



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

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Electoral Boundaries Commission

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Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Edmonton

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1 p.m.**Tuesday, January 17, 2017**

[Justice Bielby in the chair]

The Chair: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm going to start with an apology. We finished early this morning because the last few time slots weren't occupied due to a computer glitch, and in doing that, we totally skipped the fact that Mrs. Williams had registered to attend and make a presentation. I apologize to her. It was entirely my fault for not seeing her name. As a result of that, we're going to start by calling on her first, but before I do that, I'll make a brief introductory presentation here so that the people who weren't here this morning will be on the same page as everybody else.

My name is Myra Bielby. I'm a judge of the Court of Appeal of Alberta, but at the moment I'm chairing the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I'd like to introduce the other members of the commission: on my far left, Jean Munn from Calgary; Laurie Livingstone from Calgary; on my far right, Gwen Day from Carstairs; and, next to her, Bruce McLeod from Acme.

Over the past few weeks, ever since our postcard-type advertising was in everybody's mailbox in the province, I've had lots of questions from friends and associates about the Electoral Boundaries Commission wondering what we're doing, what we are, why we're having it at this point, so I thought I'd start with a thumbnail description of our work.

Our commission has been created to research and ultimately make recommendations to the provincial Legislature as to where and how our provincial constituency boundaries should be changed to ensure effective, proper representation by our MLAs in future provincial elections. As we all know, democracy depends on fair representation, representation by population, and that means generally that people should have relatively the same voting power wherever they happen to live in the province. Representation by population is a fundamental democratic principle.

Our work is needed at this time because over the last eight years Alberta has sustained a huge increase in population. Notwithstanding the recent economic climate, our population has increased by more than 20 per cent, by more than 800,000 people. The last time an Electoral Boundaries Commission did its work was in 2010, so here we are, seven years later, starting the work again, and there's been that increase at this time.

Alberta has 87 provincial constituencies. We haven't been given any authority to create new provincial constituencies this time. Last time four new constituencies were created, but our task is really to look at the same pizza and divide it up into 87 pieces of different sizes depending, in large measure, on the population in each of those pieces. The population has changed over the last eight years. Needless to say, each constituency elects one MLA to the provincial Legislature, and we have 87 constituencies. Our population has increased by 20 per cent since the last time.

For the average estimated population in each of our constituencies today, if you took the provincial population of 4,252,876, divided it by 87, you'd get 48,884, and that should be the average number. If all of our constituencies were the same size, that's what we'd be aiming for, a population size for each one of those. These figures are estimates. We're lucky enough to have Statistics Canada reporting on the population figures from the 2016 census on February 8. They've promised them on February 8. Our estimates – we're using estimates at the moment – were provided to us by the Alberta Treasury Board, but the actual figures will be substituted once we get the census figures. I don't expect there will be a huge change, but there may be something of a change in both

this 48,884 figure and in the actual population figures for each of the 87 constituencies.

If you look at the second map from the end there on the wall, by way of example, you'll see two population figures for each of the 87 constituencies. Just because I can see it a bit better, there's Stony Plain over my shoulder. There's a blue number at the bottom. It tells us what the population was in that constituency in 2010, when that constituency boundary was last reviewed, and the average in 2010 for constituencies in Alberta was 40,880, almost exactly 8,000 fewer people than now. Stony Plain had 40,257 people in 2010, 2 per cent less than the provincial average at that time. Now it has 47,018 people estimated, which would be 4 per cent less than our current provincial average. These maps are a bit of an aid to see the starting point for each of our constituencies in looking at our challenge and making recommendations as to what the boundaries should be in the future.

You might say: "Well, why do we have to do this? How has this happened?" It's happened because the 800,000 people who moved into Alberta in the last eight years, including people who turned 18 and gained the right to vote, haven't moved into each of our 87 constituencies in equal numbers. The move has favoured the larger centres. A disproportionately large portion of that new population has moved into Edmonton, Calgary, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, and so forth.

That has meant that some populations have fallen below the provincial average, more than they were in 2010, and some populations are quite a bit above the provincial average even though eight years ago they were right at the provincial average. That is largely found in the suburban areas of the larger cities, the growth areas, where you see all that new construction happening. Our population growth hasn't been the same in each of the constituencies. Right now our population range, from the smallest constituency at 25,192 to our largest constituency at 79,034, demonstrates the swing that has occurred as a result of this unequal distribution of influx of population and explains the challenge before us to a degree. Our job is to make recommendations to the Legislature for change where change is needed, and we're tasked with creating constituency boundaries that are clear and effective and allow for effective representation.

We were created as a result of a piece of Alberta legislation called the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, which was last revised in 1990, and this act sets out certain criteria that we are to consider in doing our job. But the list of criteria that I'm going to give to you now isn't a closed list. We can consider anything else that we consider is relevant to the task.

