



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission  
Public Hearings

Stettler

Monday, May 10, 2010  
8:21 a.m.

Transcript No. 27-3-25

## **Legislative Assembly of Alberta**

### **Electoral Boundaries Commission**

Judge Ernest J.M. Walter, Chairman

Dr. Keith Archer  
Peter Dobbie, QC  
Brian Evans, QC  
Allyson Jeffs

### **Office of the Chief Electoral Officer**

Chief Electoral Officer	Brian Fjeldheim
Deputy Chief Electoral Officer	Lori McKee-Jeske

### **Participants**

Ray Prins, MLA, Lacombe-Ponoka  
Dick Richards, Mayor, and Greg Switenky, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Stettler  
Allen Sayler, Reeve, County of Two Hills

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[Judge Walter in the chair]

**The Chair:** All right. Mayor Richards, my name is Ernie Walter. I'm the chair of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and with me here today are Dr. Keith Archer of Banff, Peter Dobbie of Vegreville, Allyson Jeffs of Edmonton, and Brian Evans of Calgary.

We're sorry we weren't able to get to Stettler and hear your submissions in person, but we're here to hear you today, and we're very interested in what you have to say. If whoever is speaking, if there is more than one, would identify themselves for the record since it's being recorded by *Hansard*. We look forward to hearing from you. We have set aside 20 minutes for each speaker we will be hearing this morning. We have, I think, three others to hear yet this morning.

If you would like, Mr. Mayor, to go ahead, and if there is anyone else who will be speaking with you, if they could please for the record identify themselves.

**Dick Richards, Mayor**

**Greg Switenky, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer  
Town of Stettler**

**Mr. Richards:** Okay. Good morning. Thank you very much. We're having a little technical difficulty here. We're calling you from our brand new office in the town of Stettler. We understand it's one of the typical things that happens in spring in this wonderful province as far as the weather goes. We are sorry that you couldn't make it to our lovely community, but we do understand.

First of all, let me thank you for allowing us to address the commission. The brief that we have prepared this morning is very self-explanatory, and we're here to answer any questions that you may have. I won't read the brief verbatim but, rather, will touch on a few highlights that I think are important.

The town of Stettler is strongly opposed to the commission's interim recommendation to draw new electoral boundaries that would effectively split the county of Stettler between two ridings. To be proactive, we feel that as an alternative the county of Paintearth should be added to the existing riding of Drumheller-Stettler given our strong economic ties, regional transportation roads, and tourism promotions. There is a natural trading pattern that exists between the counties of Stettler and Paintearth. The town of Stettler, as the only large urban centre within the entire county of Stettler, should remain within the electoral boundaries that include the entire county of Stettler. Both municipalities work together and share many regional partnerships, incentives, services, and programs that are listed in the brief.

The town and county of Stettler have worked hard to build a community that balances both urban and rural interests together with the responsibility of providing efficient, effective, and affordable services. I often kid when I say that it took an annexation to bring both the town of Stettler and the county together, but I can also say that relations between the town and county have never been stronger and that a boundary split would effectively bring in a barrier that may create certain things that, you know, could serve to cause relation problems once again. We need to continue to be on the same team and work consistently towards common values.

In 2009 the town together with the counties of Stettler and Paintearth completed a regional waterline connection, which has established regional responsibilities and togetherness. A new community has been created based on water source management and

protection, which is critical to ensure that there is a safe and adequate supply of water to the entire region.

The town of Stettler supports that all residents within the county should be able to cast their ballots for the same provincial candidates serving their natural community and service centre. County villages like Big Valley, Byemore, and Endiang have many things in common with the town of Stettler and should be able to vote for the same candidate as Stettler residents. These communities travel to Stettler to access many regional services and retail businesses; therefore, these same residents should not be denied voting in Stettler.

The town of Stettler respectfully requests that the commission reconsider splitting the county of Stettler into two electoral divisions and, further, consider realigning geographic areas within the counties of Stettler and Paintearth as a natural fit for effective provincial electoral representation.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank the commission for allowing us to voice our opinion and just reiterate the point that we've worked hard in the past to remain a unified community. When I say community, I not only speak of the town of Stettler; I speak of the town and county. It's very important that we remain one unified voice that represents our geographic area.

If you have any questions, I and the assistant CAO are here to answer.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. In answering any questions, if the person answering could please for the record identify themselves as to who it is who's answering.

