



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

Edmonton

Monday, April 19, 2010
9:01 a.m.

Transcript No. 27-3-10

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Electoral Boundaries Commission

Judge Ernest J.M. Walter, Chairman

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Peter Dobbie, QC
Brian Evans, QC
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[Judge Walter in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning. My name is Ernie Walter, and I'm the chair of the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission. I would like to introduce to you the other members of the commission here with me today: Dr. Keith Archer of Banff on my far right, next to him Peter Dobbie of Vegreville, then to my immediate left Allyson Jeffs of Edmonton, and next to her Brian Evans of Calgary.

As you are aware, the five of us have spent the last seven months reviewing the electoral boundaries of our province, and I can tell you that we've examined every square inch of the map of Alberta. I know I speak for all of us when I say that the commission has found it both very interesting and challenging to weigh the concerns and relevant factors put before it during the preparation of the interim report. I would like to note that we are very pleased with the large amount of public feedback received since the interim report. I think we now may be at 500 written submissions, and we're looking forward to additional feedback during this hearing. Once we have considered this feedback, the commission will issue its final report by July of this year.

With that, I'm pleased to touch on a few of our findings and recommendations setting out the areas, boundaries, and names of the 87 electoral divisions we propose for Alberta together with our reasons for the proposals as outlined in the interim report you have hopefully all had a chance to read. I can tell you that the foundation for our decisions has been effective representation for all Albertans.

In undertaking its work, the commission has been guided by the requirements of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, relevant decisions of the courts, advice received at the first round of public hearings, and written submissions as well as the latest census information available to us.

When I speak about census information, the 2009 municipal census data for Alberta's cities show that there has been a consistent pattern of growth since the 2001 census. Fifty-two per cent of Albertans currently reside in Edmonton and Calgary. Using the 2009 official population list, the total population being considered by the commission is 3,556,583. Given this growth pattern this means the quotient, or provincial average population, has grown by 10,100 since the 1995-1996 commission and is now at 40,880. So, essentially, the act directs the commission to divide the province into 87 electoral divisions with a population within 25 per cent of this provincial average in a way that will ensure effective representation for Albertans.

Taking into account the available population information and factors affecting effective representation, the majority of the commission concluded that the redistribution of the 87 divisions should allow for the following increases: Calgary by two additional divisions, bringing it to 25; Edmonton by one, bringing it to 19; and the rest of Alberta by one, providing it with 43 divisions. This, we feel, will ensure effective representation across the province.

In terms of the factors which we considered for effective representation, we considered:

Population. We have attempted to limit the variations in the average population per division. The average population per electoral division from the quotient is from plus 4.3 per cent in Calgary, .7 per cent in Edmonton, and minus 2.8 per cent in the rest of Alberta.

Scarcity of population. The commission recognizes scarcity of population in the two proposed special divisions of Dunvegan-Central Peace and Lesser Slave Lake. Dunvegan-Central

Peace meets all five criteria for a special division, and Lesser Slave Lake meets four of the five criteria.

Community interests. The commission has taken into consideration community interests of which it is aware.

Community boundaries. The commission has attempted, as requested by the municipalities, to respect community boundaries in Calgary, Edmonton, and other areas.

Municipal boundaries. The commission has made every attempt to respect municipal boundaries. This has not been possible in all cases, but the commission has attempted to reduce the fragmentation of municipal boundaries resulting from the existing divisions.

Geographical features. The commission has also considered geographical features, including major roads and other matters, which provide natural boundaries between communities of interest.

Understandable and clear boundaries. The commission has attempted to recommend boundaries which are clear and easy to understand for the residents of the areas. In addition, the commission is using digital mapping technology to describe the boundaries rather than the extensive written descriptions previously used.

Distance and area. This is primarily an issue in the rest of Alberta. In recommending these boundaries, the commission has considered the area of the proposed electoral division and the travel distances involved both within the division and between the division and the Legislature. In addition, MLAs have to maintain relations with more than one school board, more than one municipal council, and several community and business organizations.

Inner-city urban issues. The commission acknowledges the submissions stressing that inner-city urban ridings generally have their own challenges such as a large number of linguistic and cultural communities, a disproportionate number of people dependent on social programs, increasing numbers of new immigrants and aboriginal people, and other urban issues.

Other Calgary and Edmonton issues. The commission also acknowledges that, while there may be only one council and two school authorities, maintaining relations with a number of community leagues or associations, business revitalization zones, and other identifiable organizations places demands on the time of a city MLA.

9:10

Now, with that in mind, we will be proceeding. We will give each presenter 10 minutes, and then there will be 10 minutes for the commission to ask questions. I would ask each speaker, since we're being recorded by *Hansard*, to please identify yourselves for the record. I believe we are ready.

Dr. Taft.

Dr. Taft: Thank you very much.**The Chair:** There's a glass with water there if you would like it.**Kevin Taft, MLA
Edmonton-Riverview**

Dr. Taft: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. For the record my name is Kevin Taft, and I'm the MLA for Edmonton-Riverview. I have with me Karen Sevcik, who is here as president of the Edmonton-Riverview Liberal Constituency Association.

The written submission in front of you is very brief, and it essentially reinforces information that you've received before about Edmonton-Riverview. I would like to congratulate the commission, frankly, on rising to a very difficult challenge across the province, and it's not over yet. My view and the view of many in Edmonton-Riverview is that the decision made by the commission concerning

the boundaries for Edmonton-Riverview was a sensible decision, and it reflects the fact that those particular communities on both sides of the river are communities that share many interests, share common concerns, share a common history.

While the argument is being put forward that the river is in many cases a natural dividing line, in this case it's actually a natural attraction. People in Edmonton want to live near the river; it's not like a freeway or things like that. The river attracts people and provides a common focus for the constituency, which is reflected, of course, in its name.

The neighbourhoods in Edmonton-Riverview right now reflect Edmonton as it grew during the first energy boom, from the very late '40s to the early '60s. The two sides of the river in terms of neighbourhoods are almost mirror images. Right along close to the river valley on either side you have very high-income, very prosperous neighbourhoods. On the south side it's Grandview or Landsdowne or Windsor Park, and on the north side of the river it's Laurier Heights and Crestwood. Then as you move out a couple of neighbourhoods on each side, you have very solid, middle-class neighbourhoods that were constructed primarily in the later '50s up to the early '60s, consistently facing issues that go along with mature neighbourhoods. So those are a large seniors population, issues around decaying infrastructure, school closures, and the transition from having been the outskirts of the city when they were first built to all now being city core neighbourhoods. There's quite a transition there when it comes to issues of self-identify even, thinking of yourself as a core neighbourhood, confronting issues of traffic congestion, crime, and so on.

My belief is that from the beginning Edmonton-Riverview has been a coherent, well-functioning constituency. As the MLA I've worked very hard to create a sense of identity across the constituency, and we do have and have achieved consistently a very high voter turnout, I think in the last election or perhaps the last two elections the highest voter turnout in the province.

I'm here first and foremost to reinforce the decision to preserve Edmonton-Riverview. I know there are people around who would actually like to see it taken apart. When I look at the challenges you face, I have some real sympathy. You're in a tough position. I do propose in this submission some wiggle room for you if you're needing that.

Is it okay if I go to the map?

The Chair: By all means.

Dr. Taft: The area that was added to Edmonton-Riverview in your proposed boundaries is this area here, which continues along the theme of following the river valley. These are neighbourhoods that are very consistent with the rest of Edmonton-Riverview.

An option – and this could either be a trade-off because I know the MLA for Edmonton-McClung is here, and Edmonton-McClung does face some real challenges. An option I'd like to leave with you, which I mentioned in the letter, is actually – this is the Whitemud freeway here, Whitemud Drive – to add these neighbourhoods to Edmonton-Riverview as well. This is Whitemud Creek, as you can see, and these are the oldest neighbourhoods in this whole southwest area of Edmonton. Again, they have a consistent social profile, say, to these neighbourhoods: this is Grandview and Lansdowne; this is a part of the University of Alberta land and this creek. These neighbourhoods literally face each other across this creek, and you can almost wave at each other from front-room windows here.

Another option would be, rather than to draw this boundary along the creek, to just follow the freeway, which I believe – and I think everybody would agree – is a much more natural dividing line than

the river, and add these neighbourhoods. You could either then return those to Edmonton-McClung, or frankly you could make Edmonton-Riverview a little bit larger than the average if it was helpful to your discussions and add both of those areas to Edmonton-Riverview. I'm looking for a way to give you, as I said, a bit of wiggle room in your decisions.

I think I'll leave my comments there and open it up to discussion.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Archer: Thanks, Dr. Taft. I appreciate the general comments and then the specific recommendations in the event that the commission needs to shuffle some areas around. The interim report has the population of the Edmonton-Riverview constituency pretty close to the provincial average, 2.4 per cent over, so there probably is a little bit of room for us to add a few parts of communities, as you're suggesting.

On the other hand, I think what you will find if you look at what we've done with the Edmonton constituencies overall is try to keep them fairly close to the provincial average. In fact, of the 19 proposed constituencies, all but one are within plus or minus 10 per cent of the provincial average, and the one that's outside that range is 10.01 per cent away from the provincial average. The constituencies that tend to be farthest from the average were the constituencies that seemed to be growing more. In particular, I think they are Edmonton-Ellerslie and Edmonton-Mill Creek in the southeast part of the city.

I'm interested in getting your general reaction to the interim report of the boundaries commission for Edmonton overall and, in particular, that principle of trying to keep the constituencies as much as possible within a plus or minus 10 per cent variance of the provincial average and if that's a principle that we should be mindful of in the final report as well.

Dr. Taft: Well, I think the principle of keeping representation as close to the provincial average as possible is really important. It's not easy when you have the geography of Alberta and the variation of population concentration, but I think that principle is crucial. In fact, I think the 10 per cent would be a maximum range, if I'm understanding your question. Just as an aside, I don't think that adding those two neighbourhoods would push Edmonton-Riverview over the 10 per cent range although I haven't done the mathematics on it.

I don't envy your position. I know there's a position out there, there's a case to be made that Edmonton should have had two additional seats. I think there's some merit to that, but that's a debate you have to have internally. I think that we face in Alberta a really tough balancing act between rural interests and the urban ones. My view is that the future growth of this province over the next eight years will largely be in the urban areas.

I'm not sure I'm getting to your question. It was sort of a conversation.

9:20

Dr. Archer: I mean, I interpreted your response as saying: keeping with a variance of about plus or minus 10 per cent for the Edmonton constituencies would be consistent with what you would be looking for.

Dr. Taft: Yes. I don't think any more than 10 per cent. I think we have to keep it within the 10 per cent.

Dr. Archer: Yeah. Thanks. That's all I have.

The Chair: Peter.

Mr. Dobbie: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thanks, Dr. Taft, for that presentation. You refer to polls 2, 4, 6, and 7 in the second-last paragraph. We are looking at neighbourhood data. We have no idea where the polls are. Do you know the names of the neighbourhoods?

Dr. Taft: Yes. Actually, I picked those polls out of here. I just call them old Riverbend. But this area is Brander Gardens. I can't recall the name of that particular neighbourhood. As I say, I've always known it as Riverbend. The freeway, which is actually getting even wider now, really cuts those two neighbourhoods off from all the rest of southwest Calgary.

Unidentified Speaker: Edmonton.

Dr. Taft: Southwest Edmonton. Thank you. And even more from southwest Calgary.

Those are two coherent neighbourhoods. There's a school here that serves the two, an elementary school, Brander Gardens.

Mr. Dobbie: I understand the principle. Just, again, if you could have someone from your office just follow up with the names so that we can be sure that we're talking about the same thing because we aren't segregating data by poll number. A follow-up piece of data would be helpful.

Dr. Taft: Okay. Sure.