But we have to consider the following things: relative population densities; common community interests and community organizations, including those of First Nation reserves and Métis settlements; existing community and neighbourhood boundaries in Edmonton and Calgary – so if you have a community with a community league in it, we're to try not to put a constituency boundary right through the middle of your community if possible – existing municipal boundaries for both Edmonton and Calgary and all other municipalities in the province. So if there's a small town or village – well, we're going try to not put a constituency boundary through the middle of Acme, for example. I'm sure that's not going to happen because Acme's mayor is sitting to my right, but that's an example of the sort of things that we're to try to avoid if possible. We're also to try to respect geographical features which suggest natural boundaries. So if there's a major highway, for example, or a river or a mountain, hopefully we'll be able to make that represent one of the boundaries of a constituency or two constituencies where that's available.

But, as I say, the list isn't closed, and we're looking for citizens' input, your input, today as to what you think are relevant factors for us to consider or how we should apply the factors that I've just described. Over the next few weeks our commission is going to be travelling Alberta. We're holding public hearings in 15 places to seek community input to assist us in developing our recommendations.

Many thanks to those of you who have registered to make an oral presentation today. We are full up this afternoon, so I have to say that we may not be able to hear from people who haven't registered. This morning we had a little bit of flexibility, and we were able to do that, but I don't know that that's going to happen this afternoon. Everybody who's registered to speak is going to be limited to 10 minutes, and then there are five minutes for the commission to ask any questions that are arising.

Everything is being recorded. It will appear in *Hansard*. It will be publicly available through our website in a day or two, an oral rendition of what you're hearing as well as written transcripts.

In addition to what we hear orally at these hearings, we've invited written submissions, and I'm pleased to say that we've had a very good uptake on that. When they did this in 2009-2010, they had 500 written submissions in a year, and we've had 300 written submissions in the last two weeks, so Albertans have been interested. That, in part, may be because it's easier this time. You can go onto our website and just make a submission right on the website, use all sorts of social media, e-mail, the post. There are different platforms that we've opened up to accept written submissions.

1:10

The commission will meet after the deadline for written submissions and after we've finished the last of our 15 public hearings. We will go one at a time through each of the 87 constituencies and come up with a recommendation to make to the Legislature as to where the boundaries of that constituency should lie. Of course, where we put the boundaries of one constituency immediately affects the boundaries of all of the constituencies around it, so there's a bit of a ripple effect, which we'll also try to take into account.

This will all be put into a report that we have to file with the Alberta Legislature by May 31 this year. That report will be published and posted on our website and will make specific recommendations as to the size, boundaries, and names of each of our 87 constituencies. We'll then entertain another set of written submissions. I'm told that people are often more comfortable responding to a specific proposal than they are to a general idea, so we hope and expect that people will perhaps look at our recommendation for their particular constituency and maybe write in with other suggestions like, "Oh, gosh, you are dividing a town in half; please change that," whatever. We're happy to receive that.

We're having a second round of public hearings in late July and early August, and again there'll be an opportunity to register on our website for those who want to make an oral submission. That all then goes into a final written report. We have to table that with the Legislature no later than October 31 of this year. The Legislature may then go ahead and enact legislation to vary the boundaries in accordance with our recommendations.

These deadlines seem early when you look at the date of the next provincial election, but they are expressly set out in the legislation, and apparently the provincial returning officers need up to a year's lead time to set up everything for the next provincial election, so that's why we're doing it now.

In summary, equity and parity of population is not our only consideration in approaching our task. The courts, including the

Supreme Court of Canada, have interpreted our legislation as meaning that each of us has the right not to have the political strength or value of our vote unduly diluted. However, the legislation permits us to have variances from the provincial average of up to 25 per cent above or below average and, for a maximum of four constituencies, up to 50 per cent below the population average.

Now, the last time, the report in 2010, which was the foundation for our current constituency boundaries, about 85 per cent of the constituencies in that report had variances of less than 10 per cent. So just because there's a maximum of 25 per cent doesn't mean that that's a good thing or that we will feel free to go up to that no matter what. Previous commissions have tried to keep the variance down to a degree, and that's certainly present in our minds as well. As for the two constituencies that have over 25 per cent variance, they are in the north of the province: Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley, with 48 per cent lower than average, and Lesser Slave Lake, with a population 30 per cent lower than average. The act allows these constituencies to exist because of the large areas in the north of the province with a relatively sparse population.

In summary, what we're going to do when we go through our task is to look at each constituency in turn, look at the actual population data as presented by the census, compare it to the average population of 48,800 or whatever Statistics Canada tells us, and then decide if there's any acceptable reason not to move the boundaries to adjust the size of that constituency to meet the provincial average. Those reasons are the sorts of things that I've just been going through and other categories or considerations that people might mention.