I'm going to ask Dr. Keith Archer if he has any questions.

**Dr. Archer:** Well, thanks, Mayor Richards. I appreciate your commentary this morning. The comments that you have are not dissimilar to what we've heard in some of the other hearings and, in particular, the recommendation to keep Stettler and Drumheller in one constituency. To clarify my own understanding of the implications of your recommendation, is it essentially a recommendation to keep things as they are at present when you say to keep the counties of Stettler and Paintearth together?

**Mr. Richards:** The county of Paintearth is presently not within our constituency, but if the commission is interested in increasing the number of electoral votes within our constituency, the natural fit would be to bring the county of Paintearth into Stettler-Drumheller to effectively increase the number of residents voting.

**Dr. Archer:** I see. Thanks so much. That's all I have.

**Mr. Richards:** My pleasure. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Peter Dobbie.

**Mr. Dobbie:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thanks, Mayor. I take it, though, your number one priority is to ensure that we respect the boundaries of the county of Stettler wherever that county ends up being located. To not split the county would be your most significant priority?

**Mr. Richards:** Absolutely. I can't stress the importance of keeping a unified town and county together. Not so dissimilar to many towns and municipalities and their relationships to the counties, our relations have been strained over the last number of years, but we're

presently at a point right now where our relationship between the town and county has never been stronger. We've gone through a new intermunicipal development plan. We have a new annexation that's in front of the government right now. We're really working as one body. To split us at this point just adds a speed bump where one doesn't need to exist. It's really important that we remain one unified body speaking to one MLA and that we can remain on the same team.

**Mr. Dobbie:** Sure. Just to reassure you a little bit, it's certainly my sense that we are hearing different things in different parts of Alberta. Grande Prairie would be an example to the contrary. They've made it work with two MLAs, but then again they've had some time to do that. You're not alone, as Dr. Archer says, in making these points, and it's been very helpful to get your clear presentation.

I've been to your town many times. I've spent a lot of time on the various rivers in that area, and I'm looking forward to coming back this summer. I hope we can give you the answer you want so I don't get run out of town.

8:30

**Mr. Richards:** Thank you very much. I appreciate the comments.

**Ms Jeffs:** Thank you very much, gentlemen. Thanks for attending via teleconference this morning. I just have a question. Your proposal is essentially to keep the county and the town together and add the county of Paintearth. Do you have a population number for that configuration?

**Mr. Richards:** No, I don't. Sorry.

**Ms Jeffs:** Okay. Can you tell me the combined population of the county and the town, approximately?

**Mr. Richards:** We're approximately at 11,000 or 12,000.

**Ms Jeffs:** Okay. Excellent. That's all I have. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

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

**The Chair:** Brian.

**Mr. Evans:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thanks very much, Mr. Mayor. Just for further clarification, looking at our map, I would assume that we would add Stettler, Castor, and Coronation to your present constituency. Is that correct?

**Mr. Richards:** You know, I'm not, for sure, certain how far east the county of Paintearth does go. I know that Doug Griffiths is from Coronation, but I'm not sure if the county of Paintearth extends that far east. I know the county of Paintearth definitely incorporates the community of Castor.

**Mr. Evans:** Okay. I'm sure that we can determine that ourselves.

**Mr. Richards:** One of the most important things as far as extending to the east in the county of Paintearth is the Shirley McClellan waterline that we've instituted. Once again, I'd just like to reiterate the point that it's a natural economic tie east-west in this community as far as trading goes.

**Mr. Evans:** I'm assuming that your answer will be that you'd rather have a higher population than lose the county. Just for clarification, if this addition were to create a constituency that has more than 40,880 residents within it, would that be an issue for you, or would you prefer to have a higher population than the average constituency population to ensure that you do have the town and both counties all within one constituency?

**Mr. Richards:** Yeah. The number of people in our riding is not as important as our riding as it is geographically drawn up. The most important thing is for us to remain intact as a town and county.

**Mr. Evans:** Okay. That was my assumption, but I wanted to make that clear for the record. Thank you very much. Those are my only comments.

**Mr. Richards:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mayor Richards. We have your written submission, and from what we've heard this morning, we will certainly be taking it into account. It's been a pleasure speaking with you this morning. Again, thank you for making your submissions.

**Mr. Richards:** Okay. Thank you. Once again, I'd like to thank the commission for allowing us to voice our opinion. As one of the members also said, you're more than welcome to stop by and enjoy the heart of Alberta.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you very much. We will.

