the boundaries to where they are now, and it would also have a bit of an impact on Edmonton-Gold Bar as well. Under the new map Idylwyld is, I believe, in Edmonton-Strathcona and Ritchie is in Edmonton-Mill Creek, and what we're suggesting is that it would be better if we flipped that around and Ritchie was put back into Edmonton-Strathcona. As Brian said, we've looked at some of the community boundaries, but I guess we're not quite ready to concede yet that the Edmonton-Norwood seat will be lost.

The Chair: I wasn't trying to take that as a concession, asking you about the south side. Okay. We'll certainly look at that.

Regardless of what we do with Edmonton-Norwood, I take it that you're saying that you would give us your best view as to how we could deal with some communities regardless of what we do there.

Mr. Mason: I think John could probably provide your staff with something.

The Chair: Good.

Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for coming and making a detailed presentation. What I would be interested in is – we've had some representation today on the Francophone community. You've mentioned this, and I take it that what you're suggestion here – right now it's split three ways – would at least keep the two parts together. Have you thought about that other part of the Francophone community at all?

Mr. Kolkman: I should mention that Raj Pannu, who couldn't be here tonight, and I did meet with Liliane Maisonneuve and a couple of other people from the Francophone community. It is difficult. Like, you know, when you actually start looking at neighbourhoods and where they best fit, you soon realize that it has a cascading effect on adjoining constituencies.

Mr. Mason: Multiple head-nodding over there.

Mr. Kolkman: We do feel that there is a solution. There's probably no solution that would put the Francophone neighbourhoods in a single riding. The existing situation is that they're in two constituencies. I think their complaint was that the interim map puts them in three constituencies. We think we may

have found a solution that at least only divides them between two constituencies again rather than three, and that's something we might be able to share with your staff.

The Chair: As soon as you have that put together, would you share it with Mr. Fjeldheim, please? That would be very helpful to us.

Mr. Kolkman: Sure.

Mr. Mason: If I can just add to that. I think there's a corollary with the inner-city concerns. It's not that everybody has to be fit exactly within one; it's that there's enough of a certain collective interest that they have a significant impact on the outcome of an election within one constituency. I think that's a reasonable thing that we can aim for. To try and package all of these different and sometimes conflicting interests is an impossible case, I'm sure.

6:50

The Chair: We've come to that conclusion too.

Mr. Mason: I'm sure you have.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Brian.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thanks, John. If you'd follow up with Brian on the Francophone issue, that would be very helpful. When we've solved what we're going to do, we may be back to you to ask you for some more advice on some community issues.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thanks very much, gentlemen.

Mr. Olthof: Tony Ollenberger, Alberta First Party.

The Chair: I think the last time we saw Tony – you were in shorts; weren't you?

Mr. Ollenberger: I was. I just came straight from work to see you guys. I didn't have time to go home and change.

The Chair: Oh, good man.

Thank you Tony. We appreciate your coming back. If I recall, last time you suggested that we should alter considerably one of the ridings; in fact, the riding that you live in.

Mr. Ollenberger: That's correct.

The Chair: I recall your telling us at the end that that's where you live. So we'll be interested to hear your advice tonight. Please, go ahead, Tony.

Mr. Ollenberger: Okay. Well, thank you for allowing me to present again. Mr. Clark, I hear this rumour that you're retiring on us.

The Chair: I can confirm that.

Mr. Ollenberger: Well, congratulations, and I hope you enjoy your retirement.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Ollenberger: I hope your successor realizes what kind of a task he or she has to live up to.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Ollenberger: Okay. Unlike Mr. Mason and probably many others you've heard from so far, I agree with what you've done with the city of Edmonton. When I look at the numbers, I see that the numbers jibe very well. When you look at the average population per riding, I don't see that it's been a poor suggestion on your part. Where I do see room for improvement is within the capital region itself, and that would be the basis of my presentation.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Ollenberger: When I looked at the ridings of Airdrie-Chestermere and Foothills-Rocky View surrounding Calgary, I thought that was a fantastic example of what we need right here in the capital region. Just as people in, say, Airdrie or in Indus or these smaller communities around Calgary enjoy the benefits that Calgary offers but don't want to live in Calgary, the same exists in the capital region, which is the reason it's called the capital region. Essentially, Edmonton is more of a metropolitan area than a big city like Calgary. I would hope that this could be reflected in our electoral boundaries.

To that end, what I've suggested is much like, actually, recent events. When we see the way the health authorities were redrawn just recently, the Capital health authority has suddenly expanded to within probably a 45-minute drive anywhere of Edmonton. That to me reflects the capital region, and that's how I'd like to see our electoral boundaries represented as well. So once more I've kind of carved up my own constituency a little bit as well as some others in the capital region. What I've done is I've redrawn it my own way around the city of Edmonton to sort of shuffle some boundaries and then create a couple of new constituencies as well.

The Chair: Good. Please go ahead, Tony.

Mr. Ollenberger: Okay. I'll start with the city of St. Albert. As I was redrawing St. Albert and trying to see how I could make it work effectively, I realized I came up with the same model as you did.

The Chair: We can't both be wrong.

Mr. Ollenberger: That's what I'm saying.

So the city of St. Albert I would leave as you proposed it: the city of St. Albert itself east of St. Albert Trail and south of McKenney Avenue.

What I would do from there – the current riding of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert I would like to shuffle a little bit and maintain that one section of the city of St. Albert north of McKenney Avenue and west of St. Albert Trail and extend it west along the boundary of highway 633, which is a secondary highway leading toward Villeneuve, carry that on westward right to the border of the Whitecourt-St. Anne riding, current or proposed – either one would work – extend it at that point south to encompass the towns of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove, carry on south along the fifth meridian line past Stony Plain to the North Saskatchewan River, and then follow the river along towards the city of Edmonton. Now, I've proposed a name for that called Parkland-St. Albert, although the naming is up to you folks, of course. The population for this riding would still be within range of where you want it to be, although it would be higher than the 36,000.

The Chair: How much higher? Do you have an idea?

Mr. Ollenberger: Roughly between 38,000 and 39,000. Again, I just had to extract from the numbers on the voters lists.

Next I'd like to work with Sturgeon county, which is the area where I live. I live in Legal, for those of you who don't know. Actually, when the federal Electoral Boundaries Commission had their public hearings here, it was interesting to see the mayors of Morinville and St. Albert and Gibbons and whatnot, these smaller towns close to Edmonton, suggesting that they were being treated unfairly by putting them into a large rural riding. I see that the same exists with Redwater. Whereas the flow of people and goods and services tends to be to and from Edmonton in our communities, we're grouped in with a riding that includes towns like Thorhild and Smoky Lake, with which we have little or no contact.

