



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

Slave Lake

Thursday, October 8, 2009
10 a.m.

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Judge Ernest J.M. Walter, Chairman

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Peter Dobbie, QC
Brian Evans, QC
Allyson Jeffs

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Denny Garratt, Reeve, Municipal District of Lesser Slave River
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[Judge Walter in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, and thank you for taking time to come out and share your views with us today. My name is Ernie Walter, and I'm the chairman of the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission. With me here today are the other members of the commission. On my far right is Dr. Keith Archer of Banff, next to me on my immediate right is Peter Dobbie of Vegreville, on my immediate left is Allyson Jeffs of Edmonton, and on my far left is Brian Evans of Calgary.

Our task, as you may well know, is that we've been directed by legislation to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on the areas, boundaries, and names for 87 electoral divisions. In other words, our job is to determine where to divide Alberta into 87 areas so that each Albertan receives effective representation by a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Over the past few months we've sought community input through province-wide consulting before developing our recommendations. Through public hearings such as the one here today we want to hear what you have to say about the representation you are receiving in your community.

In carrying out this work, we must follow the provisions of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. It says that we are to make proposals to the Legislative Assembly regarding the areas, boundaries, and names of 87 electoral divisions. You will recognize that that means we are mandated to propose four additional electoral divisions in Alberta, which will come into force at the next provincial general election. We're also reviewing the law and what the courts have said about electoral divisions and boundaries in the province of Alberta and in Canada, the work of previous commissions and committees, and the population information which is available to us.

A brief summary of the electoral boundaries law. As I've said, 87 electoral divisions. We have a limited time to accomplish this task. We are required to submit an interim report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly by February of 2010 that sets out the areas, boundaries, and names of the 87 proposed electoral divisions and the reasons for the proposed boundaries. Following publication of the interim report a second round of public hearings will be held to receive input on the proposed 87 boundaries. Again, there will be provisions for further public hearings at that time. Then we are required to submit a final report to the Legislature by July 2010. Then it's up to the Legislative Assembly by resolution to approve or to approve with alterations the proposals of the commission and to introduce a bill to establish new electoral divisions for Alberta.

One way to ensure effective representation is by developing electoral divisions with similar populations, especially where population density is similar. The law directs us to use the populations set out in the most recent census of Alberta as provided by Statistics Canada, the 2006 census, but if the commission believes there is population information that is more recent than the federal census compiled by Statistics Canada, then the commission may use this data in conjunction with the census information. We do have a considerable amount of 2009 census information, particularly from the larger urban centres, and we will be using that. So you know, for the record our average for 87 seats is 40,583, the average population for the 87 electoral divisions. At this point, based on the most updated numbers that we have, the population of Lesser Slave Lake is 27,357. That is 32.6 per cent below the provincial average.

If you look further at the law, we're required to put Alberta into 87 proposed electoral divisions, but we shall take into consideration the following:

- (a) the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,
- (b) sparsity and density of population,
- (c) common community interests and community organizations, including those of Indian reserves and Metis settlements,
- (d) wherever possible, the existing community boundaries within the cities of Edmonton and Calgary,
- (e) . . . the existing municipal boundaries,
- (f) the number of municipalities and other local authorities [within an electoral division],
- (g) geographical features, including existing road systems, and
- (h) the desirability of understandable and clear boundaries.

The population rule in the act states that the proposed electoral division can be 25 per cent above or below the average for all 87 electoral divisions. There is one exception to this. Up to four proposed electoral divisions may have a population that is as much as 50 per cent below the average population of the electoral divisions in Alberta if three of the following five criteria are met:

- (a) the area . . . exceeds 20 000 square kilometres or the . . . surveyed area of the proposed electoral division exceeds 15 000 square kilometres;
- (b) the distance from the Legislature Building in Edmonton to the nearest boundary of the proposed electoral division by the most direct highway route is more than 150 kilometres;
- (c) there is no town in the proposed electoral division that has a population exceeding 8000 people;
- (d) the area of the proposed electoral division contains an Indian reserve or a Metis settlement;
- (e) the proposed electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the Province of Alberta.

For a special area you have to have at least three of those criteria.

That's a general overview of the law from the legislation. In addition, the Alberta Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada have said that the Charter guarantees Albertans the right to vote; the right to have the political strength or value or force of a vote an elector casts not unduly diluted; the right to effective representation; and the right to have the parity of others diluted, but not unduly, in order to gain effective representation or as a matter of practical necessity. These rulings as well as the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act must guide our decisions and, ultimately, the proposals that we make to the Legislative Assembly.

Now that I've explained the law, we want to hear from you and receive your views because you're the ones that are going to be affected by these boundary changes, and it's critical to recommending a new electoral map that we ensure fair and effective representation for all Albertans.

I want to also point out that for those here who will not be speaking, you can still make your views known to us in writing by mail, fax, or e-mail.

10:10

With that background, I'll call on our staff to call the first speaker. Each speaker will have 10 minutes to present and then five minutes for questions and answers with the commission. I should tell you that the commission's public meetings are being recorded by *Alberta Hansard*, and the audio recordings will be posted to the commission website. Transcripts of these proceedings will also be available. If you have registered as a presenter or choose to participate in this public meeting, we ask that you identify yourself for the record prior to starting your presentation.

Now our first speaker.

Ms Friesacher: Our first speaker is Mr. Denny Garratt, reeve, the MD of Lesser Slave River.

**Denny Garratt, Reeve
Municipal District of Lesser Slave River**

Mr. Garratt: Good morning, gentlemen. Is this working?

The Chair: Yes. You're being recorded. For *Hansard* could you please identify yourself by your full name?

Mr. Garratt: Yes. My name is Denny Garratt, and I'm the reeve of the municipal district of Lesser Slave River. I apologize for my voice. I don't have much of one this morning.

Our concern, panel, is twofold. We have a number of people that reside in the area around the Athabasca River that are in the municipality but have another MLA. I've given you a map, and I've shown you where these people reside. They have to drive all the way to Athabasca just to vote. We would like to see the municipal boundary be the electoral boundary.

The Chair: All right. This map would indicate the changes.

Mr. Garratt: That's correct. It's not a large change, and this isn't going to take 10 minutes. All I'm asking is that the few people that reside in that area be included in the electoral district, the same as everyone else in the MD.