Mr. Dobbie: From a larger perspective there is an argument that has been made that moving the Edmonton-Riverview constituency so that it's all on the west side of the river results in other constituencies in Edmonton that for some people work better. In the first round of submissions we heard very little except from people who were supporting the concept that in the Edmonton-Gold Bar constituency the river is a divider, but in Edmonton-Riverview it's not. They've echoed what you said today. We have seen a number of submissions that are encouraging us to consider moving Edmonton-Riverview so it's entirely on the west side of the river. One of those is from Mr. Kolkman, who provided us with a detailed report.

The challenge that we're going to face is: where do you start in Edmonton? What we did last time is we certainly looked at Edmonton-Riverview as a starting point and said: if we preserve Edmonton-Riverview on both sides of the river, we work outwards from there, and then there's a natural cascading effect. Again, the challenge that we're going to face today and over the next couple of days is whether it's the best solution. It seems from what we're hearing that there are a number of constituencies that are dramatically affected by having Edmonton-Riverview in its present configuration, and there are some arguments on the other side, so I appreciate your strong support for the existing arrangement.

How many years, again? Was it in 1996 that this constituency was created?

Dr. Taft: That's right. Yes.

I guess the challenge when you're looking at some of the issues, community interests for example, some of the criteria, is that the neighbourhoods on either side of the river have much more in common with each other than, say, Laurier Heights, which is close to the river, has as you go further and further from the river. As you go further out from the river, you get into newer neighbourhoods,

different demographics, younger populations, and different kinds of issues. If you were to put all of Edmonton-Riverview on one side of the river, for example the west side, you end up potentially mixing, say, the West Edmonton Mall area with the areas along the river. Those are very different communities of interest with different histories, different issues, different dynamics.

Mr. Dobbie: One of the issues that we heard about when we were in Calgary and Red Deer was a cautionary direction from many submitters that we should be very reluctant to make dramatic changes to existing constituencies because of the natural voting patterns that are in place and also the working relationships among the constituencies. In central Alberta our proposal was to have smaller constituencies, but there were some dramatic changes in configuration. We are essentially wondering how much weight to put to, I guess, a variation of the Hippocratic oath: do no harm, or make no big changes. From your perspective how much weight should we give to maintaining existing constituencies to the extent we can?

Dr. Taft: I think there's some real merit to that. I'm not a career politician. I wasn't particularly engaged in electoral politics before I actually ran. But even as a voter I remember finding it confusing in my constituency. I remember there was an Edmonton-Parkallen for a while. I didn't move my house, but then I was in Edmonton-Strathcona, and then I was in Edmonton-Riverview. Each time you're left having to deal with different candidates and different dynamics and a different understanding. I know that I've worked really hard with tremendous signage campaigns, newsletters, and so on to create a feeling of Edmonton-Riverview so that people understand: yeah, my provincial constituency is Edmonton-Riverview. I'm sure that's true for Edmonton-Calder, which won't exist, and Edmonton-McClung and so on.

I think, fundamentally, you're in a tough spot. There's no denying that. Doing no harm, you know, trying to keep as much consistency as possible, I think, makes a lot of sense. I really worry about this as somebody who believes so deeply in democracy. As we watch voter turnout and commitment to democracy decline, I think that confusing people and always changing the rules of the game adds to that.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you. I have a hundred more questions, but I think I'm out of time.

The Chair: You are.

Just for clarification, I think you were talking about Brookside. I don't think you were talking about Brander Gardens.

Dr. Taft: You're right. Brander Gardens is on the other side of the freeway.

The Chair: You're talking just under 2,000 people in Brookside.

Dr. Taft: That could be right. I didn't do the math.

The Chair: Yes; 1,951 is what we have here.

Dr. Taft: Okay. Yeah. So that would add about 5 per cent to Edmonton-Riverview, which should keep it still under that 10 per cent boundary.

I'm just looking for constructive ways to help you.

The Chair: And we're anxious to hear them.

Ms Jeffs: Thank you very much, Dr. Taft. In just following up a little bit on that in terms of if it made sense to make a trade-off, do you know whether the populations in the two areas that you've identified are comparable or close?

Dr. Taft: I'm guessing that they're close. I somehow thought that you might be working from the polls in assigning things. I misunderstood. I was working from the report of the last election. I know that they're similar neighbourhoods. I don't know how close they are. But in terms of the demographics and the history and the issues they are quite similar.

Ms Jeffs: Okay. With respect to the issue about the river that runs through Edmonton-Riverview, thank you again for coming and reinforcing what we have heard previously from the communities, that there seems to be a strong connection from the communities on either side of the river. I note that one of the presentations that's been identified to us, the government caucus presentation, identifies as its main purpose with respect to Edmonton to ensure eliminating the need of a constituency to straddle the river. I'm quoting from that. I'm wondering: do you have any specific comments on that proposal?

Dr. Taft: Well, I would just be repeating myself. If I was to give a very concrete example, though, it would be just to go down on a Sunday afternoon like yesterday afternoon to the footbridge that crosses the river at Hawrelak park to Laurier park and spend half an hour there and watch the foot traffic. I mean, it's connected. There are hundreds and hundreds of people walking across that bridge on any kind of afternoon. There is a sense of connectedness. You know, I'm going to start repeating myself.

9:30

Ms Jeffs: Well, it's interesting because we have heard – I think the previous commission thought that what would work in Edmonton-Riverview would work in Edmonton-Gold Bar, and we've heard really strongly to the contrary.

Dr. Taft: I think the difference in Edmonton-Gold Bar is that the history of the communities on either side of the river is completely different. The demographics are quite different except, perhaps, for the flats at the bottom of the river valley. But Edmonton-Gold Bar goes up into the hard-core, if I can use that term, inner city of Edmonton on the north side of the river, and that's really different from the residential areas of Capilano and so on.

Ms Jeffs: All right. Well, thank you for that and for giving us some wiggle room.

I'm going to ask you about more of a larger issue. You mentioned, you know, the concerns for urban versus rural voters. The way the existing report is set out, which looks at Calgary, Edmonton, and the rest of Alberta, the variances are very narrow within the rest of Alberta, but concerns have been raised that that's a pretty broad brush. It includes cities, and it includes purely rural areas. Do you have any comment on that analysis and any comments that could help us out? There are so many hybrid constituencies now that it's very difficult to look at what is a rural versus an urban constituency. I thought I'd put you on the spot on that one.

Dr. Taft: I don't know if this is at all helpful, but I remember being struck in the last election and in the current arrangement that a party could win every single seat in Calgary and every single seat in Edmonton and not form government. I think the evolving character of Alberta is to a dominantly urban province. I actually think that

transition has already occurred and that the electoral system and the parameters you were given in your mandate, over which you had no choice, actually are trying to hold onto a version of Alberta that is really falling into the history books. Having said that, everybody in Alberta, wherever they live, has a right to be represented reasonably fairly in the Legislature.

I'm not Solomon, Allyson. I'm sorry; I can't solve that. These are tough judgment calls, and you have to make them.

Ms Jeffs: All right. Thank you. Those are my questions, and thank you again for coming this morning.

The Chair: Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Dr. Taft, for your presentation. Just a brief comment, first of all, on what you've just stated. As you know, what our report is suggesting is 44 seats for Edmonton and Calgary and 43 for the rest of Alberta. We're very conscious of the change in demographics. There will be a greater change, I agree, in the next eight years if current trends do continue, and there's nothing to indicate that they wouldn't. But I believe very strongly that our recommendations have taken that into account at this point in time.

Dr. Taft: Yes. I think this is a step forward. I agree.

Mr. Evans: My question to you relates to your comment. I just want further clarification because I think you and I are of the same perspective on this. You had indicated that you felt comfortable – please correct me if I'm putting words in your mouth – that Edmonton-Riverview could take on greater than the quotient in terms of representation. You'd still feel that you as the MLA for that area would be able to give effective representation, and your constituents would receive effective representation, which is our primary goal, to ensure that all Albertans have effective representation.

A commentary that we've been hearing and I specifically have been asking in urban settings is whether what I would call suburban constituencies have, just by their nature, a more homogeneous population and therefore have more tolerance of a greater variation above the quotient than, say, both the inner cities in our two major centres and those areas that are more remote from the centre of the population of our cities. I take it from your comments that you would agree with that sentiment.

Not to ramble on too, too terribly long, but looking at your constituency, it isn't totally homogeneous. There's a vast difference between that Riverbend area in terms of socioeconomic demographics and the northwest end on Stony Plain Road and 156th Street and, indeed, that southeast portion of 111th Street and 61st Avenue – and I used to live in that area when I was going to university – and 109th Street. So notwithstanding that there is a fair difference in the demographics of your constituency, it is still what I would call a suburban urban constituency. I hope that, again, you would agree that it's very tolerable for you to take on more than 40,880 constituents.

Dr. Taft: I have to say that Edmonton-Riverview is not, I don't think in anybody's mind, anymore a suburban constituency. Those were the suburbs of Edmonton when they were built 50 years ago. They are now by city of Edmonton standards city core neighbourhoods. They're miles from the suburbs. That's one of the reasons I think it would be a mistake to put it all on one side of the river. You end up having to reach way out into what are now the suburbs.

Anyway, just a comment on language. Those are very, very urban areas, but they are close together. There are a couple of extremes in terms of income and socioeconomic status, but they're fairly limited. I guess the short answer to your point is that I would agree that I think an MLA could represent Edmonton-Riverview even if the Brookside, Quesnell Heights, and Rio Terrace areas are added because, first of all, they're physically close, but they're just so consistent with most of the rest of the constituency.

Mr. Evans: Communities of interest.

Dr. Taft: Communities of interest. The issues they face, the language, the culture: they're just very, very consistent. So I guess I am agreeing with you. The other extreme would be allowing some of the remote rural areas to be well below the average because of the challenges of representation. Here I think you could allow it to get above the average because of the nature of the constituency.

Mr. Evans: Well, thanks very much for a very succinct answer to my very rambling question. Thank you.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, Dr. Taft. We appreciate your input, and I can assure you that we'll have a close look at it.

Dr. Taft: Okay. Thanks very much. I appreciate the opportunity.

Ms Friesacher: Our next presenter is Mr. David Xiao, MLA, Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Xiao: Good morning.

The Chair: Good morning. For the record in *Hansard* would you please give your name?

**David Xiao, MLA
Edmonton-McClung**

Mr. Xiao: Yes. My name is David Xiao. I am the MLA for Edmonton-McClung. First of all, I want to say that I never planned to come to the commission. I was a little bit reluctant because we are the people who will be on the ballot, so I'd rather come here myself to make a presentation. I really wanted to trust that the community leagues and the grassroots organizations would come forward to the commission to make a case on how their best interests could be effectively represented.

After going through the first report on the proposed boundaries, my office was flooded with phone calls from community leagues and from individuals who are really concerned about the redistribution of the boundaries. That's why after talking to so many people who said, "Well, David, you've got to come out to make some presentation" in a very neutral and nonpartisan way, I want to make sure that this is exactly what I'm going to do.

9:40

I'd like to take this opportunity. I think the reason we are doing the redistribution of electoral boundaries is to make sure that after a significant growth in Edmonton, we want to add one more seat. You can argue one is enough or not. That probably is not the question for now, and we are going to just add one seat. How can we take this opportunity to make sure that the people can be effectively represented after redistribution of the boundaries? That's the reason I come here.

For me, I'm really not concerned as an MLA. I know I'm going to put my name on the ballot in the next election, but I'm really not

concerned. I probably just want you to know how I got elected. I spent 13 months knocking on doors. I knocked on over 18,000 doors, almost every door in my riding. I'm already going back to the doors. I want to revisit everybody. If you assign me, you know, a new portion of a new riding, I will do so because I believe that's the effective representation, to be connected with the grassroots regardless of who they are culturewise, religionwise, and demographicswise. It doesn't matter. You know, it's up to our politicians to make that connection, to bridge that gap.