I remember during the provincial election in 2001 talking with some farmers in the Thorhild area and one fellow grumbling to me: well, it's all the people in Morinville and Legal that make all the blankety-blank decisions anyhow. I thought, well, you know, he's still got a vote. But I think that perhaps people in those communities are being paid a small, minor disservice by being grouped in with people like myself, whose interests are somewhat different. I mean, most people I know who live in Legal or Morinville or, say, Gibbons, or whatnot work in Edmonton. We do our shopping in Edmonton, do most of our business in Edmonton but live in these smaller towns because we don't want to be part of Edmonton. I feel that people who live farther away, perhaps who live and work on the farm and deal mainly on their farm, probably don't share the same interests as I do.

To that end, what I would like to do with Sturgeon county is group it together with the city of Fort Saskatchewan and combine it into one riding, which I have labeled as Sturgeon-Fort Saskatchewan for your purposes. This, I believe, would connect communities of common interests, as we have Fort Saskatchewan on one side of the river and on the opposite side of the river in Sturgeon county there is the new proposed Heartland industrial area, which, if the riding stays as it is, would be grouped in with the same people out in Smoky Lake and Thorhild and whatnot, that I just discussed.

I'd like to move on next to Strathcona county. The population of Strathcona county is nearing the 70,000 mark, so I'd suggest we could take Strathcona county and divide it into two ridings, Strathcona-North and -South or Sherwood Park-Strathcona, or what have you. That would bring very effective representation for Strathcona county residents, who seem to be quite distinct in many ways anyway.

The riding of Leduc. I'd like to shuffle the boundaries to the west a little bit, making the eastern boundary of this riding highway 21. That's the highway that goes south toward Camrose. The rationale for that is that I'd like to shift the boundary to the west to include the town of Calmar into the Leduc riding because Calmar, I feel, like myself in Legal or Bon Accord or whatnot, is more connected to the capital region than it is to communities farther to the south and west of them. So what I'd like to do is shift the boundaries of Leduc to the west to include Calmar and then extend north to the North Saskatchewan River again, then east to connect with the city of Edmonton. Populationwise, again, this would still jibe. The remaining part of what was the Leduc constituency east of highway 21 could easily be absorbed into Vegreville-Viking without affecting populations in that riding.

I think that I've actually gone through every one I wanted to discuss. I realize I have left out a certain segment of ridings that are not accounted for right now, so I'd like to bring those to your attention. Those would be the western portion of what is now the Stony Plain constituency, which I believe could be absorbed into the

current Drayton Valley-Calmar riding. Geographically, as far as what was left of the Redwater constituency is concerned, the Thorhild county and Smoky Lake county portions could be divided up very easily between Barrhead, Westlock, Athabasca, or Lac La Biche-St. Paul. Geographically, it would work in either riding. Populationwise it would probably work more effectively in Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

And that is all I have for you, my friends.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Tony. You were succinct and to the point last time, and you are again this time.

Mr. Ollenberger: Well, I try to be consistent.

The Chair: You are.

Any questions or comments, short comments? Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chair. Thank you very much for coming. If I recall correctly, last time you had strongly suggested that we eliminate the riding of Redwater.

Mr. Ollenberger: My suggestion is that it doesn't make sense as a riding.

Mr. Patterson: And you're still on that same theme?

Mr. Ollenberger: Yes.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you.

Mr. Clegg: Well, a very simple question, Mr. Chairman and Tony. I see that you want to go west in the riding of Leduc and take in Calmar. I understand what you're saying, that Calmar has nothing to do with, I believe, Drayton Valley. I understand that, and we've run into that many times, you know. When we go down the corridor south, we have had to take towns or villages and put them into the west or the east area because of pure numbers, because Edmonton – well, from St. Albert right to Okotoks, I guess, there's your growth.

Mr. Ollenberger: That's right.

Mr. Clegg: And from east and west. I'm not going to mention north because my friends are here from the north. I mean, we're growing. We'll probably be the fastest growing area in the province next election.

The Chair: Question. Question.

Mr. Clegg: Anyway, that is the reason that some of these decisions are made: strictly for numbers. I don't disagree with your comment. It's just that sometimes you have to make decisions that are not in the best interest of an area, but it's just sheer numbers that make us do these things.

Mr. Ollenberger: Right.

The Chair: And I think, Tony, Calmar fit into that situation as far as Drayton Valley was concerned.

Mr. Ollenberger: Right.

Ms Mackay: So in all your changes here have you actually reduced the number of seats below 83?

Mr. Ollenberger: Actually, no. I have not changed the number of seats at all.

Ms Mackay: So all the combinations don't actually eliminate. It sounded like you were maybe eliminating Parkland area. No?

Mr. Ollenberger: Well, just modifying seats is really all I've done.

Ms Mackay: Oh, okay.

Mr. Ollenberger: Yeah. It's more reshuffling than actually eliminating anything.

The Chair: Okay. Any further questions?

Mr. Graham: It was a great presentation. Thank you. Your last one was good, and this one was also very good.

The Chair: Thanks, Tony, very much.

Mr. Ollenberger: Thank you.

Mr. Olthof: Gary Friedel.

The Chair: Okay. Gary, thank you very much for your attendance. Both Mr. Fjeldheim and I know that you were busy today looking at budgets, so you can just keep in the same frame. You're looking at boundaries tonight. We look forward to your presentation.

Mr. Friedel: Okay. Well, thank you very much. During the presentation I'm going to make, the commission members might at some point need to reference the map that I've given Brian.

The Chair: Could you put the map over here, Brian?

Mr. Friedel: He can be putting it up on the wall and I can keep talking as long as the rustling behind you doesn't disturb you.

The Chair: We don't want Ernie to miss anything. Just a minute.

Mr. Patterson: Oh, I know I can listen.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Patterson: I'm capable of more than one task.

The Chair: Okay, Gary. Let's see if he is.

Mr. Friedel: Okay. Well, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to respond to the interim report. The first remarks I'm going to make are a little bit general. The Peace River constituency is proposed to be the largest by quite an extraordinary amount. In spite of this, the population is going to be at approximately 90 percent of the provincial average. On the paper I gave you, I compared it to the top six on the matrix. It's 1,088 percent larger than Cardston-Taber-Warner, 984 percent larger than Little Bow, 211 percent, twice as large, as Lesser Slave Lake, 278 percent larger than Dunvegan, and you can read the numbers. I did emphasize that when we're talking 1,000 percent, that's 10 times as big as some of those other constituencies.