The Chair: Do you know the number of people?

Mr. Garratt: Approximately four.

The Chair: Four.

Mr. Garratt: Yeah. I don't really know. It's an anomaly, and it should be corrected.

The Chair: All right.
Peter.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Reeve Garratt. Can I hand you our map just to make sure we have the municipal boundaries accurate? Can I have you go to the wall map so everyone in the room can see what you're referring to?

Mr. Garratt: This is the area right here that I'm referring to. There are a number of farmers in this area that are not included in our electoral boundary at this time.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you, Reeve. I'm also wondering if I can ask you some general questions. We're still trying to develop our general principles that we're hoping to apply in setting up electoral divisions throughout Alberta. Currently Lesser Slave Lake would appear to meet at least four of the five criteria to be a constituency that could be up to 50 per cent lower than the average. There's only one special constituency currently. Have you as a council talked about the province in general? Do you have any recommendations for us as to, outside of your particular jurisdiction, what we should be looking at in Alberta and northern Alberta?

Mr. Garratt: Yes, we have talked about that. As a council we're unanimous in the fact that we can't lose any MLAs in northern Alberta. In other words, there should not be a lessening of MLAs. We need all the representation that we can get in northern Alberta, so it's very important to us that we retain or even gain support on an MLA basis.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Garratt: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

The Chair: Allyson.

Ms Jeffs: Yes. Thank you very much, Reeve, for your presentation. I just have a couple of other questions. I'm wondering if you would be prepared to respond to some suggestions we've had in other presentations about some tweaking of the boundaries of Lesser Slave Lake. It's not specifically in the MD that you represent. It's been suggested to us that there are some communities there that, you know, may fit better in the surrounding constituencies, and I think one of them is sort of toward the north of the riding. The Tallcree north and south communities potentially should be moved to Peace River. We've heard that from a few people. I don't know if you have any thoughts on that or if you agree or disagree or if that's too far north from your constituency.

Mr. Garratt: To be perfectly honest, I wouldn't want to comment because I don't know. That's the simple truth. I just don't know how Tallcree would feel about moving.

Ms Jeffs: All right. Do you feel the same way about commenting on Cadotte Lake, Little Buffalo, and Seetha, which are currently in Lesser Slave Lake?

Mr. Garratt: There again, I would refrain from commenting, because I'm not sure.

Ms Jeffs: Okay. That's fine. Thank you. Those are my questions.

Mr. Evans: Just one question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Reeve, for the presentation. Just looking at the Alberta map, it certainly appears that the area that you're asking to have added to Lesser Slave Lake is closer, as the crow flies, to Athabasca than it would be to Slave Lake, but I presume that there aren't decent roads or any roads at all that would move people in that direction. So the normal transportation route would be up to Slave Lake rather than across east to Athabasca. Is that correct?

Mr. Garratt: That's correct.

Mr. Evans: Is the entire MD in Lesser Slave Lake other than this little sliver of property?

Mr. Garratt: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Evans: Okay. All right. Thank you very much. Those are my questions.

Dr. Archer: Well, thanks for your presentation, Reeve Garratt. Peter Dobbie in his question indicated that this constituency at the moment may satisfy four of the five requirements for a special consideration constituency. I'm not sure that it would satisfy four at the moment. The one it doesn't satisfy for sure is that it doesn't run across any of the provincial boundaries with B.C. or with the north. The second criterion that it may not meet – and we're not exactly sure about this at the moment – is the distance from the Legislature. It would seem – and again, we've actually not done the specific measurements here – that the lower right corner of the constituency may be within 150 kilometres of the Legislature.

I wonder if you could comment on a trade-off matter. Would it be your view that it would be preferable to follow your initial recommendation and ensure that all of the municipal district is within the constituency and simply move the boundary to the east in the lower right-hand corner? Or if that part of the municipal district is within 150 kilometres of the Legislature, is it preferable to assign that part of the district to a different constituency – let's say Barrhead, for example – which would have the effect of splitting the municipal district between two constituencies, to strengthen the case that this constituency satisfies the requirement for a special constituency? You're already split between two constituencies at the moment. The population at the moment is too low for us to categorize this as a regular constituency. So one of the challenges that we're going to confront is that if we're not going to expand this constituency, then we have to create it as a special constituency. Again, the question is: is that sufficiently important to ensure that it meets the distance test as well?

10:20

Mr. Garratt: I don't know how important that distance test is to this subject. My first impression is that we would like to see the boundary extended, as I mentioned. I don't know how stringent or even how close it is to 150 kilometres. I haven't clocked it. [interjection] I'm sorry? He's got a calculator in his head, and he's doing the mileage.

Right now I don't know the advantage to us. I do know that it's a disadvantage the way it is right now. That's all I can really comment on. Yeah, I'd like to see that when Pearl, our MLA, visits in the east, she's actually visiting her constituents. So it's a correction as we see it.

Dr. Archer: Thanks very much. That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I think Peter has a follow-up.

Mr. Dobbie: I'd like to investigate Dr. Archer's question a little bit further if I could. The concern that we might have is that currently the town of Slave Lake is about 7,000 people. If the economy grows the way it might, it might not be that many years before Slave Lake is 8,000 people, and then if you are not 150 kilometres away, the constituency would not meet three requirements for the next round of electoral review. So we're just again trying to determine some general principles: how strong a case should each special riding have? It may be possible, sir, to add the area you've asked, but for the distance you might have to lose the lower part. So we could add to the east, but if we had to draw the line straight across the constituency, how many people would be in the very bottom corner of your municipal district? You can see on the map, where you want us to add, that your municipal district runs below range 67.

Mr. Garratt: That's correct.

Mr. Dobbie: So from range 67 across to 65, do you know how many people would be in there?

Mr. Garratt: Well, without checking the record, I don't know the exact number, but I'm guessing at this point that you're not looking at more than 200.

Mr. Dobbie: Yeah. The challenge, of course, that we have is that there are a number of factors we have to balance. One of them is respecting municipal boundaries, but in some cases something has to give to make the riding work. So we hear you, but we may have to look at some other tweaking to make sure that, you know, the riding does fit the criteria that we may be looking at.