That's the reason I didn't complain. I didn't even come out, you know, screaming in the caucus meeting. People would think I would be the only one to come out screaming because of the proposed Edmonton-McClung. Lessard is included in the same riding as the people who are living along Edmonton-Ellerslie, you know, Calgary Trail. That's about more than half an hour's drive. That's why I said no. I'm prepared to do whatever it takes to represent the people in the riding where I would be their representative.

Having said that, I would suggest that after I got so many phone calls, consulting with so many ordinary people, I think what we should do is make sure: how can we minimize the impact to the people and make sure that the voters are not being disenfranchised? To achieve that, we have to apply some common sense here. I would like to suggest – this is not from me; it's from the people – that we've got to use the river because regardless. Respectfully, my colleague from Edmonton-Riverview said that the river shouldn't be the natural boundary, but I disagree with that because people disagree with that. We're talking about more than one, two kilometres apart. They are not belonging to the same community league. They have really not necessarily a lot of common community interest with those people who are living on the sides of the river.

We've also got to use the natural highways like Whitemud freeway, like Anthony Henday, and some major roads as the natural boundaries. Also, we have to make sure that the community leagues will not be divided in more than one part.

What I'm trying to say is: make sure that they can be effectively represented. That's the key word. Looking at the map – if I may just walk over – you can see Lessard here. Right here is Callingwood Road; we're talking about 62nd Avenue. There's not much here, nothing. And then you go all the way to Calgary Trail and Ellerslie Road. They have absolutely no common interests at all. How can you set up an office? For example, if you're sitting here, people want to come here. That's not their neighbourhood. They don't even bother to drive half an hour to get there.

Also, people living on this side of the river have to drive all the way up to the Anthony Henday and then go over there. We're talking about at least another 40-minute drive. This is how I see it. I say: "Well, we have to create one more constituency, one more riding. How can we do that?" You know, it's all about a domino effect. Where should we start? After talking to so many people who actually came to my office and made a lot of suggestions and presentations, I submitted the proposal, which I think best reflects the people who presented in my office.

I know Edmonton-McClung has also been growing. Although I'm really reluctant to give up any portion of my Edmonton-McClung riding because I knocked on every door – I worked very hard; there is always a personal kind of attachment to it – we have to be pragmatic. So what do we do? I say: okay; I know the neighbourhood. I look at the pools. How can we make sure that those people who share common interests are not being divided? Rio Terrace and Patricia Heights are divided by a natural ravine, and they are bridged with Edmonton-Riverview and Edmonton-Meadowlark by two bridges. They actually always go to Meadowlark Safeway; they

never go to Callingwood Safeway. That's part of their neighbourhood. They are naturally connected with that, so if you have to take a portion away from my constituency, then I would say that's the portion you can take.

If we have to go a little bit further, if you think of the number, it's not enough. I would say to use 170th Street as a natural boundary. You could use 170th Street all the way to St. Albert – why? – because all of the community leagues are separated by 170th Street.

In my riding I consider this as another even more reluctant part, you know, because I live in the Country Club, Wolf Willow area. That's my neighbourhood; that's my community league. I hate to see them go, but like I said, we have to be pragmatic. I realize and my constituents realize that we have to be fair and make sure that people can be effectively and fairly represented.

Respectfully to my colleague from Edmonton-Riverview, that's the way you can do it to create another, and if you want to call it Edmonton-Riverview, I think that part can be included in the creation of a new riding. In this case, I'd love it to work out another way. For example, Edmonton-McClung is located on the edge of the city. There's no way to further divide Edmonton-McClung, some other portion, to other constituencies because we are separated by the Whitemud freeway and the river.

My time is up?

The Chair: It is, but we have time.

9:50

Mr. Xiao: Okay. Also, like I was saying, we all recognize the fact that in the last few years the growth is in the south of Edmonton. How can we do that? We know we are going to create a new riding in the south of Edmonton. The people are really – we've got a lot of seniors.

A lot of people really spent an awful lot of time on this. They know the exact number. They study the polls. It's amazing how they did it. They came up with a suggestion, looking at the map, to have Edmonton-Riverview move to the west side of the river and then Edmonton-Gold Bar to the other side. Then we can create one. We simply can use 23rd Avenue along Calgary Trail all the way. Just look on the map that I submitted, and you will see that. I gave you two maps. Do you see here? You can easily see along 23rd Avenue because 23rd is a huge road. People along this road are separated; they do not belong to the same community leagues. So then we can create an Edmonton-South riding, you know: 23rd Avenue and Terwillegar Road all the way, and then you come along the Anthony Henday and then along the river. So you basically create a new riding, Edmonton-South.

The population there is somewhere around 38,000. Quite a few people came to me and stated that it is about 38,000. Because of the growth in the next 10 years it is going to be huge there in that area, so that will give the room. Basically, this has very little impact on the rest of the constituencies. Like I mentioned, there is a domino effect. If you make any major changes to any individual constituency, that will have a domino effect on the rest of the constituencies. So that's why I really appreciate that, you know, we have so many very devoted people. They really want to make sure that we get it right. That's the reason I'm here to present the view from my constituency, from my people.

I would love to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thank you, Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Xiao, for your presentation. A couple of questions. First of all, if I under-

stand you correctly, on your second map you're talking about what you propose to be a new Edmonton-South constituency. Our interim report had one additional seat for Edmonton, and that would bring Edmonton's total to 19. That would create a variance from the quotient of only .7 per cent above. If I understood what you were saying, you're arguing for two constituencies in Edmonton, and that would put the variance quite a bit out of whack with the quotient and make the variance between Edmonton and Calgary even more extreme. Just speaking to that ripple effect, that would be a tremendous ripple effect, and I don't think it would be a positive one. Can you please make some comments on that?

Mr. Xiao: I want to make sure that I answer you correctly. I'm not here to talk about adding two seats in Edmonton. Okay? I'm not talking about that at all. I'm talking about: how can we minimize the impact and try to avoid disenfranchising the voters? That's what I'm saying. Actually, how we're going to create the other constituency is none of my business. It's just that many people came to my office and actually presented that suggestion, so I'm conveying their message.

Also, I think I wanted to touch on the name of the constituencies. In the first proposed report you created a Callingwood constituency, and if you look at that map, actually 75 to 80 per cent of that Callingwood constituency is currently from Edmonton-McClung. So I would say that even if there are no changes – this is assumed – that riding should still be called Edmonton-McClung because 75 to 80 per cent of the new riding is currently from Edmonton-McClung. You just add Lewis Estates to that mix, and then you can name whatever the new riding is using a new name. That would make much better sense for the people in terms of participating in the elections and people not being confused. You know, that's my point.

Mr. Evans: Thank you for that clarification. Just one other comment. You've already alluded to this, and that is that the population that the interim report has identified for Edmonton-McClung, because of the high growth potential there, is about 7 per cent under the quotient, so about 38,000. Your configuration is about 41,000. Given that if there was the continuation of the growth pattern that we've seen in recent years over the next eight years, that would result in a population, I suspect, that would be quite a bit higher than the current quotient. Do you have any comments on that?

Mr. Xiao: Yes, I do. That's why I'm saying this. If you want to further reduce the population, then, like I say, you can include the east portion of 170th Street. That's what we're trying to say. I'm not in the position to make any decisions. It's totally up to you and the commission to make that decision. I'm just trying to feed you some information and present ideas, you know, how you can achieve that goal.

Mr. Evans: Sure. On a macro level you'd recognize or agree with us that there will be growth in this part of Edmonton, and we'd best do our best to try to accommodate that in the future.

Mr. Xiao: Yeah. Exactly. There will be some growth. I think there will be significant growth in the next eight years in the province. Whether some people don't like the oil sands or not, we're going to grow. There's no other alternative for energy. Those are the facts, so we have to deal with that. I'm just trying to make sure that we provide whatever information we can to let you make better judgments and decisions.

Mr. Evans: Very good. Thank you. Those are my questions.

Mr. Xiao: Yeah. Thanks.

Ms Jeffs: Thank you, Mr. Xiao. I'm going to pick up a little bit where Brian left off. If I understand your proposal right with respect to the number of seats, you're proposing basically eliminating the proposed Edmonton-Callingwood constituency and reconfiguring there and then – because we did put another seat in the south of Edmonton – putting the other seat further south in Edmonton. Am I summing that up correctly?

Mr. Xiao: What I'm saying is that in order to create one more seat in Edmonton, we have to do something, right? It's a domino effect, but we want to minimize the impact of the redistribution of the boundaries to change that.

The proposal from the people is that you just take this corner away from Edmonton-McClung because Edmonton-McClung is separated by the river, by the city boundary, and by the Whitemud freeway. There's no other way you can do it. This portion is connected by two bridges with Edmonton-Meadowlark and Edmonton-Riverview. Meadowlark is their neighbourhood. They go to Safeway; they go to the shopping centre. They don't drive all the way here to Callingwood. They don't do that.

Another thing. You see Lessard in the first proposal here. Lessard is here, but Edmonton-Ellerslie is here. You have to drive 40 minutes to get there. There are no common interests whatsoever. If you put an office here, the people cannot be served effectively. They won't come here. If you put an office there, the people won't go there because it's not their neighbourhood. Also, those folks living here have to drive all the way to the Anthony Henday, then go over there to Edmonton-Ellerslie. So people say that it makes much more sense just to separate, to take this portion, because we have to realize that there's growth. There is a number you want to reduce. That's reality. That's the best we can do.

10:00

Another thing is that if you do this, we know that the biggest growth in the last 10 years is in the south, the south side. So by creating a new riding, you know, to the south side of 23rd Avenue, like the map I presented to you here – you see, this is 23rd Avenue, this is Calgary Trail, this is 23rd, then the Terwillegar road, then the Anthony Henday, the river – you get exactly a new riding of about 37,000 to 38,000.

Ms Jeffs: I understand your proposal. You keep talking about minimizing impacts, but I think what we've heard consistently from the communities in Edmonton-Riverview and certainly from the MLA this morning – I guess one constituency's minimal impact is somebody else's major impact – is that, actually, moving Edmonton-Riverview would be a very, very significant impact, so I think we need to address that. You know, it may create more minimal impacts on Edmonton-McClung, but I don't think there's any way to describe moving Edmonton-Riverview to the west side as a minimal impact on that constituency. We realize we're the ones who have to play Solomon here.

Mr. Xiao: Absolutely.

Ms Jeffs: Just to clarify that, because you keep referring to that. You know, that's not what we've heard from the constituency of Edmonton-Riverview, and they appreciate the river as something that brings them together rather than divides them.

Mr. Xiao: I like that slogan, though.

Ms Jeffs: You know, that's something that we will have to consider. With respect, we certainly are aware that the growth area is going to be in the south, and that is why we were trying to leave some of those communities a little bit below the provincial average, to allow for that.

In terms of what you said about Edmonton-Callingwood, I just want to clarify your submission. If what has been proposed as Edmonton-Callingwood, more or less, remains with the final report, would it be your preference to see that constituency called Edmonton-McClung and the further south one have a different name?

Mr. Xiao: Yeah. Of the proposed Edmonton-Callingwood riding, 75 to 80 per cent is from the current Edmonton-McClung riding, so it would make much more sense to name that riding Edmonton-McClung than, you know, to name the riding a different name. If that's something that has to be – that's the suggestion from the people – I'm okay with any name you call it because I am going to knock on every door.

Ms Jeffs: You'd mentioned that, you know, you've had some input from constituency associations and others. Are there constituency associations who are endorsing this proposal? If there are, could you tell us what they are?

Mr. Xiao: Okay. The way I presented I think is supported by 95 per cent if not 99 per cent.

Ms Jeffs: Of people in the current Edmonton-McClung?

Mr. Xiao: Yeah. All the people living – I mean the grassroots, the ordinary people. Otherwise, I never planned to come here.

I didn't come the first time because I don't believe it is our job to make that presentation. It's up to you and the grassroots organizations. Because we will have our name on the ballots, to me there might be some conflict of interest. That's how I see that. But I'm compelled, you know, by the people who say: you've got to make that case on our behalf in a very, I will say, nonpartisan way, neutral way. I know MLAs that feel some attachment to their current constituency.