In spite of this, there were seven remote communities being added, some of them probably even more difficult to connect from Peace River than they presently are from the Lesser Slave Lake constituency, of which they are presently a part. The one that really

stands out is the Utikoomak Lake Indian reserves. There are three of them, for example. They are near highway 88 on the very southeast corner of the county, and they're considerably closer to either High Prairie or Slave Lake than they could ever possibly be to Peace River. The only reason I can see that they would be recommended to be in the Peace River constituency is because they lie within the boundaries of the county. However, to get there, you have to go through a road that's not even completed. Highway 986 is an all-weather road, but it's not high-grade, and it's not paved. So I'm assuming that that might have been an oversight, and I'll talk about it a little bit later.

No other constituency in the province has communities that are over 400 kilometres apart. The town of Peace River, for example, from the town of Rainbow Lake is more than that, and three of the communities that you're proposing to add in the northeast of the constituency would be that distance as well.

The other thing that's unique about the Peace River constituency is that it has a population spread relatively evenly throughout the entire constituency. If you look at the map, you'll see how it makes a great big T as compared to Wood Buffalo or Fort McMurray. Other than Fort Chipewyan there is no population in the north of that constituency. I'm not knocking the position on Athabasca because as chair of NADC we also made a representation about that, but I'm keeping my remarks to the Peace River one.

If you also look at the numbers – now, they don't show on the map – half of the population of the Peace River constituency is further north than any other constituency in the province: Lesser Slave Lake, Dunvegan, Wood Buffalo, and any of the other ones. So distance from the city of Edmonton, the capital city, is very significant.

When the interim report came out, the town of Peace River, for example – when they read it, they were quite upset because they're proposed to be separated from approximately 70 percent of their trading area, and they made a couple of remarks, which I've put in the attached documents. If you look at the map itself, you see that the town stands out very much like sort of a button at the bottom of the constituency.

The Chair: Right there?

Mr. Friedel: Yeah. Now, you have to disregard the red lines there because the lines on that map, on the overlay, are proposed changes. You'd have to lift up the two Mylars, Bob. Lift the bottom up. Those are the maps that you're proposing, and if you look at the town of Peace River, it stands out like a bit of a thumb right on the bottom.

Okay, then, secondly, the Northern Sunrise county, which is one of the changes that's being proposed, is being split directly through a significant portion of its population centre, and the folks there are also quite upset, and I believe you may have already heard from the reeve, Carolyn Kolebaba, about that. You can virtually see the county office from downtown Peace River, yet it would be in another constituency. If you look at that map also, the portion of the eastern side of the county that would remain in Peace River, you have to drive through the portion that you're separating to get to the portion that you're adding, which doesn't make a lot of sense, quite frankly. The river divides that area, and the only way you can get through is that highway 986, the one that's not quite complete. So it would almost seem the reverse of the kind of attachment it should have.

7:10

I want to make a side comment and not so much on how it affects the Peace River constituency, but I would be a little concerned about the scoring range of plus or minus 3 in the matrix. When I was

trying to compare these, it would appear that it's not a broad enough measure to give you the full impact of either the sizes or the distance or remoteness. Just as an example, if you compare the proposed Peace River constituency to the Whitecourt-Ste. Anne constituency – they're both rural; the population is almost identical – you'll see that they both scored 3 and 3 for area and density respectively, and as I said, while they have the same population, Peace River's area is a thousand times greater. So it would seem that there's not enough scoring range in that matrix to make a valid distinction between the two.

Also, I just sort of raise the question of the criteria under which the Dunvegan and the Lesser Slave Lake constituencies were selected to be designated as special electoral divisions. Neither, for example, are far extremes of the province. They're not the largest in size, and Lesser Slave Lake no longer even has a boundary coterminous with the provincial border. I made the observation that maybe the only significant difference between these two and the other northern constituencies is that they have less population. Lesser Slave Lake, in fact, is made considerably easier to service since the vast northern part of the constituency is removed and proposed to be added to Peace River. But in spite of this, several of the communities that would be as easy if not easier to service from Lesser Slave Lake or High Prairie are being shifted. I mean, those, being the two population centres in Lesser Slave Lake, would be as close if not closer to service the east side of the county as it sits now as the present boundaries.

So with that background, I've two recommendations, but the second recommendation is a very complex one. It's two options. The first one, I alluded to in my opening remarks, would seem to be a logical decision regardless of what happens to the rest of what I'm proposing to you. The Utikoomak Lake Indian reserves, the three population centres, should stay in the Lesser Slave Lake constituency. Either way, to High Prairie or Slave Lake, they're on a good road, much, much closer than they are to any point in the Peace River constituency.

The Chair: This area here?

Mr. Friedel: No. If you look on the far right bottom of the red, Lesser Slave Lake. Right down. Yeah. Way in the bottom right corner. Yeah. I think that's just an error.

The Chair: It's not the first one we've had pointed out to us today.

Mr. Friedel: Like I say, I think that's just an oversight, and that's why I sort of made it stand out regardless of the rest of it.

The second recommendation is, you'll see on the paper, split into two options. You'll wonder why I am making this presentation. It's sort of like taking myself and cutting myself through just above the belt, because the first proposal would be to split the Peace River constituency across, severed on the 25th baseline.

The Chair: Could you come up and show us that?

Mr. Friedel: Can you hear me?

Ms Mackay: It's going to be hard for *Hansard*.

Mr. Friedel: Okay. We'll just leave it like that as it is there. That's the 27th. It would come down here, run across. This is the area I'm talking about. The dividing line here is between Hawk Hills and Keg River. There's no one living in that area, so it would be a natural dividing line. The new area, which includes the towns of High Level, Rainbow Lake, the MD of Mackenzie, a very small portion of the north end of the MD of Northern Lights, the Paddle

Prairie Metis settlement, and Indian reserves 162, 163, 164, 164a, 173, 173a, 209, 212, and 215, has a population of approximately 19,000 people. I've attached that to the documents. The remaining portion to the south, which includes the town of Manning, the town of Peace River, and the southern balance of MD 22, Northern Lights, we're proposing could be transferred into the Dunvegan constituency. Because of the population differential that this would create, I'm proposing – if you look underneath here, this is the portion of the Lesser Slave Lake constituency that you had proposed to move into Peace River. I'm suggesting that that would stay in Lesser Slave Lake. It makes it a better block and also doesn't overload Dunvegan with the extra population and the distance.

So just sort of to recap it – disregard this line here for the purpose of this – this would be the Dunvegan constituency, this would be Lesser Slave Lake, and this would be a new constituency. This is not creating new numbers. This is shifting the populations.

Mr. Clegg: Gary, here's High Level. Now, there is Fort Vermilion.

Mr. Friedel: Okay. There's Fort Vermilion. You've added John D'Or Prairie. You've added this, this, this, and this, and these down here. But if you look at option B, it changes that too.