We're hoping for and indeed we've been asking everybody who presents whether they have recommendations for specific constituencies, not just recommendations regarding approach. We're concerned that because we're not intimately familiar with each of the 87 constituencies, there may be suggestions or ideas that will help us when we get down to the actual mapping. For example, yesterday we had the mayor of Redwater. He said, "If you have to increase our constituency, please include the whole county of Sturgeon for this and that reason," and that was terrific because we didn't know that. We wrote that down, and we'll definitely keep that in mind. So I'm going to be asking each of you who present "Which constituency do you live in?" and "If we have to move the boundaries, where do you think they should go?" You know, you might not have an idea, but if you do, I'd like to hear it.

We also have that map with a piece of laminate over it. We might ask you to go up to the map and mark where you think a specific boundary should move to. Then our clerk will take a photo of that, and that photo will be a part of your presentation, and we'll consider that visual recommendation specifically when we do our actual work of deliberation here.

Again, welcome. I'm going to start this afternoon by inviting Mrs. Williams to come forward.

Mrs. Williams: Thank you very much. Am I okay on the mike?

The Chair: Yes. Could you tell us what constituency you live in, Mrs. Williams?

Mrs. Williams: Certainly. My name is Kathy Williams, and I'm here on behalf of the Edmonton-Riverview NDP Constituency Association. I live in Edmonton-Riverview.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Williams: Thanks. Edmonton-Riverview straddles the North Saskatchewan River, and it's connected by Whitemud Drive, which makes travelling quite efficient and quick between one side of the

river and the other side of the river. The location of Edmonton-Riverview is along Edmonton's river valley, which means that there is lots of beautiful parkland, including Hawrelak park, which is a major city attraction. It's also home to the University of Alberta and includes the student residences. While it is divided by the river, its communities do share many commonalities: mature neighbourhoods with neighbourhood schools, well-established community leagues, and small businesses.

As the current federal debate about electoral reform has shown, Canadians are increasingly concerned that everyone's vote should count equally. It's important that the Alberta Legislature reflect the makeup of the province accurately and that one region's votes should not count more than another's. This being the case, we would like the commission to consider the following points.

Although current legislation allows for a 25 per cent variance in numbers of voters per constituency, we feel strongly that the commission should aim for a variance of up to and no more than 10 per cent. The most important factor for parliamentary democracies is that representation should be fair and equal.

All MLAs face challenges in adequately representing their constituencies. For urban MLAs this includes the complexity of the populations they represent, including constituents who face multiple challenges. For rural MLAs the geographical size of their constituencies is, of course, a significant challenge. It is our contention that this should not mean that their populations should generally be significantly smaller than those of urban constituencies.

We think that there are other solutions that would be effective while not undermining the fairness of our democracy. MLAs are able to do their jobs most successfully when they're supported by constituency staff who can address constituents' concerns and problems as well as facilitate access to the MLA and government departments. All MLAs should be provided with a budget that enables them to employ enough staff to properly investigate and take action on constituents' issues. In the case of rural MLAs this should include funding for two or more offices as well as adequate travel budgets, toll-free phone lines, use of online technologies, video conferencing, and so on.

The Chair: Okay. Hang on for a sec.

Mrs. Williams: Sure. I'm sorry.

The Chair: I always say that I'm no challenge to the court reporter. I'm at toll-free phone lines.

Mrs. Williams: Toll-free phone lines, online technology, video conferencing, social media, et cetera.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Williams: Communications options have changed greatly since the Supreme Court decision of 1991 that allowed for a 25 per cent variance in the size of constituencies. It's worth noting that the other two prairie provinces have stricter rules. Saskatchewan allows only a 5 per cent variance and Manitoba a 10 per cent. Given the geographical realities of Canada it is inevitable that some electoral districts will be large, but Members of Parliament and members of provincial Legislative Assemblies across Canada are able to do their jobs if they are adequately resourced. There are areas in northern Canada where communities are only accessible when ice roads are in or when coastal waters are ice-free. All of these are well served by their elected representatives.

1:20

Edmonton-Riverview has remained substantially unchanged since it was formed in 1996 although a few polls were added by the last boundaries commission. It is our hope that Edmonton-Riverview's boundaries will not change in the current review. The projected population for 2016 is about average for a constituency, and its MLA also represents the University of Alberta, whose students are not consistently included as residents in census data.

Finally, it's our hope that this commission will build on the work of its predecessor by moving Alberta towards a distribution of constituencies that makes them as close as possible in population and ensures fair representation for all Albertans.

Thanks.