Again, everything is about common sense. You can say, whatever: the river will bring people together. Of course, there are many things that can bring people together, but we're not talking about spiritual things, not talking about, you know, outdoor activity; we're talking about community activities, and we're talking about the interests in the neighbourhood.

Ms Jeffs: The question I had asked was whether any of the communities that you talked to were endorsing this proposal.

Mr. Xiao: Oh, yeah. They all feel that way.

Ms Jeffs: Which would they be? Will we be getting that input?

Mr. Xiao: No. I'm not going to name anybody here, not individually, just in case I might put words in their mouth. No, I'm not going to do that.

You know, I just feel this is a common-sense presentation by the people, not from me. I can tell you that it's never from me. It's from the people. I got quite a few very emotional seniors who came to my office. They had a big map. They used a city map. They've

got all the numbers. It's just amazing to see how people really pay attention to this.

Ms Jeffs: Okay. Those are my questions, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Mr. Dobbie: We're out of time, but just one quick question. The proposed Edmonton-Riverview constituency that you drew: did you have a population figure for that constituency?

Mr. Xiao: Yes. I think when you include east of 117th Street, the number is in the neighbourhood – you know, we studied the polls. I know the population in the polls, and based on the census from the city of Edmonton, I think it is in the neighbourhood of around 39,000. It could be lower than 39,000. It's between 38,000 and 39,000. That's basically what the number probably is going to be.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you. I do appreciate you being here. Your report is very clear, and you make a strong argument. Thank you.

The Chair: Keith.

Dr. Archer: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Xiao. Mine is probably more a comment than a question. You know, the riding that we have proposed, as you've suggested, stretches over a considerable distance and puts people in a common constituency despite the fact that they're living quite a ways apart. This was a solution that was used in a couple of Calgary ridings in addition to, certainly, this riding in Edmonton.

I think it's fair to say that the reasoning the commission was considering at the time was that because these areas are subject to quite a bit of growth over the next decade or so, certainly between now and the next boundary redrafting, what we tried to do is to ensure that, where possible, the populations of those ridings were a little bit less than the provincial average. That's the case in this constituency. I think it's about 7 per cent under the average.

It may well be that by the time of the next boundary commission some of the communities that are being built out will be in a further stage of development. Consequently, the populations can be expected to change quite a bit over the next decade or so. The implication is that the constituency boundaries may look quite different after the next redrawing, but for the time being the sense was that, you know, there are some consistencies of interest amongst fairly new communities. So even though they may be separated by some distance, those common interests of newly developing communities provide that kind of consistency and community of interest that provides the MLA with a common set of issues that could be explored.

I recognize the position that you're bringing forward. But in that set of trade-offs that the commission is presented with, the solution that we've identified for the proposed Edmonton-McClung riding is the solution we've identified in some other areas within the cities as well. Hopefully, it provides both the MLA and citizens the ability to represent their common perspectives.

Mr. Xiao: Yeah. I think that's exactly the point, why I came here to present the people's proposal. Look at the map. You know, the proposed Edmonton-McClung actually includes almost all the growth area in Edmonton in the next 10 years. In Edmonton-McClung in the Hamptons area I'll bet you that in the next 10 years it's going to grow significantly, just in the Hamptons area, on the west side of Edmonton. But on the south side along Calgary Trail the Ellerslie area is going to be huge. It's going to be huge. So we

have to anticipate the growth by knowing where it is. That's one thing.

10:10

Another thing is all about effective representation. That's exactly the reason we're doing this. Not just looking at the geographical map, we want to make sure that we are dealing with the people. How can we make sure that Edmontonians, Albertans are being effectively represented by the elected officials? That's the reason we're doing this. In order to do that, you have to think that we are human, too, as MLAs. You have to make sure as well: how can they do an effective job? By having such a, you know, vast constituency in an urban area, it just does not make sense to have somebody, an MLA, jump around.

Also, like I said, where are you going to set up the office? We all know the people. If it's not convenient, people will not come to you. They go to another. I always get people coming to me instead of going to their area MLA because it's so convenient for them. So that's one thing.

Another thing is that, you know, when you look at the map here, the houses are built and scattered all over the place in the south of Edmonton. There is no way that the constituents can communicate effectively with the elected official, in this case an MLA, because it's too distant. So that's what I'm saying.

Another point is: is it really necessary to create such a vast, huge constituency in Edmonton? Do we? So that's why when I started with my presentation, I thought of how people tell me: David, we have to apply common sense here. Use the natural boundary and make sure that people are effectively represented and make sure, to avoid disenfranchising the voters, to minimize the impact and at the same time to achieve our goal, which is to create another riding, another new constituency, in Edmonton.

In this case people see the south side and it makes absolute sense to create the Edmonton-South constituency like the one they proposed. Let's make it very clear: I'm doing the job for the people. It doesn't come from me. I didn't plan on coming here. So they said, you know: look at the map. People know the number. So we can easily create another new riding in Edmonton without disenfranchising the people.

That's the essence, I think, of my presentation.

Dr. Archer: Right. I understand that perspective.

That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you for your presentation. We'll certainly consider it.

Mr. Xiao: Well, thank you very much for your time. I appreciate the opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you.

I don't think we have another presenter at this moment, so we'll take a short adjournment, and we'll reconvene as soon as our next presenter is here.

[The hearing adjourned from 10:14 a.m. to 10:43 a.m.]

Ms Friesacher: Our next presenter is Mr. John Doiron.

The Chair: Sir, since we're being recorded by *Hansard*, could you please give your name for the record?

Mr. Doiron: John Doiron, spelled like "Do iron."

The Chair: All right. Thank you. Go ahead, sir.

John Doiron
Private Citizen

Mr. Doiron: Good morning. My name is John Doiron. I work in the inventory control sector for Igloo Building Supplies Group. Igloo is probably the largest building supplier in the Edmonton area in the residential housing market. Our salespeople tell us that the largest growth in Edmonton will be in Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by Edmonton northwest, and the other areas are Rutherford, Riverview, and Castle Downs.

For the last five months I've been studying the results of the elections in Alberta since '71, looking for fairness in the election process. I have asked the Liberals, the NDP, the Wildrose, and my Conservative MLA for help to achieve election fairness. Elections Alberta supplied the data. I found your report on the website thanks to Rachel Notley's office. I asked my MLA for the report in January, and he got back to me six weeks later and wanted to see me before he'd give me a copy, so it would have been late March before I got the copy.

My main concern I have with the exercise is to achieve a fair balance between all the electoral districts at the time of the next election. I agree that some allowance should be made for the two northern ridings, but I disagree with their variances when their variances exceed 25 per cent. Other means should be taken to give those districts access to their MLA. I sent an e-mail letter to Stephen Harper asking for him to intervene, but he declined.

Your website has a section about a poll taken to find out why Albertans are not going to the polls to vote in elections. The poll doesn't give the answer which I think is obvious. I talked to four different parties. One party equated the elections in rural Alberta as no better than in a banana republic. An MLA sent me a letter with some detail about how the abuses are carried out, and I have asked them how we can get an independent observer to oversee the next election like Canada sent to Afghanistan.

I compared Alberta's 83 ridings for 2008 with Ontario's 107. The election in Alberta had one more riding above and one more riding below the 25 per cent mark. When you look at the results of the last 10 elections in Alberta, look at '93's results: every riding in Edmonton went Liberal, and the Tories still won, with 64 per cent of the seats. Many Edmonton voters are saying: why vote? The rural ridings are going Conservative at the rate of 60 per cent every time, with few not going Tory. I don't think that is a democratic result.

I met with my MLA, and he kept talking about the insane amount of miles the rural MLAs drive. He used the term about 20 times. I don't believe the rural MLAs are insane; they are desperate to keep their jobs.

Other issues I have. Alberta is a growing province, but in the interim report there are no allowances made for growth. You are setting up the electoral districts based on the population, which is a poor measure of the number of voters. Some ridings have a much higher level of non-Canadians; others have a much higher level of citizens who are too young to vote. I have compared the census data with your population statements, and I have adjusted the figures accordingly to find out the number of voters in each riding. The bottom line is that the number of voters in each riding on election day should be as equal as possible.

I have prepared spreadsheets to show the election results over the last 11 elections, looking at different areas of Alberta. I divided Alberta into five separate parts: Calgary; Edmonton; the Calgary to Edmonton corridor along with the ridings around Edmonton; the five cities of Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat,

and Red Deer; and the last part is the truly rural ridings. I am looking at the growth, the voting patterns, and the number of voters per riding.

In 1971 the voters in rural ridings had twice the representation in the Legislature compared to the city ridings. In the last election it was closer but still too far apart: 22,000 voters for the rural ridings compared to 33,000 voters for Edmonton and Calgary. Most of the growth in Edmonton and Calgary will happen in five of their ridings, and that has not been allowed for. One Calgary riding in the last election had as many voters on election day as it had population in 2006.

The bottom line is: how do we get the voter to feel that his or her vote counts? This commission was set up to change the size of the electoral districts. The Conservative government gave you directives which appear to be looking for the same results that we have seen in the past. The Alberta taxpayer is paying for this redrawing of the map, and the taxpayer wants a level playing field on election day.

In 1993 Edmonton voters voted for change, and we had to put up with the Klein cuts. In the last six elections only 7 of the 139 positions in the area that I referred to as rural did not go to the Conservatives. The Liberals took 4 of the 7 in 1993.

Look at the results in the last election. The variance in the size of electoral districts went from minus 46 to plus 51 per cent. That is not acceptable. The voter turnout varied from 21.4 per cent to 52.5 per cent. The MLAs won the riding with as little as 10.4 per cent of the voters in their ridings. In only 10 of 83 ridings the MLA won the seat in the Legislature with 30 per cent or higher support. In 12 ridings the runner-up had more than 5,000 votes, and in 26 ridings the winner got less than 5,000 votes. Only the Premier has acceptable percentages to sit in the Legislature as far as I'm concerned.

10:50

If you look at the growth in Alberta, you will see the number of voters go from 895,000 in '71 to 2.35 million in 2008. The rural sector grew at a slower pace than the other sectors. In my spreadsheet on election results by party please note the percentage of the vote for the Tory party in the rural area.

I took your report and used the 2006 census to find out how many voters were in each riding. One spreadsheet shows the 2006 figures, another shows the adjustment to your population figures to 2009. The variances are not the same as your report.

The last Electoral Boundaries Commission was before the 2004 election. I compared the results in 2004 to 2008 to find the growth per riding. Check out the spreadsheet that shows the growth between the two elections by growth rate. Fourteen of the first 18 ridings are rural ridings with the lowest rate of growth. I projected that growth to the 2012 to 2016 elections using the average growth over the last three elections. As an example, I took Calgary-McCall. For 2012 figures I used 75 per cent of the three-year growth rate because there are only three years from the 2009 census to the next election. I then factored the growth per riding in the last election down to the average growth for each area. The three-year average for Calgary of 12.484 per cent became 9.363 per cent, so the Calgary-McCall growth rate of 40.48 per cent became 18.1 per cent.

In the new ridings I just put in a number to make the spreadsheet work. This spreadsheet is in order of the 2012 vote. As you can see, the results are not where I or the taxpayer want it to be. I'm asking that you please redraw the map so all Albertans have the equal representation on election day.

I'd like to add that while the point was made to me earlier about the ability of the MLA to get around his riding, when he sits in the Legislature, he is one man against the rest of the legislators. In

Dunvegan-Central Peace's case in the last election his people had three times the representation of certain ridings in Edmonton, or virtually three times. I don't believe that's fair.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Just a couple of things for your benefit. Where you suggest the Conservative government gave directives, we are an independent commission. We receive our directives from the statute and from the Supreme Court of Canada and the courts who have ruled on this, which is the law. You understand that?