Mr. Garratt: Well, I can't advise you to change your criteria, but I would ask that you take into very serious consideration the implications for the population of our MD because for so many of the grants provincially and federally our population is sensitive. It means the world to us to be eligible for these, and if you're taking residents away from our constituency, we're not in as advantageous a position. So I would really hope that you would consider all of the implications of what you're suggesting.

The Chair: Bear in mind, sir, that we have to adhere to the law. The five criteria that are there for special areas: we can't change those. We've got to try to make it fit at least three of those or we can't have a special area.

Mr. Garratt: I fully respect what you're saying, but on behalf of the residents of our MD I wanted to speak.

The Chair: All right. Well, thank you very much, Reeve Garratt. We appreciate your input.

Mr. Garratt: Thank you very much, and I'm glad for your questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Friesacher: The next presenter is Mr. Dennis Barton.

Dennis Barton
Private Citizen

Mr. Barton: My name is Dennis Barton. I've been a resident of the town for approximately 47 years – I grew up in the Barrhead area – and ran a business for 42 years. I thank the commission for coming to Slave Lake.

I understand what Dr. Archer probably wanted to say but didn't say, that our riding isn't big enough and would probably be split up because of the fact that Fort McMurray is growing, and they probably need two MLAs in that area. So my concern is why we should exist.

I think I'll discuss in my portion of the 10 minutes Ms Jeffs' point of view. I noticed that when you sent your mailer out, you had to follow three recommendations, and now you've increased them to five.

The Chair: For a special area.

Mr. Barton: Well, it doesn't say "special area" in here.

The Chair: No. As you realize, in the legislation it says that we have to be either 25 per cent above or below except that we can be as much as 50 per cent below if an electoral division meets three of the five criteria: the 20,000 square kilometres; the 150 kilometres from the Legislature Building; the First Nation or Métis; no town over 8,000, which you're getting very close to. The fifth one is if you have a boundary that's coterminous with a boundary of the province of Alberta. So that one is out.

Mr. Barton: Okay. I understand that thoroughly. Now, that's the part that we probably didn't know at the time.

I'd like to talk to the aesthetics of the community and to address Ms Jeffs' reasoning. We have 12 reserves in our riding; we have two pending. We have three Métis colonies. We're serviced totally by dirt roads in the north. The aesthetics of the community gives the aboriginal people the opportunity to have a voice in our Legislature.

It's the only riding with that opportunity. So I would suggest that there are some considerations here that go a little deeper than just figures.

We have some 60-odd communities in this riding that are distinct; roughly 80 per cent of the riding is native ancestry, maybe more now with the addition of the north and the Tallcree people. I think it's very important that we keep that aboriginal portion in this riding for the future generations, for the grandchildren, who will have that opportunity to still have a representative in the Legislature. If you split us up, we lose all that.

10:30

I think it's very important that you as a committee look not just for one term but for a long term that this is part of Alberta. We know we're in Alberta with five MLAs. We know we're not going to get any more, other than a population growth. The big population growth will be in McMurray. We know that you're going to give them an extra riding. You've got no choice. Who are you going to cut? The population doesn't warrant probably any more in this area in the north.

In my position, as an individual living in the area and having a great opportunity to see it grow over the years from a small area, I think the aesthetics of the community would be the priority that your commission should look at. I haven't anything further to say. I know our population is a little low, and I know you're here for a reason. I thought the underlying fact would probably be that you would be considering splitting us up. I think you should look at the aesthetics as one portion of that proposal or your agenda that warrants a little deeper consideration.

I'm free for you guys to ask any questions you want.

The Chair: Well, let me assist you in one respect. We're not here to split you up.

Mr. Barton: Appreciate that.

The Chair: We're here to look at the community, to look at what is effective representation and, from what we have been told about this community and what we will hear from others here, to see if this riding will fit into the special category, where it can be more than 25 per cent below the average. We appreciate the detail of what you've given us, which reinforces the idea that it should be a special area.

Mr. Barton: Thank you.

The Chair: Now, I know Allyson has some questions.

Ms Jeffs: More of a comment and a clarification, I think, at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your presentation. Just to reinforce what the chairman was saying, we're not here to split you up. The suggestion that I was relaying with respect to Tallcree and the other communities was that we had heard at a previous presentation that these very specific communities had ties to the neighbouring constituencies, and that wasn't an attempt to start slicing and dicing the existing constituency. Do I understand that it's your position that it would be better to maintain all of those communities in the present constituency?

Mr. Barton: Well, yes. What it does is give us an extra perspective in the Legislature. If you take and break up these perspectives, then you have nothing. Sometimes it's leadership that you have to show, not necessarily hard, cold facts. I'm saying that in this case I think it's a point of a little bit of leadership and looking to the future and keeping the aesthetics of the community together.

Ms Jeffs: All right. That was all I had, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Mr. Evans: Just to follow up, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for your presentation. I appreciate what you're saying about keeping the constituency boundaries the way that they are so that you continue with the integrity and the commonality of interests. In fairness, we've not heard from Cadotte Lake and Little Buffalo themselves, but we've heard from others, both in Grande Prairie and in Peace River, and we're certainly going to ask your MLA, Ms Calahasen, as well when she has an opportunity to present. We've heard that these folks do have more trade with Peace River and have more of a comfort level with Peace River. Certainly, we're not transporting those folks out of the north, right? In terms of percentage of aboriginal peoples in the two constituencies I can't imagine that they're vastly different, but maybe Pearl will have some other comments on that. Then Tallcree, we've heard, has more of a trading pattern going up to High Level. Again, we've not heard from Tallcree.

The reason that we're just looking at other alternatives is because we have had some commentary. It wouldn't impact the population in a way that would preclude Lesser Slave Lake from being a special consideration constituency. From that point of view it's only really to embrace what we're here to do, which is to ensure that every Albertan has effective representation and feels that they are heard.

I'm sorry for the long explanation, but I thought it was necessary to clarify that.

Mr. Barton: I totally understand that, but there's one thing that you probably – and I understand your position. But no place in here told us the date you were coming. It didn't come in the paper, and I think that being fair to those communities, they probably don't even know you exist.

The Chair: It was mailed to every household.

Mr. Barton: Oh, I understand that. Every household got it. I got three of them.

The Chair: It was also advertised in the Slave Lake newspaper and in six surrounding newspapers.

Mr. Barton: The date you were coming here?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Barton: I didn't see it. I apologize if it was.