Mr. Clegg: Well, this was a mistake. This should never have been in here. It's not in yours, Gary.

Mr. Friedel: It is, yes. This is your map here. You've added all of that.

Mr. Clegg: Oh, no, no.

Mr. Friedel: All of this down here.

Mr. Clegg: They sure did some funny things there.

Mr. Friedel: Okay. The second thing of concern, this little wedge in here that was in the Peace River constituency. This includes part of the MD, the St. Isidore map, and all of those. You heard Carolyn, I'm sure, give you her impression of what that's doing.

Mr. Clegg: Yeah, we heard that. We heard that.

Mr. Friedel: The alternate proposal, option B, would be to leave the piece of the constituency on the south end as it is, leave it intact, and add on that northern portion to enlarge it, but preferably take this part out simply because it's so huge, and retain that in Lesser Slave Lake. Now, I know the folks in here, the Woodland Cree and the Little Buffalo areas – and I'm not sure of this – may have suggested that, you know, being closer to Peace River than they are to Lesser Slave Lake – but if you just look at the sheer size of it, at some point I think you have to cut off on population as well.

So this map shows the preferred option, B. The red outlines just show the two neighbouring constituencies with what would be in them. Now, this proposal 2 would be supported by the town of Peace River. It would be the preferred option for the MD of Northern Lights, MD 22, and the town of Manning as well. The northern division, option A – and there's an attachment – is supported unanimously by every community in the north end.

7:20

Mr. Clegg: And what's your population?

Mr. Friedel: About 20,000. Just under.

Mr. Patterson: So that would become a special riding?

Mr. Friedel: It would become a special riding, and then, of course, Dunvegan would have the population here so that it would no longer have to be a special riding.

Mr. Patterson: And Lesser Slave Lake wouldn't be a special riding either then?

Mr. Friedel: No. It still is below the population, so it could still be. I think for what you have done with the boundaries, the special area is probably more semantics than anything anyway. It's just the fact that it's less population.

The Chair: Maybe we'll return to our seats. This would be like a high school principal having the class up at the blackboard; wouldn't it?

Mr. Friedel: If I'd known how to build a PowerPoint, I would have done that, but it's slightly beyond my technical capabilities.

I think I've made the points as to which municipalities support which. The town of Manning and the MD are not vehemently opposed to the split either, but the town of Peace River had considered both options, and I believe you have a written proposal from them indicating that they would prefer something much along the lines of option B, so it's kind of a split.

The reason I make this proposal – and like I say, it's sort of like cutting myself in half. You sort of wonder: okay; what am I doing to my constituency? Where would I run? That sort of thing. I totally took myself out of this equation. I had to take myself out of the picture because as an MLA this is not something I would propose, but having talked to the people in the community and looking at what I think is maybe the right thing to do, I finally came to terms with that.

I believe that if you don't do it this time around, it would have to be done the next time anyway. Simply with the distance that those communities in the north are from anything else, I think they've grown to a population where they deserve some representation that's closer than where they are. Looking at the probabilities, I would say that with the numbers, you know, that might happen by just the way the election down the road would take it over anyway.

Looking at the logistics and the logic of the way the boundaries would be, if you look at what remains, that long line on the south end which is that centre part – it's hard to describe from here, but it would be the eastern part of Dunvegan. With the geographical blocks that are left, it would almost make sense that they be squared off that way. As I say, once I started to look at that, I had to agree that I would make this proposal on behalf of the communities that I represent now.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Clegg: Hello, Gary. You know, I always sang that song: it's humble – what's that song?

Mr. Friedel: O Lord, it's hard to be humble.

Mr. Clegg: It's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way. This was certainly in my mind. I guess I'm not perfect, because I didn't ever realize, Gary, that . . .

Mr. Friedel: Nor humble.

Mr. Clegg: It's my turn to talk.

Anyway, I'll tell you how the conversation went. You were representing a couple of native bands up there, and we thought, well, you could get at it far better than they can from Lesser Slave Lake. I mean, this was the conversation between us. It was never my intention to ever have that square there at the bottom, Utikoomak and that, be in Peace River. I didn't realize the size. I guess somewhere the communication wasn't just as good as it could be, but it was never our intention to give you three-quarters of Alberta. You're a good MLA – I will admit that – but this got way out of hand. I've never been up there, but in my mind it was: well, you can just take in a couple more of these bands and you can in fact look after those better than they can from Slave Lake or High Prairie. We can't use Peace River and we can't use Slave Lake because the next MLA might be from Rainbow Lake or can be from High Prairie. We don't know those kinds of things. But I think we have a little bit of correction to do on some borders there.

Mr. Friedel: But I do agree, Glen, that including Fox Lake and Tall Cree, because of their proximity to High Level and Fort Vermilion, makes sense. They should be part of that northern area, whether it's part of the Peace River constituency, much as it is now, or whether it's split across. I think they do fit from a trading area point of view, from the way they work together. They're also part of the High Level tribal council. They should be part of that constituency. So it's not the north end that we were complaining about. As a matter of fact, I think that was a good choice.

Mr. Clegg: Well, that's really, I thought, all we were doing, bringing those all in because the access for those bands was through to Fort Vermilion and to High Level. That's all I ever presumed we were doing. I wish some city people were here to see what size of riding you've got. These figures, when I start reading, where he's coming from – but I see what you're saying.

Mr. Friedel: On the diagonal, the way it was proposed to be, it would be almost 500 kilometres across.

The Chair: So I guess, Gary, there are three things you've told us. You're saying that if we're not going to make significant changes in the north, then include that trading area around Peace River in Peace River. You're saying, number two, that if you want to look at a bold alternative, look at the idea of a new special riding in the north with 19,000 or 20,000 people. Everything north of Manning would go up there and Manning south.

Mr. Friedel: Yeah. The map lays it out pretty well.

The Chair: If you did that, then you'd have Manning and Peace River in the Dunvegan riding. [interjection] If we went for the northern riding, then we'd have Manning, Peace River, and Fairview all in one riding.

Mr. Friedel: If you split the two, then Manning and Peace River and the bulk of MD 22 would be in the Dunvegan riding.

The Chair: Mr. Clegg has already conceded that we didn't do what we thought we were doing with that large block to the east of Peace River. We hadn't planned to take that out of Slave Lake.

Mr. Friedel: As I said too, knowing that the communities don't totally agree on this, either option would, I'm sure, be acceptable. I'm going to emphasize the point and I would ask the commission to consider this: in the event that you choose not to do the north/south split, I would strongly recommend a sidebar to the next commission

since I think at that point the split would be obvious because the northern sector would have grown to the point where it would obviously no longer be a fit. So that would be the one concession I would ask. Other than that, I'm making it somewhat neutral because I'm representing communities that don't totally see eye-to-eye on the way the proposal would go, one way or another. But I think it would be a fair assumption that they would accept the verdict either way.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you very much, Gary, for coming down and pointing out our lack of deep thinking in this situation, but I would also like to thank you for coming down and being able to respond to my good friend Glen here very quickly when he gets a little carried away. So I thank you for those two things.