The Chair: I'll start off with the first question. Based on the Alberta Treasury Board's estimates, the population of Edmonton-Riverview is 45,517, which is about 8 per cent below the provincial average. I understand your comment when you say that you don't want to see it change. It sounds like it changed last time to a degree. We have to consider all options. We haven't made any determination. We have no preset, so please don't think that we do as a result of me asking this question. But if we conclude that as a result of trying to attain a greater degree of voter parity, we do have to increase the size of Edmonton-Riverview, should we go north, east, west, or south, in your view?

Mrs. Williams: I think that's a little bit complicated. I think you have a couple of options. You could go to the west and straighten out the line that is the western boundary. In some areas right now – this is new, the territory that we gained in the last redistribution. Right now it runs partially down 170th, and then it curves over and goes down 165th, and then it curves over again and goes down 156th, I think. So you could straighten that all out and take it to 170th all the way along. That would be one option.

The other option, as I see it, would be to go just to the east of the University of Alberta along Saskatchewan Drive to 109th Street and then south to 82nd. That area would straighten out the line down 109th Street. I don't know the population of either one. I didn't do that research – I'm sorry – on either one of those areas. But those would be the most logical in terms of geographic features right now.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks very much.

All right. Other questions from members of the panel?

Ms Munn: I don't have any questions.

The Chair: Okay. All right.

Thanks so much. Your comments have been very helpful.

Mrs. Williams: I can give you a copy. Would it be useful?

The Chair: Yes, it would be very useful. Thanks.

Mrs. Williams: Thanks.

The Chair: Thanks so much.

Okay. We'll turn next to Joel French, Larry Booi, and Don Carmichael.

Mr. Booi: Hi. Can we start?

The Chair: Please do.

Mr. Booi: Well, Madam Justice and commissioners, I guess we want to first of all thank you for taking on this task. It's a very

important opportunity for us and for the province to strengthen our democracy. We're really pleased that you're doing it.

I'll give you a quick indication of our organization and why we're so interested in this topic. We're a provincial advocacy organization that essentially promotes improvements in the public interest. We've been around since 2004. We work through task forces, seniors' task force, early learning and care, but also democracy. Democracy has been a big interest for us, and we've been trying to promote improvements and strengthening of democracy over the last 13 years.

There will be three of us speaking very briefly, but we have a written submission. As I said, my name is Larry Booi, and I'm the board chair and the chair of the task force. Don Carmichael is a professor emeritus in political science at the University of Alberta, and Joel French is the executive director of PIA.

We won't be making specific recommendations on particular constituencies. Our focus is very much on the big picture of the province and the opportunity to strengthen democracy. That's the focus. We won't be reading the report to you because that's available for you, but we will be speaking to aspects of it to highlight those things.

I think the big thing is the focus on the big goal that needs to be in front of all of us, and that is political equality. To me, a fundamental definition of democracy is that it's rooted in political equality, and in order to guarantee political equality, we've come up with a technique of representation by population. We believe that that has been eroded. If I could quote from one brief sentence in our presentation:

Unfortunately, Alberta has allowed substantial unwarranted and unnecessary departures from representation by population in terms of our electoral boundaries to the extent that our current system can be described as one of unfair variance by design. In the process we've sacrificed important aspects of political equality and have unfairly advantaged some groups of voters and disadvantaged others.

I'm just going to speak in very general terms myself for a couple of minutes, pass it over to Don to deal with why circumstances have changed when this legislation and when this idea of big variances came in, and then finally Joel is going to make a couple of very specific recommendations, that we hope you'll give some thought to, on how to proceed.

You have some choices, obviously, and we've heard from your chair that you are aware of what those choices are and some constraints. As you said, the legislation permits going to 25 per cent, but it most certainly doesn't require it, and you've also heard arguments about why it should be lower in order to promote equality. I think there's sort of a distortion of 25 per cent in that it doesn't sound all that much, but really if you think about 25 per cent above and 25 per cent below: if we start out at 48,000, that initially allows 60,000 and 36,000. When you compare 36,000 to 60,000, it's not actually 50 per cent; it's 67 per cent. That's where we're starting out, and then it declines right away because of population shifts.

What we're encouraging you to do, fundamentally, is to very much, as much as possible keep that focus on a very small shift in variance because of the role of the principles involved. Like, I think we've set the bar too low, and if you do set the bar too low, you're just not going to get the outcome that you want. I think of my own experience as a teacher, where if someone had said, "Okay, the goal is to have at least half your class succeed and pass, so the average should be at least 51 per cent," we're going to start out with it being acceptable that 49 per cent of the class is not going to make it when really our goal is to develop the full potential of every child and to see every child successful as learners, knowing that sometimes

that's not going to happen, but it's not going to be by design. We're strongly encouraging you to keep that focus as much as possible on that basic principle of equity.