The Chair: It was.

Keith, do you have any questions?

Dr. Archer: Yes. Thanks, Mr. Barton, for your presentation. The background for our questions at the moment is that this constituency has a population about 33 per cent below the provincial average. The legislation enables us to create up to four special constituencies, and right now there's only one. So one of the issues that we've been discussing quite actively is: how many special constituencies should there be, and where should they be? As part of that discussion Lesser Slave Lake has certainly factored into our thinking as a potential special constituency because if we don't think of Lesser Slave Lake as a potential special constituency, then we need to look at places to add more population to this riding to get it to fall within

the acceptable range. But as a special constituency it would already fall within the range for that group.

With that context I'd like to ask you the same question that I asked Reeve Garratt. I recognize that Reeve Garratt was here to express the view of the municipal district as a representative of that municipal district, and since you're not here in that capacity, you may have a different view than the view he expressed. The question is that one of the criteria that we need to look at is the distance between the closest part of a constituency and the Alberta Legislature. It seems to us that the southeast corner of the constituency – there's kind of a little block in the constituency – probably contains some area that is less than 150 kilometres from the Legislature. But if you remove that from the Lesser Slave Lake constituency, I think the constituency then meets that criterion. It is in that context that I'm trying to understand whether people are agreeable to that type of change within the constituency to reinforce the case that it fits within the special constituency criteria. I wonder if you could share with us your view on removing that part of the constituency for that purpose.

Mr. Barton: I think it's very close to the 150. I think it's probably around 130 kilometres from the city. It's a farming area, and it's probably more suited to the south when I'm talking about aesthetics, I guess. But if it doesn't affect our population and we have the variance that you can allow four special areas, I'd say it's up to the people of that community whether they – they should be here today. As long as it doesn't affect the population and the fact that we're going to lose the riding. I look at this riding as a very unique riding in Alberta. It's one of the unique ridings that will always carry the aesthetic values of the native people.

10:40

Dr. Archer: I think you've made a very persuasive case this morning in that regard. Thank you.

Mr. Dobbie: I have one quick question, sir. Again, you've heard what Dr. Archer has said. So assuming that Lesser Slave Lake would remain as a special constituency, just following up on what Mr. Evans said, we have heard that there are a few of the native reserves on the western boundary that simply can't get to Slave Lake. Their MLA might have trouble getting to them. You've mentioned that it is important to preserve the native heritage and to look to the future, so we're looking at, in some cases, trade-offs. One is municipal boundaries versus another. If it would not affect the ability of Lesser Slave Lake to stay as a special constituency but it would allow the residents of the Cadotte Lake settlement, or reserve, to have access to their MLA to the west, would that allay your concerns? Would you be in support of them being taken out of this constituency?

Mr. Barton: I think that's still up to the community. I think you've got to remember that the trade values are usually north-south, the major hospitals are in the city of Edmonton, those type of things. I think that's really up to the community itself. I'm just saying that the aesthetic values in the community are native, and we'd like to see that stay so that there is a representative always, pretty much, in the Legislature.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barton. That was very helpful, and I'm sure we'll hear more from you.

Our next presenter.

Ms Friesacher: Our next presenter is Ms Pearl Calahasen.

**Pearl Calahasen, MLA
Lesser Slave Lake**

Ms Calahasen: Good morning.

The Chair: Good morning.

Ms Calahasen: First of all, welcome to the constituency of Lesser Slave Lake, my diverse constituency. I just want to talk about what happens here because I think it's important for you to know.

The Chair: Just before you do, Pearl, would you give your full name for the record.

Ms Calahasen: Sorry. I forgot. Pearl Calahasen, MLA for Lesser Slave Lake.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Calahasen: Again, welcome to the constituency of Lesser Slave Lake. It's the most diverse constituency, I believe, in the whole of the constituencies we have. I just want to give you a perspective as to what happens in this constituency. It's so diverse. We've got oil and gas, we've got agriculture, we've got marginal and mixed farming, we've got commercial fishing, we've got tourism, and we've got forestry. We've got most everything that you can possibly think of. We even have mining. Now, we've got, as a matter of fact, conventional oil and gas, but we also have the oil sands, so we're going to see a lot of activity here in the next little while. But that doesn't mean that the population grows. Usually it means that we have shadow population, which comes in and then leaves. That's an important perspective, I think, when you look at some of the considerations that need to be made.

As you indicated, Mr. Chair, our constituency is about 89,000 square kilometres. We used to boast about the fact that it used to be even bigger. If Mr. Evans will recall, when we were presenting the last time, this constituency used to be one of the biggest, and it used to include up to the Northwest Territories. That was changed, and some of the communities were removed. The Little Red community and the three reserves were removed from this constituency over to Peace River. The constituency was then downsized, as you see, as it exists now.

We have no fly-in scheduled service in this constituency, as you probably recognize. We do have airports, but there are no scheduled flights that could come in, like in Fort McMurray or in Peace River or in Grande Prairie or in other constituencies. It's driving all the time, as was indicated by some of the presenters. We have a lot of different roads, and some of them are not paved. Some of them don't get very much gravel. We have a lot of driving that has to be done. As an example, in the first few years I was elected – 1989, 1990, and 1991 – I put on approximately 220,000 kilometres a year driving just to access the people.

I say this because we're talking about effective representation. What does effective representation mean? In my books it means being able to access your MLA. It means being able to meet them one-on-one. It means the ability of the people of your constituency to be able to access you in whichever way they can. It doesn't mean by technology either because in this constituency, like in most remote areas, there's very little phone service. There's no cell service once you pass a certain part of highway 88. There is what we call the SuperNet, but the SuperNet only goes to certain portions of the communities.

As was indicated earlier, we counted 43 communities, and we also have the three Métis settlements, the six MDs, two towns, 12 First Nations, and two more coming on stream. So when you look at this constituency, it's very unique and very diverse, a very active constituency. Most of the time the people here are not afraid to call me. Everyone knows my cell number, and that's an access. That's really good information, but a lot of people can't access me because there's no service. The people of this constituency also deserve to be able to access their MLA and to be able to see their MLA. It doesn't mean that they can only call me or be able to see me on occasion, but it means that they should be able to talk to me about their issues as well.