**Mr. Richards:** Okay. I appreciate it. Take care.

**The Chair:** Bye now.

**Allen Saylor, Reeve  
County of Two Hills**

**The Chair:** Good morning, Mr. Reeve.

**Mr. Saylor:** Good morning, Mr. Walter. I'm glad that we've done our part. You didn't change the electoral boundaries, and I got the rain. Remember that we had a discussion on that?

**The Chair:** Well, thank you very much for those comments. I'm glad you got some rain.

Today with me here is Peter Dobbie from Vegreville, Dr. Keith Archer from Banff, Allyson Jeffs from Edmonton, and Brian Evans from Calgary. We've had the pleasure of reading your written submission, which essentially, as I understand it, is to add the name of Two Hills to the Lac La Biche-St. Paul constituency. Am I summing that up correctly?

**Mr. Saylor:** Yes. We'd like to add the name to the constituency.

**The Chair:** You're essentially happy with the boundaries as we've proposed them?

**Mr. Saylor:** Very much so. I've heard a lot of positive comments, and they're very supportive of your decision.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you. Could I ask you one further question? Did you get rain last night?

**Mr. Saylor:** No, we didn't. We were the unfortunate victims. I hear that it rained in Edmonton pretty hard.

**The Chair:** Well, it did, and if we could have sent it east, we would have.

**Mr. Saylor:** You bet. We can take a lot more of it because it's absorbing it faster than it's coming down.

**The Chair:** All right. Some of the board members may have questions for you.

**Dr. Archer:** Thanks, Reeve Saylor. I think your presentation is pretty straightforward. There was just one sentence in the letter that we have from you dated April 27, and I wasn't clear what you meant by this. It's the second sentence in the second-last paragraph, in which you talk about the consultation with municipalities within Two Hills, that unanimously supported the recommendation, and then the sentence about the fact that the MLA's election mandate in 2004 had some bearing on this name change. I'm just not sure what that means.

**Mr. Saylor:** Well, Ray's mandate was to include our name because the whole county is represented by the village of Willingdon, the town of Two Hills, the villages of Myrnam and Derwent. Our county is approximately 60 miles across, so it kind of identifies the whole region also.

**Dr. Archer:** So in saying that it was the MLA's mandate, it was commentary that the constituents had given to the MLA. Is that what you're saying?

**Mr. Saylor:** That's right. The constituents were bringing this to Ray Danyluk.

**Dr. Archer:** I see. That clarifies it. Thanks. Those are all the questions I have.

**The Chair:** Peter.

**Mr. Dobbie:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning, Allen.

**Mr. Saylor:** Good morning.

**Mr. Dobbie:** My wheat is seeded. How are you doing?

**Mr. Saylor:** I'm reasonably well, and I'm also negotiable today.

**Mr. Dobbie:** Okay. Just a confirmation. I take it that you had a meeting or sent out letters or e-mails to the various municipalities within the county?

**Mr. Saylor:** Yes, we did. We have a joint municipalities meeting every three months, and the mayors and the council members all felt that it was very appropriate that we include the Two Hills name to the Lac La Biche-St. Paul constituency. Also, in conversation with the Reeves of the other municipalities they were very supportive of this.

**Mr. Dobbie:** All right. So there was a resolution passed at that joint meeting?

**Mr. Saylor:** Well, it wasn't a revolution; it was a resolution.

**Mr. Dobbie:** That's what I thought I'd said. All right. Thank you.  
8:40

**The Chair:** Allyson.

**Ms Jeffs:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for appearing via teleconference with us today. I just have one additional question. Regarding the consultation about the name change, I take it that Lac La Biche and St. Paul don't object to this. It seems that everybody is in agreement. Is that correct?

**Mr. Saylor:** That's correct. I talked with the reeve from Lac La Biche and the reeve from the county of St. Paul. They said: "Sure. Why not include yourselves? It identifies the whole constituency."

**Ms Jeffs:** All right. Well, here's the other question. Did you discuss the order in which the communities would appear in the name?

**Mr. Saylor:** No. They're within the Two Hills county jurisdiction, so that's why I just said that they would be included with this.