I think that if you do that, you'll find the ways to find those balances. In some cases, like you heard on Riverview, a river with a bridge isn't necessarily that much of a boundary; in fact, it's an access point. But if you start off thinking that 25 per cent up and 25 per cent below is okay, we're just going to get further and further from that principle of equity.

Don will address why we think that things have changed over the past couple of decades, and then Joel will make specific observations.

The Chair: Thank you.

1:30

Mr. Carmichael: Am I on? I guess I know the answer to that.

Good afternoon. As with Larry, as a citizen I want to thank each of you for taking the time and trouble to participate in this very important task. My name is Don Carmichael. I'm recently retired as an emeritus professor at the University of Alberta, where for over 44 years I worked as a political philosopher. My publications include the book *Democracy, Rights, and Well-Being in Canada*. I have complemented this theoretical work with practical service in the community, most notably as a member and chair of the Edmonton library board and also as a leader of the university's academic staff.

I mention this just because I will be speaking somewhat theoretically, but I hope that you will bear in mind that I come as a theorist of these issues with a very strong sense that important principles must be realized and implemented effectively. So it's not a case of the principle on the one side, but neither do I – and this is my main point to you today. I imagine and I hope that it will be obvious, but the point is that I hope you will appreciate that what is before you is not just a practical issue but rather an issue of the practical implementation and realization of a fundamental principle.

That fundamental principle is not just equality of representation. We take equality of representation seriously, I believe, because throughout our communities and throughout Alberta's history there has been widespread and fundamental agreement on equality of citizenship, that each member of our community matters equally, however much we differ on other things. That fundamental equality underlies the insistence upon equality of rights, underlies the idea of equal representation.

I'm going to make just two points. One of them I'll make briefly because other people have done it. The first main one I hope is really obvious. It is this, that equality is not a practical issue; it is a fundamental principle. As a fundamental principle it has certain implications. It means that it cannot be suspended for the sake of other principles. It's fundamental; it has to be respected in its own right. It also means, of course, that it has to be applied, and in its application it has to be varied. However, unlike subordinate principles, where we just try to get the best application, in this case the best application is one which most effectively realizes the principle that each matters equally.

I say that because through Alberta's history and in different ways today circumstances can oblige us to say that we can't have a strictly numerical equality of representation per voter. In order to realize the principle that each matters equally, we need to realize that effectively. Sometimes, as you said in your opening remarks, Madam Chair, the principle of equal representation may require some variation. I want to suggest, however, that that variation of strictly equal representation has to be justified not just by important

practical considerations but also in the light of the underlying principle that each matters equally.

When we vary a strictly mathematical equality, as we do, we do so by justifying it in terms of that principle itself. We say sometimes, for example, with different rights or different treatment that those rights are justified in order to give the underlying equality effective representation. Forgive me; I imagine it's an obvious point, but still I hope you will bear in mind in your important deliberations that when important questions come up about varying constituency sizes, they have to be measured not just in terms of the practical requisites, but also they have to be weighed against the fact that any variation can only be justified in the name of actually giving more effective representation through the principle that each matters equally.

The second principle – I hope I'm not going on too long. I can be brief because others have spoken to it. Historically there have been on grounds of geographic dispersion important reasons for varying sizes based on that very principle. Today, in current terms you will hear from other people stressing other such considerations. Geographic disparity is certainly more than matched as a problem by multicultural diversity.

However, I want to say that those are very important problems, but what kinds of problems are they? They're practical problems. A practical problem should never be allowed to invade a fundamental principle. If there is ever a way to meet the practical problem without invading the fundamental principle, we go that way. It's idealistic, but wherever it is possible to have our cake and eat it too, we do that. As other people have said, there are today countless ways of bringing about effective representation where there is geographic dispersion consistent with recognizing that the principle of each mattering equally can actually pay out with only very minimal variation in constituency size.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. French.

Mr. French: Thank you very much, Madam Chair and commissioners, for taking the time to listen to us and everybody else throughout this process. I'm aware that we are a little bit strained for time, so I'm going to try to keep this as brief as possible. I wanted to start by echoing the concern about large geographical areas leading to votes being weighted differently, and I wanted to speak a little bit from my own experience as a constituency office manager for the MLA for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood for two years, from 2010 to 2012, one of the smaller geographical constituencies in the province.

The constituency where I managed the office is one that has some of the highest poverty rates in the province. Staff are dealing with very high caseloads when it comes to serving constituents with issues to do with Alberta Works, with AISH, with housing concerns as well as the practical problems that we notice when we're on the ground in not only election campaigns but in constituencies doing outreach to our population that we represent, about how difficult it is to reach those marginalized populations. It does take additional resources to reach populations like that.