To me effective representation means at least being able to sit and talk to me as often as possible. It's impossible. I have communities that are between 15 minutes to eight hours apart. When I leave my home, just west of here, to go to my furthest north community, it takes me at least seven to eight hours to get there, for me to be able to sit down and meet with the people and go visiting like I usually do. Then it's another eight hours to come back home. So it's very, very difficult sometimes to be able to do that.

I also want to talk about what kind of situation we have here in terms of the people. The diversity also includes some francophones. We have Métis people. We have First Nations people. We have nonaboriginal people, whether they're German or they're of Polish extraction or they're Ukrainians. We have a diversity in this constituency which has really worked well for the people here because it means now that people are working together to see how they can maximize what their needs are in the area. It's been very, very good in terms of the people living together and working together.

Now, you were talking about some issues. I think that if you need to change it, this is my recommendation. I think that there has got to be some coterminality with the MD boundaries, at least, to be able to address some of the concerns that were addressed by the reeve. There is also another area, before I go on. On that issue there have been people who have had to drive for three hours to go vote when, in fact, they didn't have to do that; there was a poll next door. But because they were in another area and they weren't part of the whole area of the constituency, they had to leave. That's why when you were asking the question, it talks about how driving is a main issue, and that's why I think that concern was brought to the table.

On the other hand, there is another area on the west side of the constituency – I'm sure you heard this last night – that is presently in Grande Prairie-Smoky, I believe, that they would like to see included in Lesser Slave Lake so that they can go vote in Sunset House. Presently they have to drive another two or three hours in order for them to go to another poll. That was something that was brought to my attention in the last little while from the people who were driving there and said they would just not go vote. I think that when we're talking about democracy, we should be talking about how people should be able to have access to being able to go vote. I think it might be the MD of Smoky River that they were talking about. Yes, it is. If you look at highway 2 and you go through, you see a triangle. Do you see that going west? It's in that little area, that little curve there, where they have a problem. I'll mark it out here. That's an area where they have told us: we will not go vote; this is too ridiculous to go vote, you know, to go cast our vote.

10:50

The other part I want to talk about is how people have really felt that this constituency has a lot of history. Right from the beginning it has existed, and they want to make sure that this constituency continues to exist and that it becomes even one of those special considerations if needed.

Now, you were asking some questions relative to what could change. If things had to change, I would suggest that even the fact that you can go all the way to the Northwest Territories, as it existed before, would bring forward – and I'll give you the rationale. Number one, it would also add one of those issues of the 3 out of the 4 that you would require.

It would make sure that the people who were part of this constituency many years ago, who didn't have an opportunity to make any comments when the last boundaries commission was going around – they did not have an opportunity. They were afraid to go and make some comments and felt that they should have stayed within this constituency, but it was too late by the time they realized that it had happened. The people there always felt that they were connected to the constituency of Lesser Slave Lake, mostly because of the commonality. As you know, birds of a feather flock together. When you look at the constituency, if it's made up of the 12 First Nations with two more coming on and the other three that would be there, that certainly would add in terms of them coming together in terms of a common goal.

In terms of travel, most of the people, most everybody, travel through Slave Lake on highway 88. They go south to go and do their work, to go and do everything, to go meet with industry, to go down and work with communities. Also, on the health side they certainly use Edmonton as their centre of excellence. So when you look at that kind of a situation, the migration is south, and Slave Lake becomes the focal point at this stage when you're talking about the people who are from the north going south. As we know it, that migratory kind of situation is north-south in most cases, and that's what we see within this constituency.

Now, I wanted to also indicate that within this constituency we have a lot of school jurisdictions, both provincial, First Nations, and private. We've got five provincial school boards; five First Nations, one private and one college; and three hospitals.

The Chair: Thank you. That was very informative. I wonder if I could just ask you a couple of questions. Yesterday in Peace River we heard representations from High Level that we look at a new constituency that would run, just as I'm indicating, across here and would be a special area. This did not meet with – there were other groups who said no to this. I just mention that to you because you had suggested perhaps moving the boundary straight up, but if we needed to get that 150 kilometres in there, if that little bottom was removed, that would mean we would have met the criteria. Do you have an opinion on that?

Ms Calahasen: I love the people there. They are certainly very active in dealing with issues. In terms of the travel patterns they do go south as well to Westlock. They have travel patterns that they work in the agricultural sector and go south. I do know that. They have been involved in a lot of areas relative to the south. The only problem with that is that it would not be on the MD coterminality, so that's the only issue that I would see as well as their availability or, at least, their ability to get involved. I think they can get involved anywhere. They're really great, great people.

The Chair: Yes. Appreciating that and appreciating that we'd like to have MDs and county boundaries that are coterminous, we have a whole bunch that aren't. That's one thing we'll have to look at.

Ms Calahasen: Can I make a comment on this whole issue of how they wanted this?

The Chair: Certainly.

Ms Calahasen: Well, if you recall, we did a health region boundary, and we broke it up so that we would have that north as a boundary. What we found was that it was very difficult for people to get, number one, service. It was very costly. It created some huge problems for the people who were living within that area even though I think there was some commonality in terms of being in a northern part of the province. It was an interesting region that had to be broken up in the end. I think sometimes it's a good idea to be able to draw lines – and I know how easy that is to do – but sometimes we have to look into the situation of the people in terms of effective representation as well.

The Chair: Yes. Thank you.

Ms Jeffs: Hi, Ms Calahasen. Thank you very much for coming before us today. Appreciating what you've already said at this point and what we've already heard, I'm wondering if – and this goes back to what Mr. Evans and I were asking about those specific communities of Tallcree north and south and of Cadotte Lake. I should say that there was just a sense that those communities had more ties to the Peace River region. The other representation we had heard was – and this was described as polling distance – that there was a piece of the Athabasca-Redwater district that had, I think, previously been part of Lesser Slave Lake and that there was perhaps some merit in adding that to the constituency.

Ms Calahasen: Which portion would that be?

Ms Jeffs: You know, I have polling district numbers of 3, 16, 17, 26, 27, and 15. I apologize because I don't know how helpful that is. I'm working off the other presentation, but let me see if there's a map on here. I think there was a map.

Ms Calahasen: Do you know which communities that would be? It would identify the communities, right?

Ms Jeffs: Yes. I'm sure that would be helpful.

The Chair: You may be talking about Smith and . . .