Mr. Doiron: Uh-huh.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Archer: Thanks, Mr. Doiron, for the very detailed information that you've provided. If I understand correctly, much of the data that you're using in your various tables as part of your submission relate to the number of persons on the voters list per constituency as opposed to the census data. Could you elaborate on that a bit? The legislation that we're working with indicates that the boundaries commission should be working with census data in developing constituencies. Those census data, whether they're provided as a result of the Canadian census in 2006 or subsequent municipal census initiatives, for us are a starting point. To a certain extent I want to ensure that there's consistency of understanding of the variances within the populations, and I'm trying to understand the impact of using voter registration information as opposed to census data.

Mr. Doiron: Well, basically, in each riding you only have a certain percentage that can vote. It's not straight across the board. In certain ridings there are 8,300, I believe, that can't vote, and in other ridings 18,000 can't vote. Either they're non-Canadian or too young to vote. I worked that through from the 2006 census. The figures that they give me, the people in institutions, the population is 1 to 4. The population, unfortunately, they have in there is 5 to 19. So I had to equate that back to 5 to 17 and then equate that from 2006 to your figures to come up with, you know, who could not vote in that riding.

I'll accept the fact that it's not a hundred per cent, but it's an attempt to come up with some idea of how many voters will be able to vote in the next election. It's not that far off the names on the list. You know, it's not a hundred per cent because for one thing there's a year between the last election and the census data for 2009. Certain ridings, of course, grow quite rapidly and others don't. That's what I attempted to do.

It came out in the election data from the last election that even in Calgary or Edmonton you have a huge gap, you know, from about 24,000 to 41,000 voters in a riding. I'm asking you guys to see if you can bring that closer. Even if I don't win on the rural Edmonton thing, if you can at least get the city ridings halfway right, that would be a big plus. Then it wouldn't show the vast difference between Dunvegan-Central Peace and the largest growth area in Edmonton or Calgary. Like I say, the largest riding in Edmonton was just under 42,000 – it depends on which figures you take in the book – but that's what it looks like. It's a huge swing.

Dr. Archer: Right. So are you suggesting that there's some kind of systematic variation in using voter registration data as opposed to census data? If there are differences but the differences are random across types of constituencies, then the effect of using census data is,

I think, somewhat mitigated. Of course, the challenge of using voter registration data, if a boundaries commission was ever so inclined to do that, is that voter registration lists, as we all know, are typically vastly out of date in Canada. The challenge, I think, for elections is offset by the fact that we have election day registration, so if your name is not on the voters list in the right riding, you can always change that on election day. But to use those data for drawing electoral boundaries, I think, is a recipe for adding more inaccuracy into the process rather than improving the process. That's the concern I have in adopting that recommendation.

Mr. Doiron: Okay. If you look at the 2006 census data, it tells you how many non-Canadians. The information is there. I'm asking that you look at that and see if you can get some update on those figures, why they are as they are.

11:00

Dr. Archer: Okay. Just for your information, the commission in this round was given the ability to use not only the 2006 census data, which has supplementary information, as you're suggesting, but also updated census information for those municipalities that chose to submit it to Municipal Affairs. For many parts of the province, in fact, we're using data from 2009. So in terms of a cost-benefit analysis with respect to what data we're using as the core of our report, I think the updated census has provided as timely a portrait of the Alberta population as any Electoral Boundaries Commission in Alberta has ever been able to use.

The other, I guess, broader point that you're making is that there is a level of inequality within our proposed report that is troublesome for you. So what would you suggest to the commission as a goal? The legislation enables us to have ridings that are plus or minus 25 per cent in addition to four special ridings up to 50 per cent below the average. I take it from your comments that if we use that full variation, that would be unacceptable. What for you would be an acceptable range?

Mr. Doiron: Well, I would like to see a maximum of 25 per cent. I would like to see more help given to those ridings because I know that if you get a good person in the office of the MLA, you could have, actually, two or three offices in those ridings that have people that work. I've talked to some workers from some of those MLAs' offices. Some of them know their work very well, probably nearly as good as the MLA himself. Just the fact that he can reach the MLA at any time because we have satellite phones and everything else, there is no excuse for the residents to not be able to get in touch with the MLA at any one time. I'm suggesting that even in those ridings give them more help if they need it. I'm not sure what the term is for the workers in those offices, but I know I spoke with a few of them that know their stuff very well, and I think that's what they need more than bigger representation in the Legislature.

Dr. Archer: Right. Just a final comment from me, then. You'll be pleased to know that in the interim report, although the boundaries commission doesn't have any authority to allocate resources in any constituencies, we did make a recommendation that the Legislature look at providing additional resources in those constituencies where those would assist in providing for effective representation.

Mr. Doiron: Yeah. I think that's a good suggestion just because they need it. Like I say, in the Legislature when they're sitting around the table as you are here, why should you be representing 16,000 and you 41,000? Otherwise, I can understand your argument,

but when it comes to sitting around the Legislature, which is the main focus of what their work is, it should be equal.

Dr. Archer: That's all the questions I have. Thanks.

The Chair: Peter.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you. Mr. Doiron, I don't have any questions. I just wanted to comment that I appreciate the thought and work you've put into your proposal. It's clear that you understand that much of what you're talking about is beyond our mandate, but this is an important venue to get it on the record. Certainly, everything that we have received by way of submissions and presentations does form part of *Alberta Hansard*, and over time I suspect that the message that you and others are talking about will get out. So thank you for the work you've done on this.

The Chair: Allyson.

Ms Jeffs: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Doiron. I just have a question with respect to your growth projections. You're projecting forward from the 2006 data, and I'm wondering in light of what Keith Archer was saying, our colleague here, that it looks like maybe some of that growth has already been caught by our 2009 update.

Mr. Doiron: Some of them were probably, yeah.

Ms Jeffs: I'm also wondering if you had made any allowances for changes in the growth? We think that with the economy and stuff things are changing a little bit in the overall growth rate.

Mr. Doiron: Right. I agree.

Ms Jeffs: Were you able to account for any of that?

Mr. Doiron: I didn't get into the economy. I went into the numbers of the last two elections to project, and I showed on the one spreadsheet certain ridings, like Dunvegan-Central Peace at the low end of the stick with 3 per cent or thereabouts growth, and you had a number of ridings up closer to 50 per cent, so I projected that in. While I agree that in the next election some of those ridings, especially in the high end, the name will switch.

Edmonton-Ellerslie now, from what I'm told, is going to be the real big push. I'm saying, you know, that there's a fair chance of Edmonton-Ellerslie, being essentially equated to the last election, being at that 41,000 or so and Dunvegan-Central Peace at 16,000. I find it very hard to justify that kind of spread. It also makes it hard for the MLA. Plus your commission is not only for the next election; it is for the election after that and possibly after that. Edmonton is growing, I can tell you. At work we're struggling to keep up with all the new growth. There is a possibility in Edmonton-Ellerslie that you may have the equivalent of a whole new riding, especially between now and 2016. I'm asking you to try to get a little better handle on it.

I know the city planning division has paperwork on what the growth is and where it is, except they don't have it broken down by electoral districts. I can show you what they sent me last week, but I didn't have the time to equate it with the different electoral boundaries that you have. I can definitely tell you that there are different areas where they're going to grow. Even within the old part of the city ridings are going to grow because they want to put in high-rises and everything else. Between the last two elections the

downtown grew considerably; I think it was like 30 per cent or whatever.

Ms Jeffs: That's quite correct. The core of the city is growing, I think, more than expected.

We tried to make some allowances, especially in the outlying areas, to leave a little bit of room for growth, but I take your point is that perhaps the proposed boundaries in the interim report don't do enough for that.

Mr. Doiron: Right.

Ms Jeffs: Your point with respect to the sparsely populated rural ridings is well taken. We have heard that concern with respect to urban versus rural representation. I can say that we're still struggling with that, but thank you very much for your presentation.

Those are all my questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Doiron. You've obviously put a tremendous amount of time and effort into your presentation. I'm not going to presume to be able to digest it in the short period of time we've had to review it, so I'm not going to get into many specific questions. With respect to your growth projections, just so that I'm clear, were you using gross population figures, or were you using figures based on the number of electors during a period of time and projecting that out?

Mr. Doiron: What I did, basically, was take the growth in the last three elections as a base for the growth over the next two elections. Then I took the growth in the last election by riding, whatever that figure was, and tried to show that certain ridings were going to grow much more than other ridings.

Mr. Evans: But growth of electors as opposed to growth of gross population?

Mr. Doiron: Yeah. Right.

Mr. Evans: I see.

Mr. Doiron: I mean, if I had thought that was significant, I could have done that as well because I have all the data. I've only showed you part of the data I have on my computer.

11:10

Mr. Evans: Well, as has been stated by my colleagues, the majority of our interim report is based on the statutory provisions that we operate under. That is both a benefit and a distraction at some points in time, but it's the reality.

Thank you for your presentation. I'm sure I echo what my other colleagues would say, that we will certainly pay attention to it and will take the time to review it carefully. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Doiron: Thank you for your time.

Ms Friesacher: The next presenter is Mr. Dave Taylor, MLA, Calgary-Currie.

The Chair: Mr. Taylor, since we're being recorded by *Hansard*, for the record could you please give them your name?

**Dave Taylor, MLA
Calgary-Currie**

Mr. Taylor: Absolutely. Judge Walter and commissioners, thank you very much for allowing me to present today. Good morning. My name is Dave Taylor. I am the MLA for Calgary-Currie, a constituency which is to disappear in name if the interim report becomes the permanent report. With any luck, if that happens, I will in future be the MLA for Calgary-Killarney, I imagine.

I don't want to take the full 10 minutes today that you've allotted me for my presentation because our constituency association presented to you down in Calgary last week, and I know that it was a fairly complete and thorough presentation and question period to follow. So I don't want to go over all the same ground. Suffice it to say that I concur with most of what was within their report, and there were a couple of points that I would just like to reiterate.

I guess point 1 is the request to leave the boundaries as close to the current boundaries as is possible. The reason why I say this is because there has been a homogeneity, if that's the word, a cohesiveness to Calgary-Currie that I've certainly gotten to know well in the last couple of terms that I've represented the riding. There are a couple of communities on the far west end of the constituency which still behave, think very much like suburban, albeit inner ring, mature suburban constituencies, but the culture in the rest of the riding is very much a big-city, inner-city, residential culture.

This leads me, really, to the point that I think is our second point that concerns the constituency association, that concerns, certainly, some constituents I've talked to. Although let's be honest. I mean, most people, when it comes to voting in a provincial election, if they vote – and that's been a concern in the last few – they will go and vote where the voter card tells them to vote. They don't really pay a whole lot of attention to what their constituency is called or whether they're in the same constituency this time that they were last time unless they have a particular fondness for their MLA, which all of us MLAs, of course, hope that they do, but that doesn't always happen.

What you've proposed here, in our view, essentially takes the inner core of downtown Calgary, south of the Bow River, and pretty much puts it all into one constituency, Calgary-*Buffalo*. The argument here – and I think that the constituency association president, Gerald Forseth, made this argument when he presented to you last week – is that that, in effect, underrepresents the inner-city residents of Calgary in that it gives them only one voice, the MLA for Calgary-*Buffalo*, as opposed to two voices in the MLA for Calgary-*Buffalo* and the MLA for Calgary-*Currie* currently. Now, you might be saying: "Well, okay. Wait a minute now. We've hived a little off of Calgary-*Currie* and put it into Calgary-*Buffalo*, and we've hived a little off of Calgary-*Currie* and put it into Calgary-*Elbow*, and we've hived a chunk off of Calgary-*Buffalo* and moved it into the proposed new Calgary-*Killarney*. So doesn't it all even out in the end?"