As well, there are, of course, diverse language groups, and it takes more time for caseworkers and offices to service those populations as well as for political outreach. The constituency that I managed included two Chinese seniors' homes where very few of the residents spoke English. Just as an example of an additional challenge, we had to arrange for translators and spend more time developing literature and developing resources so that we could

even communicate with the people that the MLA that I was working for represented.

My point in giving these examples is not that dense, diverse urban constituencies should be made smaller, nor that the votes in those constituencies should be worth more. Rather, there is a parallel challenge in more sparsely populated areas and that there are challenges in every constituency, and those challenges are not best met by varying the weight of votes but rather are better met by other means.

I'll go to our two main recommendations, that you will see in the written submission. The first is that constituency boundaries should be drawn with no more than a 5 per cent variance above or below the average constituency population. The legislation, we are aware, allows for much more than that, but as Don said before me, the principle that votes should count equally is one that we believe supersedes those other considerations. As much as possible, of course, we need to be practical when drawing those boundaries and don't want to cut towns or neighbourhoods in half, but votes should count equally.

Secondly, we believe that the commission should recommend to the Legislative Assembly that they fully review the challenges that MLAs face to ensure that MLAs have the proper supports they need to effectively represent their constituents, including the challenges of sparse or dense populations, higher numbers of municipalities within their boundaries, poverty rates, diversity of language populations, as well as other considerations. To the best of its ability we believe that the commission should ensure that every vote is weighted equally in provincial elections.

Thank you so much for your time.

1:40

The Chair: As promised, what constituency do you live in, Mr. French?

Mr. French: I live in Edmonton-Centre.

The Chair: All right. Just looking at our estimated figures here, the population in Edmonton-Centre is 51,659 at the moment. Maybe less than 5 per cent, but if it turned out that in its work our group was challenged with having to move the boundaries to reduce the size of the population in the Edmonton-Centre area, do you have any views as to how that should be done?

Mr. French: I do. I actually have the experience of managing an election campaign in the last election in Edmonton-Centre, where I now live. I believe the part of the constituency that doesn't seem to fit as much as others would be the detached houses in the north of the riding. Almost everything else in the rest of the riding is much denser than that, are multiple residence dwellings, sometimes small apartments but often high-rises. In fact, I know just anecdotally that in many areas in downtown Edmonton there are more high-rises going up in many areas, so I would expect that that population will actually significantly grow throughout this time in time for the next election but particularly in time for the election after that, which of course is something you have to consider when you're drawing your boundaries. So I would suggest that moving the north boundary further south is likely the most logical solution to that.

The Chair: Do you have access to any population growth projections in your work? You should. Some people have offered that, and I just wondered if . . .

Mr. French: I don't specifically.

The Chair: No ideas as to estimated growth in Edmonton-Centre. Okay, thanks.

Mr. Carmichael, what constituency do you reside in?

Mr. Carmichael: I have recently moved into Edmonton-Centre after living for, I guess, close to 50 years, I suppose, in some variation of Edmonton-Strathcona or Edmonton-Riverview.

The Chair: Okay. So any observations you might want to add to Mr. French's comments? If we had to change the boundaries first of Edmonton-Centre, any thoughts on how that might work?

Mr. Carmichael: I'm so new to the one, and I would say, as well, that I lived on the edge. I lived right in the university district in Edmonton-Strathcona, so I lived right on the edge of what was sometimes Edmonton-Strathcona and sometimes Edmonton-Riverview. I did find that Edmonton-Riverview covered two radically different communities. As someone who did campaigning for candidates, I just found the reception and the views and the interests were very different on each side of the river. Beyond that, no, I'm afraid I can't help.

The Chair: All right. Looking at the population estimates for Edmonton-Strathcona, they are 44,400, so more than 10 per cent below the provincial average. If we decided at a certain point that we had to grow Edmonton-Strathcona, do you have any views as to how we should move the boundary?

Mr. Carmichael: I would really rather that Larry Booi answered that.

Again, as you may know or Edmontonians may know, the Edmonton-Strathcona provincial constituency has occupied two different configurations over the last 40 years. In some cases it's been a somewhat narrow north-south constituency, and in other cases it's been a thinner constituency running east-west. The fact is that you cover very different natural communities whichever way you go. I can tell you that if you look at the electoral results for the north-south, you can almost colour code the winning candidate as you move from south to north, as you go from, I would say, Wildrose through Conservative to Liberal to New Democrat. It's really quite an astonishing sort of sandwich.

The Chair: One thing we're not doing is looking at poll results. I'm seeking your view as to if we were going to change Edmonton-Strathcona as it currently is to increase the size, do you have any view as to how we should move the boundaries to avoid cutting off any complete communities?