**Ms Jeffs:** All right. Thank you very much. I have nothing further.

**The Chair:** Brian.

**Mr. Evans:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much, Reeve. I believe that we asked the question, when MLA Danyluk was in front of the commission, about the exclusion, if you will, of Elk Point from the naming of the constituency. Do you have any comments on that? Has that been discussed with Elk Point? Do they have any issues whatsoever?

**Mr. Saylor:** No. I did not consult with the Elk Point council nor talk with anybody there, but Elk Point is within the St. Paul county jurisdiction, so it's probably identified in the constituency that they represent.

**Mr. Evans:** So this is more a description of counties as opposed to communities themselves.

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

**Mr. Evans:** Okay. Thanks for that clarification, and good luck with your seeding.

**Mr. Saylor:** Well, thank you. I grow grass right now. I don't harvest any more crops. We're into the sod business, so it's a totally different way of doing diversified agriculture. I'm the only guy who can sell grass legally. [laughter]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Reeve Saylor, and have a good day.

**Mr. Saylor:** Well, thank you for your consideration. It's always a pleasure to chat with you. We respect your wisdom.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Saylor:** Thank you.

[The hearing adjourned from 8:42 a.m. to 8:57 a.m.]

**The Chair:** Good morning, Mr. Prins. It's Ernie Walter here, and I have with me Dr. Keith Archer, Peter Dobbie, Allyson Jeffs, and Brian Evans.

We have your written submission, and we're looking forward to hearing from you. We are being recorded by *Hansard*, so if anyone other than yourself is speaking, would they please identify themselves for the record. Please feel free to proceed.

**Mr. Prins:** Well, thank you very much. I'm just sitting at home at my kitchen table, so there's no one else here except my wife. She's only making coffee and listening.

**The Chair:** Well, if she speaks well of you, feel free to ask her to speak.

**Ray Prins, MLA  
Lacombe-Ponoka**

**Mr. Prins:** Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you for calling me back at home today. We were unable last week to be in Stettler because of the weather. What I can tell you today is that the visibility at my house is about down to 200 feet due to fog, so today would not have been a good day as well to travel in this area.

I was also not able to be at the meeting in Red Deer as I was busy that day, but I did hear that some comments were made or some questions were asked about the boundaries of the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency on the west side. I think one of the commission members was asking the question to a presenter from Clearwater county. I haven't read *Hansard*, so I don't know exactly what the question was. It was about Lincoln Road, if Lincoln Road would be a good western boundary to the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency. The presenter maybe said yes or no, but he wasn't sure. I'm not sure if you meant the Lincoln Road north of highway 12 or south of highway 12. Lincoln Road south of highway 12 actually turns into what they call the Woody Nook Road, but it's the same road going north and south.

My only comment on that question would be that if you're looking at your maps, Lincoln Road lies very close to Gull Lake, and there are a lot of people living between Lincoln Road and Gull Lake, so I don't think Lincoln Road would be, actually, a good western boundary to the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency. On the west side of Lincoln Road we have McLaurin Beach, New Saratoga, Wilson's Beach, Meridian Beach, Raymond Shores, and some proposed new developments, some fairly large rural, country residential developments, that are not named. They're between the road and the lake, so these people have no connection to the west side of the lake other than they know that people live out there. It's not part of the community.

Gull Lake is a very large natural boundary all the way from highway 12 to highway 53. Even at the north end of Gull Lake there are no north-south roads that go from the north end of Gull Lake to highway 53. There's a road allowance; the road that we suggested as a western boundary to the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency is actually a road allowance. There is no actual road there. It's a large natural boundary, or barrier, from the east to the west.

I'm suggesting that on the west side we just stick with the suggestion that I made in my first submission. Then going around the south and east and north sides of the constituency, I'm going to

stick with my recommendations or the recommendations as they were presented in the first submission to your commission, dated March 25. I think all the reasons, you know, stand for themselves.

I know that the county of Camrose and the town of Bashaw have filed submissions that are somewhat contrary on the east side, but I'm not going to comment on that. I think you're going to have to weigh those arguments against the arguments that I made. You'll have to make some kind of a decision there. Their rationale – they see it from their point, the other rationale, and I should be seeing it from their point as well because they're part of my constituency, so I'm going to let it stand for itself, and you'll have to make that decision.

I'll take questions if you have some.

**The Chair:** Certainly.  
Brian.

**Mr. Evans:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Thanks very much, Ray, for your presentation. Just to make sure that I'm correct here, in our suggestion we would have been giving Lacombe-Ponoka some of that area around Gull Lake, and you'd rather see that area remain in the Sylvan Lake constituency. Is that correct?