Well, in our view, no. Of course, that's, I suppose, a subjective opinion, one that we can argue, one that we can discuss, or perhaps you'll choose not to discuss it. I think what it does do is it gives – I don't want to say like-minded people – people in similar circumstances, people living right in or close to the downtown core of Calgary, who bring with them a whole package of attitudes, sensibilities that go along with that, everything from being able to walk to work or maybe get by with one car as opposed to two or three if they live in the outer suburban reaches of the city to being

able to walk to shopping, to appreciating the proximity to cultural activities downtown, et cetera, et cetera: they certainly have points of view in common. I suppose, on one hand, you could argue that, well, that means they'll do just fine being represented by one MLA. On the other hand, if they're represented by two or more, it gives them a little added clout, I would argue, in the Legislature relative to what they would have if there's really only one voice speaking for the downtown residents and all the others have significant suburban communities in their boundaries.

I know that at the presentation on Monday it was recommended that Calgary-*Currie*, Calgary-*Buffalo*, Calgary-*Elbow*, and Calgary-*West* come together and try to collaborate on a joint written submission, that I believe you want to have by – I forget – the end of this week or the beginning of next, expressing our joint concerns with some of the boundary reassignments. That effort is under way, so I presume that you will have that written submission on time.

It strikes me when I look at the boundaries that, although you've done a creditable job trying to even out the population inequities, in order to do so, you have created a really strange boundary for Calgary-*Elbow*. I'm not really sure that I would want to be the MLA for Calgary-*Elbow* and have to hoof it from one rather misshapen end of that constituency to the other. When I look at that and I look at Calgary-*Glenmore*, which is the other one, I see two constituencies whose proposed new boundaries represent, to my eye, an effort to get within the variance on the 42,000 goal, but in order to do that, you've had to create some very strange boundaries that put communities together that do not necessarily have anything in common. For me that would be a concern.

I want to put one more thing on the record. I probably am getting close to using up my 10 minutes because that's the way I usually go. I say I'm going to talk for a couple, and then I talk for 10. I know that this is outside your realm of authority, commissioners, but just to get it on the record. When the Legislature voted to increase representation as of redistribution to 87 constituencies versus 83, I was opposed to that idea. I remain opposed to that idea simply because even at 42,000, give or take, people at the provincial level in this province are very well represented, some would argue overrepresented. As I compare the various levels of government and representation in Calgary, well, clearly MPs represent a much larger population, and that would be expected, but city councillors in Calgary represent, I would say, close to twice the number of people in their wards that we MLAs represent in our constituencies.

Now, let me point out quickly that I'm not advocating for fewer urban constituencies and the same number of rural constituencies. I think you folks have done a pretty good job at trying to wrestle with the issues of population versus geography in the rural areas, and I recognize that the extra four seats have allowed you to probably do that much more easily than if you were restricted to 83. But we still do have, in my view and in our constituency association's view and in the view of a lot of urban dwellers, big-city dwellers in this province, a disproportionate overrepresentation of rural Albertans in the House versus urban Albertans.

I think that, in essence, is the nub of my argument, of my submission. I'll turn it over to your questions now.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thanks very much, Mr. Taylor. First of all, thanks for confirming the position that was taken by your constituency association last week. That's helpful to know.

Secondly, just with respect to that issue of Calgary-*Buffalo* only

representing the inner city, it seems to me that there isn't a huge amount of distinction between the west side of 14th Street and the east side of 14th Street. In other words, Calgary-Killarney, as we have called it in the interim report, is representing that area to the west of 14th Street, and a great deal of that or at least part of that, I would submit to you, is as much inner city as the east side of 14th Street. Did you take that into account and has your constituency association taken that into account in coming to the conclusion that Calgary-Buffalo is the only inner-city constituency?

11:20

Mr. Taylor: Yes, we did take that into account. We also looked at it in another way, I would submit to you, and that is the boundary line being 17th Avenue S.W. in Calgary, which it currently is. That largely changes under the proposals in the interim report of the boundaries commission. While there are similarities, there are distinct differences between north of 17th Ave and south of 17th Ave, whether you're east or west of 14th Street. Let me point out that in both cases when I talk north of 17th Avenue and south of 17th Avenue, for argument sake I'm essentially talking about the present-day boundaries of Calgary-Buffalo and Calgary-Currie.

Both constituencies are undergoing fairly aggressive densification, you know, a real initiative and effort by the municipal government in Calgary to get more people living in the downtown core and close by. But whereas you have a mix of high-density office buildings and high-density multifamily residential buildings, be they condo or rental, in Calgary-Buffalo, much more of it in Calgary-Currie is anything from single family – and they can be quite large single-family homes in the case of Mount Royal, obviously – through infills, duplexes, triplexes, small multifamily units maybe with four, eight, 20 units in the building, that sort of thing.

What we are seeing and what we have seen for the last six years in Calgary-Currie – and it has slowed down a little bit with the slowing of the economy, but I have no reason to believe that it won't pick up again with a vengeance as soon as the economy picks up – is a densification where old wartime era bungalows on 50- or 55-foot frontage lots are being torn down and replaced with two or three housing units in that area. So the population growth in Calgary-Currie, as the commissioners no doubt noted in preparing their interim report, has been substantial over the time that I've been the MLA there.

Mr. Evans: Sure. Just one other comment and then a question. You mentioned that we may get a co-ordinated response from three or four constituencies. That is extremely helpful because the ripple effect is inevitable if we only hear from one constituency and it doesn't take into account neighbouring boundaries.

Another position that was taken by your constituency association was relative to the name and a great regard for the historical name Currie. The comment that the commission made was that we didn't feel comfortable leaving the name as Currie when much of Currie barracks was outside of the proposed boundary. The response to that was that the overriding concern should be the historical nature and the identification with that name and the desire to continue to have that name as part of Calgary's electoral history. Could you make some comments on that?

Mr. Taylor: Sure. I would concur with that. Of course, given that my first point was, "Let's try and redraw the boundaries so that the boundaries of the new improved Calgary-Killarney/Calgary-Currie go back more in line with the current boundaries," that would put the Currie barracks site most likely back in the boundaries of Calgary-Currie.

Now, Currie barracks itself, for all intents and purposes, doesn't really exist as a going concern anymore. It hasn't been an armed forces base for quite a number of years now. On the east side of Crowchild Trail, which fits into my constituency currently, it has been completely redeveloped as Garrison Woods, and on the west side of Crowchild Trail, in what is today Calgary-Elbow, it's about to be redeveloped by Canada lands corporation, again, very much along the same lines.

So other than for the military museums, there is not much tactile, on-the-ground military history left in the area. Nevertheless, the name Calgary-Currie has a real historical significance going back to the founding of the barracks and its naming after the general who led our forces in World War I and who is credited, certainly in many historical circles, with being the soldier most responsible for the nation-building effect that our participation, fighting under our own flag in World War I as opposed to under the flag of the British Empire, had for this country. So it has real historical significance there.

Now, if that sounded impressive, let me admit very quickly that I don't know why Calgary-Buffalo is called Calgary-Buffalo. In fact, I've forgotten. I did know at one point, and I don't remember. I know that there was historical significance to that, but I would suggest that very few Calgarians probably remember what that is. If there are any buffalo running around downtown Calgary right now, I'm sure the police are very concerned.

Mr. Evans: Thanks very much for those comments. I appreciate it.

The Chair: Allyson.

Ms Jeffs: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Mr. Taylor, for coming to see us this morning. I'm going to pick up a little bit on what you were talking about about the growth because we've certainly seen that as well in Edmonton as the other major city, that the central neighbourhoods which used to be sort of vacating are now filling up again, and we're seeing some fairly high-density development coming in. If I look at the proposed riding of Calgary-Killarney, the interim report proposal has it at about plus 8 per cent, plus 9 per cent, in that range. Is it your sense that, you know, we should be rethinking that a little bit to leave a little more room for growth if the commission is going to relook at the boundaries in this area?

Mr. Taylor: That's a tricky question because as I look at the four constituencies that you've asked to collaborate on a written submission, Calgary-Killarney already has a significantly higher population than the lowest represented riding, which is Calgary-West. There's a difference of almost 6,000 people between Calgary-West and Calgary-Killarney, on the plus side to Killarney. Calgary-Elbow comes in at, I would say, about 1,500 fewer than Killarney, and Calgary-Buffalo comes in at close to 4,000 fewer than Killarney. To make room, you know, if you can do that, yes.

I don't personally have any role to play in this joint submission that's being prepared, but I would suggest that if you take our comments seriously, not prejudging what the constituency associations are going to do, you're probably looking at a fairly significant redrawing of the proposed boundaries that you have in there. Thank goodness I'm not on the commission; I think your work would have driven me quite mad, having to do this. But looking at the maps, I would suggest that some of the redrawing has to involve Calgary-Glenmore as well.

Ms Jeffs: Okay. Just to clarify, I think the thinking of the commis-

sion was to try and leave room in some of the constituencies for growth. I think that's why Calgary-West was redrawn to be a bit below quotient, because of acknowledgement of growth out there, but we may have underestimated the potential for those neighbourhoods that are currently in the proposed riding of Calgary-Killarney.

Mr. Taylor: I would make that argument, too, Ms Jeffs, if I could, because in Calgary-West you've still got some developable land that can be built out, but it's going to be built out according to, you know, suburban development plans for that area. While certainly suburbs that are being built in Calgary today are being built at a higher density than they were 10 years ago or 20 years ago, suburban life in the city of Calgary is still mostly about single-family dwellings on their individual pieces of property, their individual lots. When a new neighbourhood is developed like that, you're probably looking 40 to 50 years out before there's any significant redevelopment and any opportunity for densification there.

So I don't quibble with the notion that you've accurately accounted for future growth prospects in a place like Calgary-West, but the densification and the redevelopment of communities like Bankview, Richmond, Knob Hill, Altadore, South Calgary, the Marda Loop area, Killarney, Glengarry, that's happening as we speak. Populations are growing in those areas, as they are in Calgary-*Buffalo* on the north side of 17th Avenue. That's going to continue, in my opinion, reasonably unabated.

11:30

Ms Jeffs: All right. I appreciate that input because we may have underestimated in that area. We were trying to leave it, but densification adds a whack of people in a single building if you're starting to get condo and even medium-density multiple developments.

Mr. Taylor: Even a block with 30 houses on it that gets redeveloped with infills suddenly has 60 houses on it. While sometimes those houses in my constituency can be prohibitively expensive and end up being bought by empty nesters, you know, by childless couples, that sort of thing, that is certainly not the rule everywhere. Those houses are being bought by young families as well, so there is very definitely a net population increase going on.

Ms Jeffs: Thank you very much. That was my final question.

The Chair: Peter.

Mr. Dobbie: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Taylor, the question that you answered for Ms Jeffs was one that I had as well. I'm wondering if I could take you up 30,000 feet for a moment. I'd appreciate your thoughts on some of the suggestions we've heard with respect to relative constituency sizes. It has been suggested to us and we have accepted for the large part that an urban centre riding has a higher demand on an MLA's time and on his staff's time than a suburban-urban riding. I'm wondering if you agree with that argument?

Mr. Taylor: Given that, you know, any rule has all kinds of exceptions that prove it, in general terms I would say yes. Now, let me qualify that as well by saying that I've never been a suburban MLA. You certainly have a different perspective when you're allowed to have a hands-on situation than when you're observing it from the outside. In general, yeah, the closer you get to downtown, the more constituents will present in your office with complex, difficult cases.

An example that I often refer to in my own office goes back about

three years to the height of the housing crisis, when real estate prices were going through the roof. Reasonably affordable – and I'll put affordable in quotes because "affordable" is one of those words that you can define a billion different ways in housing. Reasonably affordable rental accommodation was being converted to condominiums at a rapid rate, and we were literally in the summer of 2007, which was the worst for the housing crisis in our city, helping upwards of three or four constituents a week find a new place to live because they could no longer afford to live in the place that they were living in. These are often people who have jobs and just don't make enough money to afford a 250 per cent rent increase. Thankfully, that sort of housing market only seems to come around about once in a generation in this province, but it does come around, just like booms.