Mr. Carmichael: No. I don't think you need to worry about cutting off a complete community. You may need to go a little bit larger than you want in order to get all of it. If you think particularly of the traditional Alberta francophone community on the east side of the constituency, you may need to extend further or run the constituency a little further north rather than south in order to capture that. It would be wrong, I think, to split that particular community.

The Chair: Thanks.

Mr. Booi: I live in Riverview. I listened carefully to the response – and I know that you have to ask the question – but my response is: first of all, it doesn't actually matter to me. I trust you to listen to people to whom that does matter. To me what's important is: how do those numbers come out at the end? Also, you can't just look at Edmonton-Riverview. If Edmonton-Riverview is going to gain, someone else is going to lose. The real question then becomes: in

the context of the broader number of constituencies which shifts seem to make the most sense, looking at the big picture?

I would be fully satisfied if the net result was a far more equal variance – very, very limited variance – and I also believe that in urban constituencies the characteristic is diversity. The fact that – like, I don't believe constituencies actually have a character. I think they have a number of aspects, like facets of diamonds, and you don't want to split one of them in absolute half. But, at the same time, you're going to have a very diverse setting in these, so you do the best you can, and you're guided by the numbers. If you came up with 49,000 in each of these areas and if things got moved around, I'd be the one standing up and applauding.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other questions, commissioners?

Ms Munn: I don't have any questions.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.

Mr. McLeod: I do.

The Chair: Oh, yes.

Mr. McLeod: You mentioned kind of the urban characteristics. I understand where you're coming from, but I was hoping that as a broader view from Public Interest Alberta you might have touched a little bit more on the rural side of it.

Mr. Booi: Sure. I'd be happy to make some observations on that because my view is that the rural constituencies that I am familiar with are not monolithic in any way, and when you go one direction from Medicine Hat, it looks one way, and if you go north, it looks another way. We're always putting together diverse groups and interests, and part of democracy is about: how, when we have diverse interests and when we disagree on things, do we work those out in civil and meaningful ways?

I believe that there has been an attempt to address just size more with rural constituencies. I think if we work outward from the needs of the MLAs – for example, if you have a huge, long area with two main centres of population, it only makes sense to me to have two constituency offices. If there are three in a very diverse area when it stretches all the way out to Oyen and other areas like that, you may really have to consider three. To me that's a recommendation that I hope you folks will make to the Legislature to enable MLAs to reflect the unique circumstances.

By the way, northern Alberta constituencies are not at all like the southeast in so many ways, and we have to work outwards from what their situation is and then say: how can we provide the kind of supports, technical and staff, that allow each MLA to give the most effective representation to his or her unique situation?

Mr. McLeod: Thanks, Larry.

Mr. Booi: Thank you.

The Chair: Anything else? Okay. Thanks so much.

Mr. Booi: Thanks a lot.

The Chair: Thank you.

All right. Our next presenter is Jenny Adams. Ms Adams?

All right. Then we'll move along to Jeff Wedman. If you could tell us the constituency, Mr. Wedman, where you live.

Mr. Wedman: Madam Chair, commissioners, I'm currently in the St. Albert constituency.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Wedman: The official Alberta Municipal Affairs population count indicates the total population of the city of St. Albert lattice to be 63,000 people, give or take. That was in 2014. The expected benchmark for each constituency is 48,800 or so people. St. Albert, obviously, does not have the population base to support two constituencies by itself. Historically this has been the case, and the result of this has been one constituency that is solely comprised of a portion of the city of St. Albert, the St. Albert constituency, and one constituency that consists of the remaining portions of urban St. Albert, surrounding rural areas, and the city of Spruce Grove, which is the current Spruce Grove-St. Albert constituency.

I believe that it is important to keep one constituency as a pure, urban St. Albert riding. This will allow one MLA to focus on urban issues relating to St. Albert and Alberta's other medium-sized cities. The interim population count indicates the St. Albert electoral district consists of 48,430 people, falling almost right on the expected benchmark. As such, my recommendation is that no changes be enacted to the boundaries of the St. Albert electoral division.

1:50

In regard to what other areas to combine with the remaining portion of St. Albert to fill out the second constituency, there are nearby communities which have a closer connection with St. Albert that are currently not included in the Spruce Grove-St. Albert electoral division, specifically the communities of Morinville and Legal, directly to the north. They share a common French-Canadian history with St. Albert, being founded at near the same time. Morinville and Legal are also part of the St. Albert Catholic school division. The hamlet of Cardiff, the numerous acreage subdivisions which lie directly to the north of Edmonton which are part of Sturgeon county, and the new Edmonton urban subdivisions developed to the south of Big Lake – Hawks Ridge, Starling, and Trumpeter subdivisions – which are now part of Edmonton-Calder: these residents all utilize St. Albert schools, St. Albert businesses, and sports and recreation facilities. I think they are a more common fit with the remaining 16,000 or so residents of St. Albert than Spruce Grove.