My question to you, though, leaving that all aside, is: should we consider, then, some name changes? Let's say we accept option A or option B. Have you thought about what we should do with name changes?

7:30

Mr. Friedel: Well, if you made the north/south split, I would guess that the logical name would be Mackenzie or something like it because that's what the municipality is named after. The Mackenzie highway is up there. It generally sees itself as the Mackenzie area of the province. Obviously, naming it Peace River would no longer be appropriate.

Mr. Patterson: No. If Peace River moves into Dunvegan, have you any thoughts about the name there?

Mr. Friedel: The present name probably isn't all that bad.

Mr. Patterson: Even though it's represented by a previous MLA?

Mr. Friedel: Yeah. In case the audience wonders, they probably have figured out by now that Glen and I were neighbouring MLAs. We appreciated and enjoyed each other's company a lot, and there's a long history of this ribbing.

Mr. Clegg: By the way, Gary was raised in Fairview, which makes him very, very good.

One last question, Gary. You had mentioned John D'Or Prairie and those reserves. Could you give us a map of exactly where you think it should be represented regardless of either option A or B? If it went to option B, tell us exactly where that line should be. It was never our intention to take three-quarters of Pearl's riding away. We knew we were taking some, but we didn't know it was three-quarters of it.

Mr. Friedel: Well, in spite of the fact that there's a huge traveling distance to Fox Lake, John D'Or Prairie, and the two Tall Cree reserves, I have to admit that the most logical place for them to be attached is to wherever High Level and those are.

Mr. Clegg: Exactly. That's what we thought.

Mr. Friedel: As I say, again, looking outside of what's comfortable for an MLA living in Peace River, that is a logical fit. What you see in the green kind of box with two corners out of it should be the northern part regardless.

The Chair: Okay. Any other questions for Gary?

Thank you, Gary, very much. We appreciate it.

Mr. Friedel: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Olthof.

Mr. Olthof: The hon. Minister of Seniors, Stan Woloshyn.

The Chair: Mr. Minister. Hello, sir.

Mr. Woloshyn: Good evening. I'll make my presentation brief and to the point. I'm here substituting for Russell Hakes. I would like to say to all of you folks up there: thank you very much for tackling a very difficult task. At the end of the day I'm sure the outcome will be as good as any group of five people in this province could make it.

You have some very interesting challenges to face with respect to Stony Plain, my constituency, and basically the west side of Edmonton. I think doing the minimal changes that you did were the appropriate things to do given the populations and trading patterns and whatnot.

I'd also like to wish each and every one of you, your families, your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a blessed holiday.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Woloshyn: That's my presentation. Any questions?

The Chair: Stan, I'm not going to let people ask you questions, because I'm sure Glen might arrange for some row. Things are going so well. Thank you very much, Stan.

Mr. Woloshyn: And have a good season. Thank you very much.

Mr. Olthof: Dan Carroll, Edmonton-Riverview constituency.

The Chair: Dan, do you happen to have your MLA along with you?

Mr. Carroll: I do happen to have my MLA along with me, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: If you want him to sit up beside you, if you don't mind the association, we wouldn't mind.

Mr. Carroll: I'd invite Dr. Taft to come and join me, please. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Okay. You know Ernie Patterson; you know Glen Clegg; you know Bauni . . .

Mr. Graham: And you know me very well.

Mr. Carroll: I recognize some of these people indeed.

Mr. Chairman, commission members, my name is Dan Carroll, and some of you may recognize me in my other incarnation as a lawyer. I'll ask you not to hold that against me in these hearings.

I'm here tonight as the president of the Edmonton-Riverview Liberal Constituency Association, and I'm here to speak to the commission's interim report as it relates to that constituency. Quite frankly, it is regrettable that the commission found it necessary to reduce by one division the representation of the city of Edmonton, but I'm not here to speak to that general issue. I'm here instead not to advocate but rather to congratulate the commission with respect to what it has done with the Edmonton-Riverview constituency.

When the commission began its task, it was faced with a constituency at Edmonton-Riverview with a population of about 32,000, which is roughly 90 percent of the provincial average. Now,

the challenge that this commission faced was how to essentially respect the current configuration of the constituency, because it was a configuration that worked, while at the same time bringing the constituency more in line with the target averages for population.

I submitted a letter on the 27th of June to the commission. I made a number of observations about the nature of the communities, about the elements that they held in common by virtue of their age, by virtue of their demographics, by virtue of the character of the population that was there. I also made a number of observations about the need to expand the constituency, and when the interim report was released, I was pleased to see that, quite frankly, my submissions were taken far more to heart than I had anticipated.

Firstly, the commission saw fit to maintain the same general configuration for the Edmonton-Riverview constituency, which was a good thing. Secondly, the commission appeared to accept what was plan A of my written submission, which was to add the Grandview Heights and Lansdowne neighbourhoods in the Edmonton-Riverview area south of the river, and that increased the population by about 2,400. Thirdly, the commission of its own initiative added a further neighbourhood, the Jasper Place neighbourhood of Meadowlark, to the constituency north of the river. That also increased the population by about the same number, 2,400. That gave us a constituency now of about 37,000, which was 4 percent above the provincial average as opposed to 10 percent below, and it is right within the ballpark of the category average. So what the commission has done has added three neighbourhoods to the constituency. All of these neighbourhoods are very similar in their age, in their demographics, and those neighbourhoods face the same kinds of issues as those that are currently within the constituency.

I say that I come not to advocate but to congratulate. I advocate that the commission stay the course with its report, and I congratulate you on the steps you took with respect to Edmonton-Riverview. I think they were appropriate, the constituency association thinks they were appropriate, and I'm here really to speak in favour of what the commission has done rather than to complain about it, which may be a refreshing change.

The Chair: It's getting late in the evening, but it's never too late to hear that.

Mr. Carroll: Those are all my submissions, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thanks, Dan.
Any questions or comments?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to say: Dan, as a lawyer now you don't have to worry anymore about being a lawyer; it's chartered accountants that have to worry.

Mr. Carroll: They're the ones that are really under the gun these days.

The Chair: Dan, thank you very much. I want to make a special comment, and that is that when you people came with that idea and you told us that the river brought people together, I thought you had about as much sense as a snowball in Hades. Obviously, I was wrong. Bauni and the rest of the group on the committee convinced us that that in fact at least could be seen as kind of a uniting thing. The committee has bought that. It's seldom that people come to us and say: you did listen, much to our surprise, and we appreciate that you listened, and you did a good job. That's about the best Christmas card we've received in two days, so thank you very much.