Add to that a higher population in inner-city areas with issues of various sorts, whether they be mental health, physical medical health, medical conditions, substance abuse and addiction problems, literacy problems, the need for social services. Of course, I could tell you a few stories from Calgary-*Currie*. I'm sure my colleague from Calgary-*Buffalo* could tell you many more because the workload is even more intense there.

You do have that, and you have as well, which adds another interesting wrinkle to your question, a number of senior citizens who have spent their entire adult life living in my constituency and are suddenly finding now that they're faced with needing to find different accommodation, wanting to stay in the communities they've always lived in but wondering if that's going to be possible. They bring with them the issues that come with aging in place or having to leave your place and aging somewhere else.

Mr. Dobbie: Accepting that proposition, how would you describe Calgary-Killarney if we rename Calgary-*Currie* as proposed by us? Is it more urban than suburban? I certainly view Calgary-*Elbow* as more suburban.

Mr. Taylor: Calgary-Killarney, as proposed by you, would be more suburban than Calgary-*Currie* because you have essentially moved the boundaries of Calgary-*Currie* north to the river and west to Sarcee Trail and west of 14th Street. Now, the point that was made earlier, that if you're using 14th Street S.W. as the dividing line and things are really just as inner city on the west side of 14th Street as they are on the east side, that's true if you're close to 14th Street S.W. But if you're using 17th Avenue as the dividing line and you start to get out to 37th Street, to 45th Street, up into the Shaganappi area, it's getting very much more to be mature, inner-ring suburbs, the suburbs that have been there for anywhere from 35 to 50 years. They present quite a different complexion, I would argue, than an inner-city residential riding, yes.

Mr. Dobbie: Finally, the presentation we received from the Liberal constituency association had some numbers in the first paragraph on page 2 that were incorrect. I take it you're aware of the comments we made on those?

Mr. Taylor: Yes, I'm aware, and they are aware now, and I'm sure that they will be corrected in the submission.

Mr. Dobbie: Okay. Thank you very much. I appreciate your input on that.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you.

Dr. Archer: Thanks, Mr. Taylor, for those comments. I have a brief

comment and then a couple of questions. I guess the comment is that the thing that set in motion the kind of changes that we recommended in the Calgary-Killarney riding was the recommendation we had heard in the first round that we shouldn't have Calgary-Bow on both sides of the river. We adopted that recommendation and then put Calgary-Bow all on – where did we put it?

Mr. Taylor: On the south side, I believe.

Dr. Archer: On the south side of the river. Doing that resulted in a need to shift some of the populations around. As so often happens in urban ridings, one change has a domino effect elsewhere. We raised that with the constituency association just to give them some context for what was the factor that led in the first instance to such a significant change in Calgary-Currie.

I think the second decision that we made – and this is the one that we're mostly talking about here. In our interim report we essentially said: well, let's create two ridings and split them east and west, with Calgary-Killarney being west of 14th Street and Buffalo being east of 14th Street. What I hear you recommending, fundamentally, is: rather than splitting the riding east and west as in our proposal, go back to the current situation, which for the most part splits those ridings north and south, using 17th Avenue as the dividing point. I think that's something that we need to consider seriously now as we begin the next round of tweaking.

We've heard a few recommendations from people in other ridings that are going to have some bearing on the changes that we need to consider generally within this sort of near southwest part of Calgary. I'd like to run some of them by you just to get your reaction. Some have a direct effect on the Calgary-Killarney riding, and some may have an indirect effect.

In our Calgary-Glenmore proposal we had Glenmore extending quite a ways up; it had sort of a northeast finger on it. The suggestion was to take the current Calgary-Acadia riding, which I believe has as its northwestern edge the Blackfoot Trail, move that over to Macleod Trail. That effectively cuts off much of the northeast finger of Calgary-Glenmore.

11:40

A second recommendation that we've heard is to think about Glenmore Trail as the southern boundary for Calgary-Elbow. Currently we have the Glenmore reservoir as the southern boundary. By using Glenmore Trail as the southern boundary, the effect is to take the Lakeview area and assign Lakeview to Calgary-Glenmore. So part of the shift in Calgary-Glenmore by taking the northeast corner is addressed by giving it a new northwest corner.

That will for us raise the question: is it reasonable to think of the Glenmore reservoir as a natural dividing point, which is what we did in the interim report and said that Calgary-Glenmore should be all on one side of that, or to say that Glenmore Trail is the natural dividing point and use that and, consequently, take a fairly big chunk out of Calgary-Elbow? That's the impact of taking Lakeview out. I don't have the population figures in front of me, but I know that there's a lot of people at play there. Then if we do that, it suggests to me that there's not going to be a lot of room for us to play around with the northern boundary of Calgary-Elbow because Calgary-Elbow will just get too small.

The alternative, which I think is what you're proposing, is to say that we'll leave the Glenmore reservoir as the southern boundary of Calgary-Elbow, and if you're going to take some population out of Calgary-Elbow, probably do it in that area of Altadore, Marda Loop, South Calgary. Now, I'm not sure that we're able to come all the way down to 50th Avenue, the current riding boundary, because

there's such a large population there that we're going to begin running into population difficulties.

So my question is: if we're going to tweak the boundary, the mid-south boundary of what we're calling Calgary-Killarney, instead of cutting it off at 20th Street and moving up to 26th Avenue, is it reasonable to just use 33rd Avenue all the way across as a boundary? At present it comes down to 50th Avenue. It seems to me that you either cut at 33rd Avenue or at 50th Avenue. I don't know that there is a natural point between those two arteries that would make a lot of sense.

Mr. Taylor: Well, of course, you're talking to the wrong guy about a natural southern boundary to Calgary-Currie because as you look at it now, there is nothing consistent or natural to it. It's Richmond Road in part; it's 50th Avenue in part; it's the Elbow River in part. It's all over the place, really. I don't know if I have an opinion. In my perfect world as the MLA I would love to keep all of Altadore because it is, in essence, one community, and my preference is to keep communities together.

I don't know if you'll find this satisfactory or not, but as a more general response to what you're saying, first of all, it puzzled me that you would adjust the Calgary-Glenmore boundary by moving the boundaries of Calgary-Acadia, which is, by and large, the current Calgary-Egmont, because as you get up there in that area going along Blackfoot Trail, commissioner, as you know, that's heavily industrial; there are not a lot of people that live up there. To my way of thinking – and I apologize if this word sounds loaded, but it's the one that comes to mind – a more suitable redistribution would perhaps have Calgary-Buffalo going a little further east to take in a little chunk of that weird northeast corner of Calgary-Glenmore. It would have Calgary-Killarney, or Calgary-Currie, moving back significantly east of what you've proposed, again, with what you were suggesting, continuing to use 17th Avenue as the boundaries. There would be a southward movement of the Calgary-Currie boundaries, which would squeeze into Calgary-Elbow, no question about that. Yes, I'm subjectively, you know, with all due bias, arguing for the reinclusion of neighbourhoods like Mount Royal into Calgary-Currie because in my view – and this and \$2 will get you a cup of coffee – it fits in the context of the Calgary-Currie that I know.

I would leave Lakeview in Calgary-Elbow. There seems to be no particular reason to move it out of there, so I would leave the northern edge of the reservoir as the boundary. I think I would drift Calgary-Elbow a little further south down into some of what is Calgary-Glenmore's territory. I don't know, because – I'm sorry – I haven't thought this through to this extent, whether that means that all of Glenmore has to drift a little further south and maybe come in on its eastern boundary in order to create the room for growth that Ms Jeffs spoke about earlier in some of the more southern suburban constituencies in Calgary.

On the west side I think either Calgary-Elbow has to go up the west side a little more, which, frankly, it does today, or Calgary-West needs to come a little east or Calgary-Bow needs to come a little south and/or all of those suggestions.

Perhaps we should have – well, no, we probably don't need to get any more cooks spoiling the broth in a collaborative submission. I was going to suggest that perhaps we should have had Calgary-Bow in on this discussion, too, but at some point let's get all 87 constituencies. That's your job.

Those would be my thoughts, Dr. Archer. Again, with a goal towards keeping Calgary-Currie, or Calgary-Killarney – I'd like to go back to the old name, frankly, because of the historical significance – as more of an inner-city residential riding with the good and

the bad that comes with that. I mean, there are some incredible positives, I think, as well. If there's a negative, it's just that the casework is a little more challenging, but I knew that when I ran for office there, so that's okay. And leave some room for growth. As you take another whack at these boundaries, leave some room for growth in Calgary-Currie, slash Calgary-Killarney, and some of the other constituencies that would be affected by boundary change because it's going to happen in the inner city just as much as it happens in the suburbs, I would argue.

Dr. Archer: Yeah. Thanks very much. I think there's lots of room for some tweaking here, and that input is really useful. I certainly look forward to anything that could come jointly from the constituencies in that area.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Taylor. We'll certainly consider your input here.

Mr. Taylor: Thanks very much.

Ms Friesacher: The next presenter is Ms Judith Axelson, Edmonton-Mill Woods Liberal Constituency Association.

The Chair: Ms Axelson, since we're all being recorded by *Hansard*, would you please for the record give your name?

Ms Axelson: My name is Judith Axelson.

The Chair: And you are representing . . .

Ms Axelson: Edmonton-Mill Woods Liberal Constituency Association.

The Chair: Thank you. We'd love to hear from you.

**Judith Axelson, Edmonton-Mill Woods
Liberal Constituency Association**

Ms Axelson: Thank you. Thank you very much for allowing me to respond to your interim report. I was here in September initially, and I was somewhat pleased to see the results of what you came up with for boundaries. Certainly, we found that the area to the east of 34th Street, which is the extreme right boundary on the map – and I have included a map the second-last page.

The Chair: We have a laser as long as you don't point it at any of the commission.

11:50

Ms Axelson: And there are no airplanes overhead.

I'm not too sure how to do this. Okay. There it is. I see. I'm one of these 21st century Luddites. I'm not very good at technical things.

The boundary I'm talking about, 34th Street, is right here. The old Edmonton-Mill Woods extended all the way east, way off the map, to what used to be highway 14. You know, we didn't want to see that as part of the constituency. It's a newly developed area. Everything to the east of 34th Street is up to 25 years or more younger than what is on the west side of 34th Street.

My reason for coming today was to have the commission take a look at two suggestions, two recommendations, if you like. These are based on the fact that Edmonton-Mill Woods and Edmonton-Ellerslie are basically the original Mill Woods part of Edmonton, that was founded back, I think, around 1970. The growth that has come about in the last few years: although some people consider it

to be part of the Mill Woods area, it really isn't. It's got other names like the Meadows and Summerside, things like that. The original Mill Woods was designed by the city of Edmonton and the developers to be composed of a number of very distinct communities. These communities became members of an organization called the President's Council in Mill Woods, which does also accept some of the outlying community leagues that are not in the original Mill Woods area. Needless to say, there's a rather strong sense of identity about being part of Mill Woods.

This leads to two recommendations. First of all is the little area that is part of the community of Ridgewood. On the map in the package I presented, it's a blue area. I have indicated the number of registered residents or whatever that live in that area in the report, the fact that there are some approximately 3,500 residents living here, the largest number of them probably being in apartment complexes right in this little area here. It is part of a community called Ridgewood. This is Ridgewood right here, bounded by 50th Street on the west, the Mill Creek ravine, and 23rd Avenue on the south. This is Ridgewood, one of the five areas making up what used to be Edmonton-Mill Woods. Approximately six and one-third polls are located in that part of Ridgewood that has been given over to Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Now, 34th Street is a very – what can I call it? – inhospitable thoroughfare that extends all the way south to Ellerslie Road, way south of where the map is and up here. It's not until you get into Burnewood north of the ravine that you begin to see some stores and whatnot that have been developed into strip malls along this area. Most of this area is inhospitable: back sides of houses on one side, back sides of houses on the other, a cemetery on the east side.