Ms Calahasen: Smith is in my constituency already.

Ms Jeffs: Yeah, it is. I think there may be some synergies here because I think that might be part of the MD of Lesser Slave River, in fact.

Ms Calahasen: Is that where we were talking, like, earlier in terms of people being left out?

Ms Jeffs: Yeah. That would be that piece. So I take it that would be okay?

Ms Calahasen: Yeah. I would support that because I think that people shouldn't have to be driving three hours to go cast a vote all the way around and then not wanting to do it. I mean, they're farmers, right? They're farmers. That's just not right for them. You know, it's just not right.

Ms Jeffs: Okay. It sounds like we're hearing some consistent feedback about that.

Then just your sense of the Cadotte Lake, Tallcree north and south, and Little Buffalo areas. Again, this was a presentation we had had suggesting that perhaps they be . . .

Ms Calahasen: Removed?

Ms Jeffs: Yeah. That they be shifted into Peace River. The suggestion, again, was that there were more ties to that constituency in terms of where they shopped and where they . . .

Ms Calahasen: Okay. At one point in time they were part of Peace River. At one point in time. That was before. I've been here so long that I can recall how many Electoral Boundaries Commissions we've had. We've done a lot of changes in the past where we've had them here, we've had them there, and then we remove them, and then they say: we want to come back. We've had that kind of a situation for a long time. I don't know who presented that, but if you talk to the First Nations people, it's probably true in the Cadotte area where they would say: Peace River is closer, and we would like to do some work there.

On the Little Buffalo side that's probably more in tune with – let me first explain. Little Buffalo and Cadotte Lake are mostly my relatives. Okay? Just so that you know the context. But most of them go south, and they use that new road that we have built for them to head south. So when you look at the migration pattern and where they go and do business, that's where they go in terms of long-term business associations.

11:00

When it comes to shopping, they have choices now, which is the best thing we could do. They have choices. They can go to Peace River, or they can come to Slave Lake. Those are the choices they have now, and when I talk to them, they say: well, we kind of like going to Slave Lake for certain things, and we like going to Peace River for other things. So it's a division. If anything, if that's their wish rather than somebody else's wish, I would suggest that if they come forward and say that they want to move, that's a different story, but I would leave it as is until they do.

Ms Jeffs: Okay. Thank you very much. That was very helpful.

The Chair: Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thanks very much, Ms Calahasen, for your presentation.

Mr. Chairman, I can assure you that in the eight years that I was in the Legislature, Ms Calahasen made a point regularly of pointing out how special her constituency was, and if I live to be 150 years old, I will never forget that Lesser Slave Lake is a very special place.

Ms Calahasen: That's right. It's a very special place.

Mr. Evans: It was a delight to be a colleague of Pearl's, quite frankly.

Pearl, I know you have a big job jar, and you've said: why don't we wait for Cadotte Lake and Little Buffalo and Seetha and Tallcree to get in touch with us if they want a change? But we've got it on the record now in a couple places that somebody thinks that they do want a change, and it would really be helpful to us if you would speak with your constituents and, you know, get their view. Believe me, we don't in way, shape, or form think that it would be a matter of them not wanting Pearl Calahasen to be their MLA or not wanting to be in this constituency. Rather, it's just more practical for them, just as it's more practical in all likelihood for the folks down in the southeast part of the constituency to be part of Lesser Slave Lake and not Athabasca-Redwater.

In terms of this issue of going north back up the N.W.T. border, do you have any idea of how much population would be included there if we were to just bring that eastern line all the way up to the N.W.T. border?

Ms Calahasen: I think another 5,000.

Mr. Evans: That many?

Ms Calahasen: Yeah. I think it's about 5,500 for the three reserves.

Mr. Evans: That many people. Wow.

Ms Calahasen: I think there is something like 2,200 for Fox Lake. Oh, right. There are four reserves. There's Beaver Ranch as well.

There are approximately 2,200 people in Fox Lake. There is John D'Or, maybe about another 1,800, maybe 2,000. Then Garden River. There would be, yeah, about 4,000, 4,500.

Mr. Evans: Okay. All right. That's very helpful. Thanks very much for your presentation.

Ms Calahasen: You're welcome.

The Chair: I should say that some years ago when I was the chief judge, I was here at a First Nations conference, and we were presented sweaters, Pearl and I. Pearl got many more cheers than I did.

Peter.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ms Calahasen. It's helpful to get your perspective on this constituency. I'd like to move you up to the 30,000-foot level and ask some questions about the province, if I might.

Ms Calahasen: Sure.

Mr. Dobbie: My first question is: do you have an opinion on the number of special constituencies that this commission should be considering?

Ms Calahasen: I think that you should go as many as you can. There are areas that need to have that kind of consideration because of the population and the diversity of the communities and the isolation of some of the communities. So if you can use all the four, I would suggest that.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you. Secondly, it has been suggested by people in Edmonton and in Calgary that one approach we could take to looking at assigning electoral divisions is to take the population within the municipal boundaries of Edmonton, divide it by our quotient, or average, do the same thing for Calgary, and then do the same thing for the rest of the province. That gives us three numbers to work with. The quick math, you probably know, means that it's very close to 50-50, 51-49 if you take Edmonton and Calgary. So 51 per cent there, 49 per cent for the rest of the province. Do you have any comments on that as an approach?

Ms Calahasen: No, I don't.

Mr. Dobbie: Again, we are working on philosophy or guidelines. One thing that using as many special constituencies as we could does allow us to do is have the remaining constituencies outside of the

two major centres as close to the average as possible. That would be one of the effects of having some smaller constituencies.

We've heard in Edmonton that effective representation means different things in different constituencies. Certainly there seems to be an understanding that the travel challenges that rural MLAs face really merit allowing them to have a lower number of constituents, or deviate from the margin. We've also heard from city centre MLAs that their constituents are higher need and that the challenges of representing an inner-city constituency are in many ways similar to a rural constituency. Do you have any comments on that?

Ms Calahasen: First of all, I think that it's important to recognize that no matter where people live, they should have effective representation or at least be able to see their MLA and work with their MLA for them to be able to be involved as much as possible. That's the only way you can get changes in communities, by the involvement of the people in those communities. I think that if they get the information that's available to them, they can make those decisions and make those changes in their lives.