Mr. Carroll: I will say that you earned it. Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks, Dan.

Mr. Olthof: Doug King, Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Association.

The Chair: Well, Doug, how are you tonight?

Mr. King: I'm very well. Thank you.

The Chair: Ah, good. Thank you very much for coming. We've been at this all this morning, afternoon, and this evening, and despite the fact that we've been here for some time, we look forward to your presentation.

Mr. King: Maybe I'll give you an impromptu Christmas card as well. This must be just mind-numbing listening to all this stuff.

The Chair: To some extent. But there's a gentleman down here who's sat through the whole day.

Mr. King: I certainly don't envy you.
I don't know if you have copies of my presentation.

The Chair: We're getting them.

7:40

Mr. King: It's relatively short. I was here during the first round, and I must say that I was dismayed, I guess, with the interim report, certainly as it related to Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan. Most of it's in the written submission, so if you'll agree to undertake a test, I won't read just strictly from my notes.

The Chair: We so agree. Give us the highlights, please, Doug.

Mr. King: Just very briefly, I guess. We struck a committee within the association, spent a fair bit of time on this. I liked the background in the report. It gave some good, solid background in terms of effective governance and certainly your interpretation of that. I guess in section 14 what the committee saw and the constituency saw in there, where you talked about averages and scarcity and density of population – that was listed first, and all the remaining things that, in our view, are far more important to the average constituent in Alberta were all listed after the numbers issues. I guess that goes to common community interests, existing municipal boundaries, roads, and clear and understandable boundaries. That's really what I wanted to key on today, to really underscore the community interests and community history, because that's really what most of life is about, certainly out where we are. We have a high sense of community, and I just wanted to underscore that.

You had asked me a question during my first presentation about Ardrossan not being that large. However, had you asked the question, "Would you like me to take 11,000 of your constituents and put them somewhere else?" you would have had a far different answer. I just wanted to clarify that.

In our first presentation certainly our preference was to take Sherwood Park, take Strathcona county – if you had equalized the two constituencies, you would have had two constituencies that were over, but I did the math, and I think they were plus 18 percent. But if you have other issues outside – you know, that was part of the problem that we struggled with. We did have some help, certainly, in looking at some of the areas outside Clover Bar and Strathcona county, but if you had some population scarcity issues farther east,

I guess we understand it.

The Chair: And we did.

Mr. King: In that regard, that's where we spent most of our time, I guess, subsequent to the interim report.

What you had proposed was about 11,600 residents, I think it was, in southeast Strathcona going to Viking, adding about 11,000 residents from Sherwood Park. That concerned us to the extent that at that point we saw a constituency that had an urban/rural ratio of about one-third urban, two-thirds rural being flipped over to two-thirds urban, essentially, and one-third rural. The issues on acreages are much, much different than they are in Sherwood Park. Even though we're aligned toward Sherwood Park, they're still different and we're still distinct. So that caused us some concern. Really, severing the county, particularly in a municipality that had a referendum to maintain its former government under one council, being Sherwood Park urban services area and the rural county, I guess caused us some concern.

In that regard, I think you've probably heard other presentations in terms of what we're proposing. It forced us to take a serious look at the common alliances, the common interests, the community history, and that type of thing. At the end of the day it was a pretty hard decision in my view, and we had to admit, I guess, that the conclusion ultimately was that rural Strathcona has more in common with Sherwood Park and the rest of Strathcona than we do with the city of Fort Saskatchewan. It's not something that came lightly or easily.

In that regard our proposal is: Fort Saskatchewan and a small area north of highway 15, which really, you know, has somewhere in the order of 200 voters, a small portion of Strathcona county, go to the east, align themselves with Vegreville . . .

The Chair: Vegreville-Viking.

Mr. King: Vegreville-Viking, yes. I'm going to stay out of the renaming. I'm sure there are folks more competent than I am to deal with that issue.

. . . and retaining the 11,000 residents down in the southeast area of the county. I guess I'd really like to point out, and it's in my report, that we actually had one director that went out and phoned 23 contacts. He had a contact list from another issue; it wasn't a constituency list at all.

The Chair: Twenty-two were shocked.

Mr. King: Well, the reaction ranged from shock to disbelief to even anger immediately. The remaining one phoned back the next day and said: no, no; we're aligned with Sherwood Park. I really wanted to stress that.

At the end of it there are some numbers in there, and I think we have some improved average numbers that are closer to the provincial average. We have a rural/urban/acreage mix that's still about one-third/two-thirds, or two-thirds rural. I think that if you talk to the residents and council of Fort Saskatchewan, they would probably prefer to be aligned to the east. Actually, I think what we've got improves on most aspects of what you have to consider.

The Chair: The mayor of Fort Saskatchewan was in Athabasca yesterday afternoon, and we've had two or three presentations along this line today. We asked some of the good folks from a little farther east to sit down with the presentation that, I believe, Mr. Loughheed made. Wasn't it?

Mr. Clegg: Uh-huh.

The Chair: So we've hopefully had those people looking at the presentation to see if it serves a good purpose a little farther east too. It's a new idea that came on the table today, and we concede very openly that we know we have to do something different than what we proposed in the area east of Edmonton. I think one day in the office we got – Doug, how many faxes did we get from the Sherwood Park area?

Mr. Olthof: About 108.

The Chair: So your system works pretty well.

Mr. King: Well, that wasn't our constituency. That was probably Sherwood Park. I suspect that there are a number of people there that – it's really hard to draw boundaries, you know, and I've just seen a small bit of what you have to deal with.

The Chair: Tell us.

Mr. King: I know they don't want 11,000 residents moving from Sherwood Park out into, whatever the name might be, Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, as it exists today. Five thousand, I guess, originally was what we had in mind, but to try to pick boundaries – actually, I could give you some help. I work largely east of Clover Bar Road in the growing area of Sherwood Park, and I know those areas in the neighbourhood intimately. You would almost have to go by area structure plans and get into Sherwood Park's planning system if you were going to pare it down from the boundary that you've picked.

The Chair: Pretty close.

Well, any questions of Doug? Thank you very much. We appreciate your help. It's noted that you offered to give us a hand in that east country if we need it. Now, you may live to regret that offer.

Mr. Olthof.

Mr. Olthof: At this time, Mr. Chairman, I have no other speakers.

The Chair: Is there any reason why we would stay if there are no other speakers at this time?

Mr. Olthof: Well, we have another speaker on the list scheduled to arrive at 8 o'clock. We're a bit ahead of schedule.