Effectively, I believe that if this is moved over to Edmonton-Mill Creek, these citizens are going to be stranded. Their schools, the issues, whatever they have are likely to be quite different to what you're going to find on the east side. It does, as I said, split off one little part of a community. There are two schools there: Mary Hanley, which is a Catholic elementary school, and Bisset school, which is a public elementary school. Now, as I said, there are about 3,500 residents there.

The other thought we had. The area that's to the southeast of what has been designated here as Edmonton-Mill Woods is south of 23rd Avenue, extends to Calgary Trail here and the CPR line and goes all the way south to Anthony Henday Drive and uses 80th Street and part of Mill Woods Road as a boundary. Now, this area to the extreme east is where you have South Edmonton Common. You have the Alberta research centre and other research facilities all in here. It's not residential. It's only this little park here that is residential, and again it splits off one of the communities here. I believe it's Knottwood community that ends up being split almost in half.

I know Mill Woods looks like a dog's breakfast to most people, but there is really some method to the madness of how it was designed. Mill Woods Road, which comes up here, actually makes a big loop right through Edmonton. On the other hand, everything south of 23rd Avenue has been part of Edmonton-Ellerslie. In the 2002 commission this section here was taken away from Edmonton-Mill Woods, and we've regained it now. We had asked for that initially. We did get it back as we lost everything to the east. Again, here we had communities split up that have nothing to do, really, with the communities to the south of 23rd Avenue.

Now, in the area that I've proposed on your map – I've coloured it yellow – the population was 2,832, which is just a bit less than what was in the Ridgewood area, that we're looking to get back, right in here. I did the math, and if we did what I suggested, we would end up with 40,931 residents, which is 51 residents more than the suggested 40,880. We would end up with plus .01 per cent,

which is really, really close. I mean, I wasn't aiming just for that. Then I thought: okay, so what's going to happen? Obviously, Edmonton-Mill Creek needs a few more people. I suggested in here that it makes more sense to take some of what is considered Edmonton-Ellerslie. Is it possible for you to put an Edmonton-Ellerslie map up, please? I didn't realize you were going to have this wonderful technology today. Then I could tell you where I think it could be fixed.

Okay. You can see this area. Where are we? Okay. Here it is. All right. You see that this area right here is Edmonton-Mill Creek. This is the Ridgewood area, that we want back. This is 34th Street. Now, here they've used the Anthony Henday as the south dividing line for Edmonton-Mill Creek. All this area in here is being rampantly built up. In the future, like the next time there's a boundaries commission, I can guarantee you that there's going to have to be some boundary movement. I'm suggesting that perhaps they use Ellerslie Road, which is right here, as the southern dividing line for Edmonton-Mill Creek and whatever is going to be built up in here. Some of it probably already is. I know from looking at this that there are housing developments and whatnot that aren't shown on here. It would give them the necessary extra people. It makes more sense to give Edmonton-Mill Creek what is going this way because it has more in common with what is to the north.

12:00

Now, I had mentioned in my initial presentation in September that Edmonton-Mill Creek is a weird constituency anyway. North of Whitemud Drive it's an older residential area. There's also a lot of commercial stuff, places where you can buy gravel and dirt and things like that, trucking companies. Then you get into the old Avonmore area, and it's a very old residential area. Then you go south of the Whitemud, and all of a sudden it's all of these new houses and whatnot that I talked about, most of which are to the east of 34th Street except for those that are in the Jackson Heights area, which is up above the Mill Creek ravine and is a very natural dividing line for a constituency, I think. That's what I would suggest if you're saying: well, where can we give some more to Edmonton-Mill Creek and take a little bit away from Edmonton-Ellerslie? That's my suggestion.

I do think that it's important that the communities as such be retained. I know that this area of Ridgewood right here, that we want back, before 2002 was part of Edmonton-Mill Creek. So 50th Street was the whole dividing line – 50th Street is right here – for Edmonton-Mill Woods. We were just over here, so we did gain a bit. We gained everything from the Whitemud to along the ravine, this area known as Ridgewood. Now it's been split in half, and all of a sudden some people are being flip-flopped back into an Edmonton-Mill Creek constituency that isn't familiar to them or has nothing in common with them.

The two constituencies, then, of Mill Woods, Edmonton-Mill Woods and Edmonton-Ellerslie, would essentially for the better part be representative of the original Mill Woods except for everything that's been developed south of Anthony Henday, which is right here.

You can see the strong concentration of housing. There's a big green space right here, and there are those power transmission lines that go through there. There's never going to be any housing built right along Anthony Henday, but they have given Edmonton-Ellerslie all this new area, which I kind of think next boundary commission time, because of all the massive building that's going on down here, is going to necessitate another constituency or whatever unless there's a reduced number of constituencies in the province.

The Chair: Well, thank you.
Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Thanks, Ms Axelson, for making your presentation today. It is very clear that you have spent time trying to deal with the population quotient issue that we face.

Your suggestion about moving the eastern boundary of Edmonton-Mill Creek down to Ellerslie Road . . .

Ms Axelson: The southeastern boundary, yeah.

Mr. Evans: . . . doesn't look to me like it would have that much of an impact, at least currently. But if I understood you correctly, you believe that that little rectangle with a tail on the northeast side is a growth area that will likely see increased populations.

Ms Axelson: Very much.

Mr. Evans: Has that area had subdivision plans approved by the city, area structure plans?

Ms Axelson: You know, that I haven't checked, but I'm pretty sure that things have been done because there's been a lot of debate about building – was it a Superstore? – one of these large grocery stores on 17th Street and what would be 23rd Avenue; 23rd Avenue is right along here. This is 17th Street over here. There is a big-box store development up on Whitemud Drive and 17th Street, but they're of course proposing more down here.

It wasn't that long ago that I think it was a Baptist-type church was built right here, and it seemed like it was in the middle of absolutely nowhere. I remember driving out – yeah, I taught in Fort Saskatchewan. I used 23rd Avenue to get to the highway, and I thought: this is weird. Now there are all sorts of houses around there. The growth is just phenomenal. Every time I seem to drive out that way, I just can't believe what's happening. It's the same over here. It used to be just farms there.

Mr. Evans: So that area over east of 34th Street along the Anthony Henday Drive doesn't face the same electrical transmission line issues that you've identified to the west of 34th Street?

Ms Axelson: I don't believe so. I haven't seen them. I'm not even sure where they go, but I've never seen the lines out here.

Mr. Evans: Okay. We'll take that under consideration. If you have an opportunity to do any additional research and can provide us with any kind of an update, that would certainly be appreciated as well.

Those are all my questions, Mr. Chairman. Thanks.

Ms Axelson: I was just going to mention that the roads used to be very much set out in the grid system like when they were originally made. Like, 23rd Avenue went straight, and there was a road that went straight out to the highway, but you can see what they've done here, put in a big interchange. So they've somewhat changed the whole perspective of things there. But I can see them thinking of Anthony Henday, obviously, as being a – I can understand why it was put there.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

Ms Jeffs: Thank you very much for coming and for providing such a clear presentation. That helps us out a great deal. I think we can certainly consider some of the boundary shifts you have suggested. I'm noting that we have left Edmonton-Mill Creek and Edmonton-Ellerslie a bit below quotient, anticipating quite a bit of growth in

this area, and it sounds like that's what's expected for that entire southern area.

Ms Axelson: So they might be okay just leaving that boundary where it is. In fact, I would assume that that's the case.

Ms Jeffs: Okay. I'm sorry; I'm just going to ask you to recap a little bit. That little tail, is there a lot in there right now? There is a fair amount in there right now?

Ms Axelson: Not yet.

Ms Jeffs: Not yet, but it's coming.

Ms Axelson: It's moving from the west to the east and from the north to the south.

Ms Jeffs: In terms of the population.

Ms Axelson: Also, if you go across highway 14, which is dubbed Anthony Henday Drive north, I guess, or whatever, there is a lot of growth. The Sherwood Park area has been expanding towards that highway also.

Ms Jeffs: Yes. All right. Thank you very much.
I don't have any questions, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Peter.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one question on your ideal Edmonton-Mill Woods constituency as you've proposed it. It's my understanding that it is fairly completely developed.

Ms Axelson: Yes, it is.

Mr. Dobbie: The question I have for you is: in eight or 10 years the average is likely to be 45,000, so knowing that Mill Woods is not likely to grow internally, where would the logical addition of 4,000 or 5,000 people be to that constituency for the next go-round? Because if we're not able to accommodate all of your concerns now, we may take into account what you suggested.

Ms Axelson: My suggestion is that we would have to go south in that case but without breaking up communities, something that more directly follows the community boundaries in Ellerslie. I'm not quite as familiar with them because it has been a few years since I walked these areas when I was running for election, but a line that would follow the community a bit better. It would have to come from down here, I would think.

In fact – I don't know – I guess in a perfect world we wouldn't have as many MLAs as we've got, and I could see the Edmonton-Ellerslie and Edmonton-Mill Woods areas becoming just one constituency. That might happen 20 years from now or less, but I can see that happening. We can't just keep adding and adding and adding people to represent us. That would be my suggestion. I honestly know that anything that's to the south of Anthony Henday that's considered Edmonton-Ellerslie has nothing in common with what is to the north of it. That's what's probably going to have to happen, but I don't think it has to happen yet.

12:10

Mr. Dobbie: Okay. Thank you. So follow the Henday as a southern boundary would be your suggestion.

Ms Axelson: Because then you're completely out of the whole Mill Woods thing.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you.

Ms Axelson: You're very welcome.

The Chair: Keith.

Dr. Archer: Yeah. Thanks, Ms Axelson. I remember when we were sitting around the table drawing this map and this little jog of an area was very much up for discussion. The challenge, quite frankly, is that Edmonton-Mill Creek at the moment has the smallest population of any constituency in Edmonton under our proposal – right? – at 10.01 per cent below the average. If we were to take 3,500 people out of that riding, we would have a riding that's almost 20 per cent below the average. You know, quite frankly, that was the challenge.

Your proposal of bringing the southern boundary down to Ellerslie Road creates a possibility of adding some population in the future, but for this round we would still have Edmonton-Mill Creek at minus 18 to minus 19 per cent. We've tried to avoid that level of variation within Calgary and Edmonton, generally. I suspect that this will be a tough one for us to accommodate.

Ms Axelson: Yeah. I do know that there's the ideal of 40,880, but, again, I know that there are two what I call rural constituencies that exceed, I think, 35 per cent difference. I understand it's a large area, but you've also given Edmonton-Mill Creek a very large area. I think you will find that the numbers along Whitemud to the east will eliminate whatever you're expecting because there's a fair bit of multifamily housing that's going in there.

You're right about, you know, the area of Edmonton-Mill Woods and Edmonton-Ellerslie. They're sort of like landlocked areas. There's really nowhere for growth to happen except, I believe, there is at least one area, that green area around schools that's slated to be developed for housing, but that would be quite minor. It's not as if they're planning apartment buildings or anything like that.

Yeah, I can understand, you know, the frustrations you must have because, unfortunately, people don't live within all these nice natural-type boundaries or man-made boundaries that make it possible to create your constituencies. I mean, look what they did when they cut up Africa, you know, what they ended up doing. I guess maybe splitting up a community is not quite the same as splitting a tribe or putting together two hostile tribes.

But I feel strongest about the Ridgewood area. Obviously, that's the one that's causing the biggest concern for you. It's just taking a little group and splintering them all off.

Dr. Archer: Yeah. Thanks for the input. That's all I have.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Axelson. That's been very interesting and very helpful, and we'll certainly consider it. Can't promise you anything, but we'll certainly look at it. Thank you for coming.

Ms Axelson: Thank you for allowing me to make my presentation.

The Chair: It's our pleasure.

All right. We're running a little behind time, so we'll adjourn now till 1:30, I believe.

Thank you.

[The hearing adjourned at 12:14 p.m.]