In terms of the numbers and the fact that rural MLAs have a lot of mileage that they have to deal with, I think that in an urban setting – because I'm not an urban MLA, I would never know what kind of struggles they would experience, but as a rural MLA I certainly understand what kinds of needs there are within the communities. Those communities are important in terms of their involvement, as well, in getting the services that they should have.

The rural MLAs certainly have a lot more travel, I would say. We have a lot more places to go and see. As I indicated, 43 communities within my constituency, and everybody wants to see you. They don't just want you to be calling or writing or sending these news releases or news, whatever it is. For them it's an important component.

In terms of the other part of how it could be divided, that, I just don't have enough information as to what happens in an urban setting and what kind of numbers would be good in an urban setting and what numbers should be working in a community setting. However, if it's just by population, I'd suggest that maybe we add something else into that and look at it from a perspective of also by communities and how many communities people have in their areas. We forget that. We forget those numbers of communities. We think it's just population – right? – but it's the communities as well because you can't move those communities. Those communities exist, and therefore they also need to be able to be part of the democratic process.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you.

Dr. Archer: Ms Calahasen, thanks so much for your comments. As others have said, we've had quite a few comments in other hearings that relate to Lesser Slave Lake, and I think you've responded to just about all of those comments. That's much appreciated.

I just wanted to follow up on the one suggestion of potentially extending the constituency up to the Territories border just so that I understand where those lines would likely be drawn if we went that route. It doesn't show it on the map here, but of course the Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo riding at the moment at its western boundary includes Wood Buffalo national park. That kind of juts out a little bit on the west side at the northwest corner of that riding.

If you just followed the fifth meridian up, you'd actually run into Wood Buffalo national park at one point. Would your recommendation be to continue to preserve Wood Buffalo in the riding east, assuming that remains a Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo riding, and simply draw the line, which on this map that we can see on the wall

would be the upper left-hand portion of your constituency, and take that all the way to the Territories? Then at the very top, east of that riding you just have this sliver, in a way, that runs up to the Territories. Effectively, that would mean that you're not proposing to include Fort Vermilion, but you would be proposing that you would include most of the communities that are to the east of Fort Vermilion. Is that the configuration that you had in mind?

11:10

Ms Calahasen: Yeah. We're talking about the four reserves.

Dr. Archer: Yes.

Ms Calahasen: As you see, that little jut that goes into Wood Buffalo national park is what we call the Garden River. That's the reason why it was. At one point in time this constituency would cut Wood Buffalo national park right in half, so I had something like 242 buffalo in my constituency. I used to count them, too.

Dr. Archer: Great. Thank you. I mean, paradoxically, if we went that route and if there are 4,500 residents . . .

Ms Calahasen: Approximately.

Dr. Archer: . . . in that community, then your population would no longer need to be within the special constituency category because I think you'd be at around 31,000.

Ms Calahasen: I think so. Yeah.

Dr. Archer: That would put you within the plus or minus 25 per cent. Thanks so much.

Ms Calahasen: You're welcome.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much.

Ms Calahasen: Thank you. I have to leave, but please enjoy our constituency.

The Chair: We will. Thank you.
Our next presenter.

Ms Friesacher: Our next presenter is Karina Pillay-Kinnee, mayor of Slave Lake.

**Karina Pillay-Kinnee, Mayor
Town of Slave Lake**

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Good morning.

The Chair: Good morning, and for the record, since we're on *Hansard*, could you please give your full name.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Sure. It's Karina Pillay-Kinnee. The spelling is K-a-r-i-n-a, and the last name is P-i-l-l-a-y hyphen K-i-n-n-e-e. It's a long one.

The Chair: I had the pleasure of meeting the good mayor here in terms of a public building for the courthouse.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you very much for being here today. We look forward to hearing from you, so the floor is yours.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Thank you for the opportunity. I just have an oral presentation, and we'll follow up with a formal written document for you by the October 13 date. As I've been hearing, I'm sure some of the comments supporting our being a special electoral district have been covered, but I think it's important that I reiterate those comments. Based on the act, it said that we have to fulfill three of the five criteria to be a special electoral district, and we definitely fulfill four of those criteria. One of them was to be more than 150 kilometres from the Legislature, and of course Slave Lake is 250 kilometres to the city limits.

The Chair: Could I just stop you there? It's 150 kilometres to the nearest boundary of the constituency, and I don't think you make that.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Oh. Okay. To the boundary, so that doesn't apply.

The Chair: Yes. Sorry.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: I'll continue with the other three, and hopefully those will meet their criteria.

We are the largest municipality within the constituency, the town of Slave Lake. Our population is 7,031, so we are below the 8,000 requirement. As far as the constituency having an Indian reserve or Métis settlements, we have 12 within our constituency. As far as the land mass of the constituency we had our staff actually physically calculate on the map, and we are an area of over 75,000 square kilometres. So we meet three of the five.

Another consideration that I think is important, of course, is that the sparsity of the population definitely creates a challenge for elected representatives to properly serve the district. Also, culturally speaking, people in our area prefer the face-to-face representation versus, you know, over the phone or with our new communications. Some areas don't have access to high-speed, all those forms of communication that you might find in an urban centre. I think it's definitely more respectful with our culture in our region to have that face-to-face representation.

We don't have chartered air service, so as I listen to you proposing changes to our electoral district, I think you will have to give Pearl a plane if you want her to properly represent the district. We don't have chartered air service. As well, many of our roads aren't all-weather roads for travel, so many of us rural constituents have to think of that and make plans if the weather conditions don't permit travel. Those are some of the things we consider, living in rural communities.

Failure to ensure that areas like Lesser Slave Lake have a voice in the Legislature will be detrimental to Alberta's economic interests. The north, particularly the rural north, may not have the population that you have in the south, but it is critical to a thriving economy and has social and cultural interests that vary greatly from the more densely populated areas. I know that Slave Lake is a resource-rich area, and if we are not heard, they may be overlooked, possibly have some negative consequences.

Some other considerations. Our transportation routes, recruitment and retention in our area, and the cost of living are just some examples of challenges that we have, living in the rural areas. We recognize that the growing urbanization of Alberta and, indeed, of Slave Lake has definitely seen some faster growth than the average community in our constituency. However, there is definitely a need

to maintain a rural-urban balance within the Legislature and have that representation. It's definitely a concern that we won't have a voice in the Legislature, and this is important to the interests of all Albertans as the less-populated northern rural areas have a disproportionate impact on the provincial economy.