The Chair: Okay. We'll take a five-minute break, then.

[The commission adjourned from 7:50 p.m. to 7:55 p.m.]

The Chair: Mr. Olthof.

Mr. Olthof: Yes. Mr. Don Kuchelyma, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues.

The Chair: Don, welcome back again. I want to say to you at the outset that we did listen to what you said about trying to keep communities together. I'd like to think that we've done that in a number of places, quite frankly, not only in your community but in the city of Calgary. My friend Mr. Graham found out that it wasn't possible in all cases. So we look forward to your suggestions tonight as to how we might improve upon what we already have, but I do want you to know that that didn't go over our heads or was

forgotten.

Go ahead, please, Don.

Mr. Kuchelyma: Thank you, sir. I am Don Kuchelyma, as you mentioned, the president of the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, and I'm here tonight to elaborate on the views expressed in our September 23 letter to the commission. Our main concern is that the proposed provincial electoral boundaries intersect some community leagues.

The community league movement has been an integral part of Edmonton since 1917, when the first community league was formed. Four years later the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues was created by the nine leagues of the time to advocate matters of citywide concern. In 1980 Edmonton city council passed policy C110 stating:

The community league structure is a useful mechanism for debate of area concerns and presentations of views and recommendations of the area. Participation in community league activities is a desirable element for democracy which seeks to place decision making for appropriate activities at the neighbourhood level.

In 1999 the EFCL adopted the following policies on boundaries and hopes the Alberta boundaries commission does as well. Some of these policies are: respect natural or man-made boundaries to participation; respect for community league boundaries as they exist; ability to consider room for future growth; respect for common interests as identified by the leagues; ability to consider age of neighbourhood, demographics, and socioeconomic similarities; and will consider the number of leagues and/or the population. Based on these criteria, the EFCL is opposed to electoral boundaries that carve up individual community leagues and, unavoidably, their interests.

Also, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta, 2000, chapter E-3, part 2, number 14, Relevant Considerations, in part states:

... may take into consideration any factors it considers appropriate, but shall take into consideration . . .

(c) common community interests and community organizations [and] . . .

(d) wherever possible, the existing community boundaries within the cities of Edmonton and Calgary.

Recommendations for Edmonton and Calgary communities are further recognized and receive special consideration and mention in the MGA.

We have five areas of concern in the draft proposal regarding Edmonton constituencies, and these are regarding the Kenilworth and Ottewell community leagues. We request that the boundary between Edmonton-Gold Bar and Edmonton-Mill Creek proceed from 90th Avenue and 75th Street north to 92A Avenue to Ottewell Road, then south to 90th Avenue, and east to 50th Street.

Regarding the Lakewood community league, which consists of the Kameyosek, Meyonohk, and Tipaskan neighbourhoods, we ask that the boundary between Edmonton-Mill Woods and Edmonton-Ellerslie follow 34th Avenue east to 66th Street and then south to 28th Avenue. Alternatively, we suggest that the boundary follow 91st Street south from 34th Avenue to 23rd Avenue and then east to 50th Street.

Regarding the McCauley community league, we request that the boundary between Edmonton-Centre and Edmonton-Gold Bar proceed north on 101st Street to Norwood Boulevard, not 107A Avenue and 92nd Street.

Finally, in respect to the Parkdale-Cromdale community league boundaries we request that the boundary between Edmonton-Highlands and Edmonton-Gold Bar follow Norwood Boulevard and 112th Avenue to the LRT ROW.

We're also concerned about the commission's proposal that Edmonton-Gold Bar straddle the North Saskatchewan River. We

believe that community leagues such as Boyle Street, McCauley, and Parkdale-Cromdale have different interests, are of different age, demographics, and socioeconomic status than those on the south side. In addition, we have a concern that Edmonton is losing an MLA through this process, but I will leave this issue to others to object and raise opposition to.

That concludes my presentation, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Don. Don indicated to us that he had an opportunity to be at a wine and cheese function tonight, and some member of our staff indicated that there'd been a bit of "whining" here. I'm not sure whether it's been from this side of the table or that side, but, Don, thank you for a very to-the-point presentation.

What we'll do, Don, is pass this on to the Chief Electoral Officer and have him look at the specific proposals, and certainly once we've made a decision of what we're going to do in Edmonton, we will do this and keep this very, very much in mind. I appreciate it, and I want to emphasize again: we didn't take your presentation lightly earlier. Sometimes we end up having to do strange things when you've got to find a few thousand or a few hundred people to kind of balance out some of these population problems, but we really will try and heed what you've told us here.

Mr. Kuchelyma: From what we looked at in regards to some of the neighbourhoods, the population shift is in the hundreds.

The Chair: In the hundreds?

Mr. Kuchelyma: Yes.

The Chair: That may well be workable.

Mr. Kuchelyma: So it seems that they might have gone on an arterial rather than on the community boundary. Unfortunately, the map that I had for my own I left with the commission the last time I made the presentation, so I don't have another copy, but if required, I could get another copy of the community league map. One of the indications was that there was some difficulty in getting community league maps in both Edmonton and Calgary, and I don't know if that is the case.

The Chair: Brian, is that the case?

Mr. Fjeldheim: Yeah, it is difficult because sometimes there are community leagues and community associations that crop up. You know better than I: sometimes they don't coincide.

Mr. Kuchelyma: Yes. The best maps are available through the city or through our office.

Mr. Fjeldheim: All right. If I could get that information.

Mr. Kuchelyma: Okay. I believe I left you a card you can take, and you can get that information through our office, if need be.

The Chair: If need be, Brian will follow up with you directly.

Mr. Kuchelyma: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Any other questions?

Mr. Patterson: I just want to say, Mr. Chairman: thank you for coming in. We've heard some of these concerns expressed in some

earlier submissions today also, so thank you.

Mr. Kuchelyma: Thank you, and thank you for the opportunity of making a presentation.

The Chair: I think Bauni has a question for you.

Ms Mackay: Yes. As someone who's active in her community league, I'm kind of interested in a statement by the Federation of Community Leagues that although you are in opposition to Edmonton losing a seat, you see no need to actually raise the issue in terms of objection and opposition. I'm kind of curious about that because it would seem to me that the Federation of Community Leagues should feel an obligation if you agree that Edmonton should not lose a seat, that you would want to be arguing that to the commission. I'm just a little curious as to the logic behind the rationale that you've presented here.

Mr. Kuchelyma: One of the things that we don't do is we don't do a lot of political posturing unless the membership votes and says that one of the objections that we have is this. The membership voted that the process that we take and present, as I'd indicated earlier, is on the points that we don't cut up the community boundaries, we try to have their concerns, et cetera.