**Mr. Prins:** Well, you say the Sylvan Lake constituency. In my submission, I've just referred to it as the Rocky Mountain House constituency because the new proposed Sylvan Lake constituency, I don't see that as very viable. The only place that the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency would change there would be that the entire area from highway 2, Westwood, would be going into the proposed Sylvan Lake constituency.

**Mr. Evans:** Right. Yeah. I'm just looking at our interim report to give myself a map to look at.

Could you just go into a little more detail on the east side? What is Bashaw asking for that creates some issues for you?

**Mr. Prins:** I think that what Bashaw is asking for, if you look at their submission – let me see. The town of Bashaw has one dated April 1; Camrose county has one dated March 31. Those two submissions are very similar. I think they probably concurred on something. They wanted the entire portion of the county of Camrose that's currently in Lacombe-Ponoka to go into the Wetaskiwin-Camrose constituency. I believe that's what they want.

**Mr. Evans:** So it's separated now?

**Mr. Prins:** Part of Camrose county – including Bashaw, Ferintosh, New Norway, and Edberg – is now in my constituency, in Lacombe-Ponoka. They are asking for that portion to be put into the Wetaskiwin-Camrose constituency instead of my suggestion to put it into the Battle River-Wainwright constituency.

**Mr. Evans:** I see. Okay.

**Mr. Prins:** They want it to go north instead of east.

**Mr. Evans:** Gotcha.

**Mr. Prins:** My suggestion was to keep Camrose county entirely into the one to the east, and they're saying to put it entirely into Wetaskiwin-Camrose, north.

9:05

**Mr. Evans:** I see. All right. Okay.

**Mr. Prins:** I don't have a problem with that, so I'm going to let you look at that and weigh those.

The west side is my concern: Lincoln Road and the boundary being on the eastern edge of Gull Lake.

**Mr. Evans:** Sure. The only other question, then, is: have you been able to calculate the populations if your submission of March 25 were to be incorporated by the commission?

**Mr. Prins:** Yes, I have just rapidly calculated it. I think that if we were to do exactly as suggested in our submission, we would be slightly under the average. I think that if you actually moved the boundary further to the east, we would be even more under.

**Mr. Evans:** Okay.

**Mr. Prins:** We'd be slightly under, but I want to reiterate that Blackfalds is one of the fastest growing communities in Alberta. I think that probably within a couple of years we'd be well over the number again. Blackfalds, Lacombe, and Ponoka are very rapidly growing areas, and the rural areas are developing a lot of interest as well along the lakeshores and country residential. So I think that being slightly under is not a big problem, although in this area it doesn't matter. Like, we're 15 per cent over now, and that's not a big problem either.

**Mr. Evans:** Okay.

**Mr. Prins:** For me it isn't, anyway; for you, I think that you have to kind of balance it out.

The Lincoln Road issue. I do know that there are people south of highway 12 that would like to be included in the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency. I don't know what you want to do with that. If you look at the older maps, prior to the 2004 election the boundary was on Lincoln Road. People on the east side asked for the boundary to be moved to the edge of the lake, and that actually happened.

Then south of highway 12 the boundary was moved to the east rather than the west, so it actually made it worse for people between highway 12 and the Blindman River. When I say worse, they're farther away from an MLA's office. They are now in Rocky Mountain House rather than Lacombe-Ponoka. Those people have actually called me and asked if we could move the boundary back to where it was. I think it doesn't affect a lot of people. If you wanted to see where it was, you'd have to look at a map. There's a baseline map – I have copies of it if you would like – made in about 2004 showing the old Ponoka-Rimbey, the Lacombe-Stettler one, and then the new Lacombe-Ponoka one. Now the interim report has changed it again. I think that where we don't need to change, we shouldn't change.

**Mr. Evans:** Okay. Well, thanks for the history and thanks for those comments. Those are all of my questions.

**The Chair:** Allyson.

**Ms Jeffs:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Prins. I do have a bit of a clarifying question. I'm jumping a bit

back and forth with maps, some of which don't have the county boundaries. On that western side you're looking at the boundary coming along the east side of Gull Lake; am I correct?

**Mr. Prins:** That's absolutely correct. Yeah. When you hit the north end of the lake, we jog over about two miles. Well, it goes straight off the north end of the lake, but it's two miles west of the meridian. The meridian is a well-known kind of a line that we have there.