Another important thing, of course, is that we are predominantly aboriginal. Historically 80 per cent of the population has been aboriginal. It provides an important opportunity for aboriginal people to be heard in the Legislature. We can't speak on their behalf, but we want to acknowledge that they have unique needs, and they need to be heard at the political level.

So those are some of the main points why we think we should be considered as a special electoral district. We are definitely an important pillar of our provincial economy. There are a few other points, but those are the main points for us being a special electoral district. Of course, we'll follow up with that formally.

You may not have had quite the representation today for input because we didn't have any advertising locally in our papers or anything about the date of this. We looked through all our papers. The reason we found out is that our administration looked online to find out the date. We looked through our newspapers; our media weren't aware of it. So that might be a reason that you may not have had the representation here today. You may want to follow up on that.

The Chair: We were assured that it was in the local newspaper. I think we may have a copy of it here for you that was in your newspaper. It was in the Slave Lake *Leader*, the High Prairie *South Peace News*, the Swan Hills *Grizzly Gazette*, and the Wabasca *Fever*.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Okay. Well, the *Lakeside Leader* attends all our council meetings, and it was news to them. So they called us and gave us the news, but we did our own research to follow up on that. It may be something to consider. The word may not have got out for our constituents to have a voice.

The Chair: It was in in the week of the 21st of September.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that input. I believe there will be some questions.

Peter.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mayor, for your presentation. It's helpful to get as much input as possible, so I'm sure you will encourage your constituents and your fellow municipal councillors and mayors to give us their comments. There is an initial deadline of October 13, but frankly the more information we have, the better.

A question for you is in relation to the population of the town of Slave Lake itself. It's currently 7,031; it has grown. I take it you have projections for the next five or 10 years. Where do you expect the population to be over the next five to 10 years for this town itself?

11:20

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: We do have a growth-management study we've done. I'm just trying to think of the statistics offhand, and I don't have that. I think we anticipate steady growth, substantial growth. I don't think we'll be within five years city status, 10,000. I don't think that was in the projections. But steady growth.

Mr. Dobbie: If you could add that to your written presentation.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Sure. Yeah.

Mr. Dobbie: The reason it's important is that in developing our principles, one of the things that we are seriously looking at is how to anticipate growth in some urban ridings. We may say: let's anticipate that southwest Edmonton will grow, so we don't want to have them at the average. We might want to make those under the average within Edmonton compared to Edmonton ridings.

The same thing for the special constituencies. If we are creating a special constituency that will very quickly not meet three of the five requirements, one of them being the population not over 8,000 – if Slave Lake will be 8,000 before the next review, it creates a challenge for the next commission. So the more information we have, the better decisions we can make.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Definitely. For example, based on our last census, Slave Lake I think had a 3 per cent growth. However, the surrounding MD of Lesser Slave Lake did not grow. So I think it'll be different for each area if you're looking at the whole constituency and what areas are going to anticipate growth.

Mr. Dobbie: Right. But one of the criteria is: no town greater than 8,000. So it's important for us to know where you're going there. Thank you very much.

Dr. Archer: Thanks, Mayor. The comment that you made about the large geographical size at the present time within the constituency and the limited airline services would lead me to infer that you wouldn't really be supportive of a decision on the part of the commission to extend the northern boundary of the constituency all the way up to the 60th parallel but, rather, look at other ways of satisfying the requirements. Would that be accurate?

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Well, it definitely conflicts with the whole proper representation, face-to-face representation. Increasing the distance for our representative to travel definitely would be a concern, so I don't know if I would support that.

Dr. Archer: Thank you. You know, looking at various trade-offs that are involved in trying to meet the objective of effective representation, one of the things that we're obviously looking at here is designating this constituency as a special constituency. That has raised the issue for us of the distance from the Legislature, and it does seem to us, at least from our initial calculations, that in order to achieve that, we likely would have to assign that southeast portion of the constituency to another riding. Do you have a view on that trade-off that the commission could be involved in? Would that be a useful thing for us to think about or not?

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: For me to comment, I'd have to look at what communities would be moving over. The intent for that would be the distance; you're saying that's the intent?

Dr. Archer: Yes. That's right. Our understanding is that the population in that area is relatively small. I think one of the earlier presenters said that it may be around 400 people or thereabouts.

The Chair: Two hundred.

Dr. Archer: Two hundred people. Again, the move of that part of the constituency would be intended to satisfy the distance.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: I can't comment on that. You know, it depends on where those residents feel they would be properly represented. I don't think I can make a comment on that part of our constituency.

Dr. Archer: Okay. Thank you. That's all I have.

The Chair: Allyson.

Ms Jeffs: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I actually don't have any questions, although I do want to thank you for your presentation. Just to reinforce as well, because there seems to be a bit of a surprise about our appearance here, that once the interim report comes out, we will be seeking additional input. So there will be an opportunity potentially for further hearings but certainly further input. I'm sure we'll particularly hear if people have concerns about what we do. So just to reinforce that and to thank you again for coming today.

The Chair: Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Madam Mayor. I don't have any questions about the town of Slave Lake but appreciate your comments that perhaps we would have had more people had there been more advertising, recognizing how close-knit the various communities are. From your meetings with your colleagues from the other municipal areas in the Lesser Slave Lake constituency is there anything that you could provide us in terms of

information about any other concerns of boundaries in Lesser Slave Lake? Is there any scuttlebutt that you hear every time you go to a municipal meeting?

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: No. I mean, speaking with our MLA, the challenge of covering the distance to get to municipalities, with her schedule. But, no, I can't recall any other issues that have been brought up. We haven't really had a chance to discuss this amongst us all, to meet with other municipalities to just strictly talk about this.

Mr. Evans: Sure. Okay. Well, that's my only question, then. Thank you very much for your presentation.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam Mayor. We look forward to your written input, and I'm sure you'll get it in on time.

Ms Pillay-Kinnee: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: I believe those are all our presenters for the morning, so again thank you all. We look forward to looking at this material. We'll be making our decision in our interim report, and you'll have a chance for further input.

Thank you.

[The hearing adjourned at 11:27 a.m.]