When we found out that the commission was actually cutting one seat or proposing to cut one seat, we didn't have the opportunity to go back to our membership to get their ratification. Because of that, we are not going to stand here and make a presentation on behalf of all the community leagues in the city of Edmonton that states that they are opposed to losing one member. I am very sure that if we had a meeting, that would be one of their concerns, but as the president it might be a concern. Maybe we should only have one seat in the city of Edmonton; I don't know. But as I indicated, there are some individuals that are concerned, and as an organization we can't stand here and say that our membership is truly supportive of our losing one seat. I do know that some community leagues would stand up and say that they're very opposed to it. We operate as a democratic organization, and if that motion would pass, then we would stand here and state that fact. So I hope that that . . .

8:05

Ms Mackay: I understand.

Mr. Kuchelyma: It's not that we don't wish to; it's just that we haven't been given the authority to stand here and say that.

Ms Mackay: You have to follow the process. Yeah, I understand.

The Chair: Any further questions?

Thank you, Don, very much, and have a good Christmas.

Mr. Kuchelyma: Thank you. You as well.

The Chair: Thank you.

John Engelmann.

Mr. Engelmann: Good evening, Mr. Chairman and fellow members of the commission. I have to say that this is going to be an ad hoc oral presentation here. I should mention that perhaps these types of commissions are in my blood, since my father, Professor Frederick Engelmann, sat on the federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Alberta in 1990.

The Chair: Oh, very good. Well, John, the practice we've followed is that people will have 10 minutes to make a presentation

to us, and then we'll ask you some questions or make some comments. I have trouble with the gentlemen to my right asking questions; they generally like to make comments. The people on my left are more inclined to ask questions. But that's the procedure we'll follow, John.

Mr. Engelmann: Okay. Very briefly, my opinion may be based on what I learned as I grew up. In a representative democracy the most important factor by far is an equal number of persons in the various constituencies of any constituted state. I'm somewhat uneasy that in Alberta we classify ridings by whether they're urban, suburban, or rural, and not just a riding per se. I'm also troubled by these extra factors that are used in the matrix to determine what is, quote, effective representation, since in my humble opinion or my maybe slightly biased opinion . . .

The Chair: No. In your opinion.

Mr. Engelmann: These are generally what I see to be factors to reduce the number of urban seats, basically to reduce the enfranchisement of the major urban areas for lesser populations elsewhere. In the interim report there was a representation made by, I think, Dr. Gibbins, and his point I think should be taken very seriously. Also, I still do not fully understand the Legislature's use of, quote, special areas to determine electoral boundaries.

Now, I agree with what you said. The United States model, which is rep-by-pop to the nth degree, is probably not appropriate in Alberta.

The Chair: Or in Canada.

Mr. Engelmann: If there is one example I can give in the United States that you could look at as a fairly good method of determining constituency boundaries, it would be the state of Iowa. They use a nonpartisan board and, unlike the other states, don't have these partisan people getting together with their computer models to make completely arcane constituencies.

Going on. As I said, another thing I would consider about population sizes in general is that if a riding is to be made smaller than the average, probably the most important reason might be that it is a rapidly growing area of the province and that over the next 10 years it would in fact be well above the average by that time. Therefore, you purposely make some of these ridings smaller with the expectation that the population would increase.

Concerning the major urban areas, in my belief both Calgary and Edmonton deserve one more seat than what is currently given to them in the interim report. Where I would humbly take these seats from is one seat from the rural south to Calgary, one seat from the rural central to Edmonton. In the rural north the average population per seat is around the average even though there is a huge skew between Lesser Slave Lake and Wood Buffalo. If there is some qualm about that, Edmonton's current population in 2001, if divided by the constituency quotient, is under 19 but above 18.5.

One could consider, though I understand that this is taken with trepidation, that CFB Namao, a big chunk of whose population used to be in CFB Griesbach, which was in the city, is contiguous to the city and for all intents and purposes is oriented to the city as the major armed forces base in the area. Therefore, if need be to bump up Edmonton's constituency population slightly, you could consider adding CFB Namao to one of the Edmonton ridings. This would of course probably completely tear up Redwater, but I think a previous speaker was saying something about his plans for Redwater.

The Chair: Yes, we've had that suggestion.

Mr. Engelmann: Yeah. What I was going to say is that in this interim report there was some discussion about the rural versus urban and how some of the rural areas were concerned that as the urban population increases, their interests seem to diminish. But you could say the same thing for the urban areas, that as their population increases, they're underrepresented in the Legislature. Therefore, issues that are important to them may not be addressed and would be addressed if the ridings were basically more or less equal in population.

Basically, those are my few words.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much. I appreciate your comments. I guess what we're tied with, as are the federal redistribution people, is this concept of effective representation. We've tried to come to grips with that and have some allowance in the recommendation that we've made on the assumption, not by everyone, that it's easier to represent people in Edmonton than it is in rural areas. Calgary is likely the second easiest place to represent and then the corridor and then the urban areas where there are cities and rural areas and then the rural rurals. That's really why you see the numbers from about 37,000 down to about 33,000, John. That's kind of how we balance out. Now, no one is to say that that's right, but that's the best we've been able to do to date, anyway.

Mr. Engelmann: Sorry. One comment about these conditions. To me number one, area; number two, population density; and number three, rural/urban ratio are basically addressing the same point. If you wish to make consideration for an area, that is, I kind of understand, somewhat important, but then population density and rural/urban split are the same as area. Therefore, why they're there, I'm not quite sure.

The last point: distance to the Legislature. Again, I'm uneasy about this. In this modern world of effective communication and fast transportation how far you are from Edmonton doesn't – in the other provinces I'm not sure but I don't think they say the same things about how far it is to the provincial capital.

The Chair: Oh, but they do. It's just like in the federal redistribution. One of the issues that people in the far east and far west have is, in fact, the amount of time it takes people to get to Ottawa and the difficulties they have. But that's another issue; isn't it?

Mr. Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say that distance does make a factor. I serve on the Alberta Urban Municipalities executive, so I find myself spending five to five and a half hours in the car to get to Edmonton, and some people serving on the same executive jump in the car and they're there in half an hour. So I hate to disagree with you, but it does make a difference.

The Chair: Mr. Clegg.

Mr. Clegg: No.

The Chair: Anyone else?

John, thank you very much. We appreciate your coming and giving us your sound advice. Thank you.

Mr. Engelmann: Thank you.

Mr. Olthof: Mr. Chairman, I have no further speakers.

The Chair: Okay. Then the day is now concluded. We'll reconvene at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning in Red Deer at the Capri;

is that right? Okay. Thank you very much. Good evening.

[The hearing adjourned at 8:15 p.m.]