**Ms Jeffs:** You know, I'm going by memory, which is always a bit faulty, but I thought that we'd had at some point some submissions with some concern that there were residents on that side of the lake, which would make that not as good a boundary, that would have some community of interest with others along the shore of the lake. Can you speak to that at all?

**Mr. Prins:** Well, if you actually look at the map of that area, you see Gull Lake, and on the east side of Gull Lake, on the Lacombe side, you have a number of – they're not summer villages and not hamlets either, but they are residential areas. They're called, from the south going north, McLaurin Beach, New Saratoga, Wilson's Beach, Meridian Beach, and Raymond Shores. Those are five little communities along the east side of Gull Lake, going right from the south side to the north side. They are between Lincoln Road and the lake. Their major connections are to the east, to highway 2. You know, a lot of these people have been seasonal dwellers, but they're now pretty well permanent residents there. Their jobs are in Lacombe and Ponoka and on that side of the lake.

On the other side of the lake, on the west side, you have Parkland Beach and some other little settlements, and they tend to go more to Bentley and Rimbey. They follow highway 20 north and south, so that's why Gull Lake would be the natural boundary. Coming right off the very northern point of Gull Lake, the major communities on the west side are Parkland Beach and Poulsen's Pasture and some other smaller places along there.

**Ms Jeffs:** Do you know what kind of a population we're looking at in those communities as an aggregate?

**Mr. Prins:** Well, I think that on the east side I would say probably close to a thousand and on the west side probably close to a thousand as well between all the little ones. The only ones that are summer villages are Parkland Beach and Gull Lake. The others are just developed areas that are part of the county. They're fairly built up – they have paved roads and a fairly high density of population – but they don't show up on a map because they're not separate communities. There are a lot of people around the edge of Gull Lake.

**Ms Jeffs:** Okay. If I'm reading your submission here correctly, you're estimating that if the boundaries that you suggest are followed, the population is around 37,800 people, so approaching 10 per cent below our average.

**Mr. Prins:** I don't know if it's 10 per cent below it.

**Ms Jeffs:** I don't think it's quite.

**Mr. Prins:** No. You know what? I'm actually not sure of the exact population. I just went from the last election and the amount of people that are in polls, and it actually doesn't calculate the popula

**Ms Jeffs:** Oh, okay. So that number is based on electors, not on actual population.

**Mr. Prins:** Right.

**Ms Jeffs:** Okay. Thank you.

One of the rationales for your suggestion is to reduce the number of the municipalities, so the only two municipalities would be Lacombe and Ponoka, the counties?

**Mr. Prins:** Well, that would be the large rural municipalities or counties.

**Ms Jeffs:** The counties, yes.

**Mr. Prins:** Within that area we still have Blackfalds, Lacombe, Ponoka, Clive, and Alix. I also have a very small portion of Wetaskiwin county and a small portion of Camrose county. In Camrose county we have Bashaw, Ferintosh, Edberg, and New Norway. Those are small urban municipalities. There's nothing wrong with that. I like these communities and work well with these communities, but it is a lot of extra work for MLAs to attend to all these municipalities.

I can't complain because I know that if I go to the Drumheller-Stettler constituency, there are far, far more small communities there. I know that other MLAs have far more. The large urban ones have, of course, far fewer. We're right in the middle, and I'm not unhappy about that.

**Ms Jeffs:** Well, perspective is a wonderful thing. Thank you very much. I have nothing further.

**The Chair:** Peter.

**Mr. Dobbie:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thanks, Mr. Prins. It is actually very helpful to get some direct feedback on the boundaries. For example, on the east side of Gull Lake indirectly if we have the boundary off by a mile or two, it's likely to affect voter turnout because people tend to vote where they work. Knowing that the people, in your opinion, on the east edge of Gull Lake tend to work primarily to the east of them helps us make that decision.

You weren't in Red Deer, so just to let you know, we did hear directly from a number of people within Red Deer, including a couple of councillors in their personal capacities, that the appetite in Red Deer is not to have two and a half or two and a quarter constituencies, that they would rather have two urban-only constituencies that are above the quotient by about 5,000. That certainly allows us to look at a bunch of other changes outside of Red Deer.

Again, I appreciate your comments on the western boundary and the Gull Lake issue, and we'll certainly, I think, be able to take a hard look at what you're suggesting.

9:15

**Mr. Prins:** Absolutely. Thank you very much. You're absolutely right that where people work is where they're going to vote, and if you put people on the east side of Gull Lake into the Rocky Mountain House constituency, voter turnout would be, I think, negatively impacted.

**The Chair:** Keith.

**Dr. Archer:** Yeah. Thanks, Mr. Prins. Your comments are really useful, and I think they reinforce some of the things we've heard

already, particularly on this question as to whether it makes sense to have a Sylvan Lake constituency. We didn't hear a lot of enthusiasm for that in our hearings. Although the town council of Sylvan Lake seems to support the notion, it doesn't seem to be widely shared. Your voice has been added to the opposition to that proposal.

I think a lot of our comments today have focused on the Gull Lake area, and that's certainly something that we'll have to give some thought to. We did have a proposal. It was to come down I think it is county road 792 and include all of Gull Lake within Rocky Mountain House.

**Mr. Prins:** Yes. That's Lincoln Road, yeah.

**Dr. Archer:** You know, in the case of Rocky Mountain House I'm not sure what the implications are for the size of the constituency, whether we draw it on 792 or the eastern edge, but it sounds like with the proposal that you're bringing forward, there's probably not a lot of room to be losing more population. That would certainly be an argument in favour of keeping the eastern portion of Gull Lake as the boundary for Lacombe-Ponoka.

The other thing we heard quite a bit was this idea of using highway 2 as a divider between constituencies. Again, your view seems to reinforce what we've heard from others, that we should think about having the constituencies bridge across the highway rather than be split by it, so we'll certainly take that into account.

**Mr. Prins:** You're absolutely correct. The Lincoln Road thing: that was, I thought, settled eight years ago, or the last time, when they moved the boundary over to the edge of the lake. Those people definitely want to be on the Lacombe-Ponoka side. On the north end of Lincoln Road we have Crestomere school. Kids bus to that school from both sides of highway 792. Near the south end of Lincoln Road we have Lincoln Hall, which is a large community hall where we have lots of meetings. It's a fairly new community hall that has a lot of activities. That's probably where they would have a polling station as well, and it's right on that road. The people around there have formed a very cohesive community in that area, and those communities have been there for almost a hundred years. The boundary at the lake is by far the best place to draw the line for the constituency.

**Dr. Archer:** Right. Thanks for that. Maybe just one more question. The constituency runs up against the northern edge of Red Deer. If we're looking at the constituency being a bit below the provincial average, I'm wondering if you're expecting growth to be particularly strong around the northern portion of Red Deer – and I don't know if there are annexation plans up that way – or whether you would expect that there would be perhaps some acreage development over the next while.

**Mr. Prins:** Well, I think that when we're talking Red Deer, the dividing line between Red Deer-North and Lacombe-Ponoka today is the Red Deer River. There's only a bridge at Joffre, there's a bridge on highway 2 just on the west side of Red Deer, and there's a bridge inside of Red Deer, so two or three bridges. That area of Red Deer county that's between the city of Red Deer and the Red Deer River is proposed to go into the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency. I think it would be a real mistake to put that small part of Red Deer county into Lacombe-Ponoka.

The growth that you're asking about is going to happen around Blackfalds, which is actually in Lacombe-Ponoka now – that's a very rapidly growing community – and Lacombe itself. I think the



largest amount of growth that you're going to see in the next 10 years will be right between Blackfalds and Lacombe: around Blackfalds, inside of Blackfalds, in the country between Blackfalds and Lacombe, and some north of Lacombe as well. There are some developments between Lacombe and Morningside. The town of Lacombe itself is becoming a city this fall. They have just approved city status for Lacombe, so we're going to see some growth in that area, right within the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency.

**Dr. Archer:** Okay. Thanks very much. That's all I have.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Prins. We have your submission, and we've carefully recorded your comments. Thank you very much. We'll say goodbye now.

**Mr. Prins:** Okay. Thank you. Now, would you like to see the map? I'm looking at a map that has the old boundaries from prior to 2004, the current boundaries, and the proposed boundaries. They're all superimposed.

**The Chair:** We already have that one here.

**Mr. Prins:** Wonderful. I thought you probably would have that one.

**The Chair:** Yeah. But thank you for offering.

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

[The hearing adjourned at 9:21 a.m.]