For people that live in Morinville, that live in the north of Sturgeon county, that live in the acreage subdivisions: their natural transit flows are through St. Albert and their natural sports teams – my son plays on a Sturgeon-St. Albert club volleyball team. Many people live in Morinville and work in St. Albert or vice versa. The same can't be said for Spruce Grove. There's a natural boundary of the Yellowhead and the natural boundary of the Henday. Other than our electoral division the towns of Spruce Grove and St. Albert really have not much more in common than, say, what they'd have with Fort Saskatchewan or Beaumont or other communities of the greater Edmonton area.

This would be a radical restructuring of the Spruce Grove-St. Albert electoral division right now. From my rough estimations almost half of the electoral division would have to be comprised of Sturgeon county. Now, we wouldn't want to take the entire Sturgeon county. I previously lived on the other side of Sturgeon county. When we get to the far Bon Accord and Gibbons, those communities have more in common with, say, Fort Saskatchewan and Redwater than they do with St. Albert, so it would make more sense that – although we don't want to cut it in half, St. Albert city council and Sturgeon county's city council do have a lot in common.

On ongoing annexation – I wouldn't say “dispute” because it ebbs and flows, much so more than Spruce Grove. There would be

some challenges in where to cut that line in Sturgeon county, and I don't have the access to the population – I don't know where to draw that line. Sturgeon county is about 19,000 people, so about half to two-thirds would be needed to fill out the electoral division.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: The proposed southern boundary you suggest moving to includes Big Lake and those new subdivisions out by Big Lake?

Mr. Wedman: Correct.

The Chair: Is the Henday the natural dividing line there? Are they all north of the Henday?

Mr. Wedman: They're all at Henday and then as it wraps around to the Yellowhead Trail. it's very much a natural dividing line between the two.

The Chair: So if we use that boundary just for discussion purposes, would any of the city of Edmonton be within the St. Albert constituency?

Mr. Wedman: Yes. Those three subdivisions of Starling, Hawks Ridge, and Trumpeter are new subdivisions that have only been under construction for the last five, six years, maybe, that are just at the beginning stages of being filled out.

The Chair: They're part of Edmonton, not part of St. Albert?

Mr. Wedman: They're part of Edmonton. Yes.

The Chair: Okay. All right.
Trumpeter.

Mr. Wedman: Yes.

The Chair: What are the other two?

Mr. Wedman: Hawks Ridge and Starling.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.
Questions?

Thanks. You've been very precise. Thanks so much.

Mr. Wedman: Thank you very much.

The Chair: All right.

Jenny Adams: has she arrived?

Okay. We were going to have a coffee break at this point, but because we've got a bit of a gap here, I could invite Red Woelfle if he's available. Does he want to come forward?

Else Smart?

David Klippenstein?

None of these people are late. They were all scheduled for later this afternoon. We're just trying to be efficient here.

Good afternoon.

Mr. Klippenstein: Good afternoon. Thank you, Madam Chair, commissioners. My name is David Klippenstein. I reside in the St. Albert riding, constituency, electoral division. I'm here on behalf of myself. I find this process fascinating. I view this as a learning experience as well as providing some ideas and thoughts.

There are a few examples here that I'd like to draw to your attention to. Certainly, the vigorous population growth that we have seen has not affected everybody or every place in the same way. There are areas that are hot spots of growth and development, so that has led to some discrepancies. Looking at your website and

looking at the number of electors rather than the population – these are 2015 numbers – I note with a great deal of interest that there is a tremendous spread in the number of electors from the low end to the high end. For example, Fort McMurray-Conklin, 13,222 electors, not population but electors; Calgary-South East, 46,871; and that's a ratio of 3.5 from the top to the bottom.

Clearly, you have your task cut out for us in terms of fairness and equity and access to the political process. I certainly agree with the previous speakers that talk about narrowing the range of permissible variations in population and number of electors. The next highest constituency in terms of numbers of electors is Spruce Grove-St. Albert, the one that the previous speaker alluded to. In addition, the portion of St. Albert that is within Spruce Grove-St. Albert is the fastest growing part of St. Albert, and Spruce Grove itself is one of the fastest growing or faster growing communities in the Edmonton region. So they're high already, and they will get higher if there aren't some changes made.

I've always been intrigued by Spruce Grove and St. Albert being put together. It seems to me that there is a greater affinity between, say, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, and Stony Plain has its own constituency with the surrounding Parkland county and other areas. To me to rationalize this it would make – I've thought of the idea, and I would certainly defer to the folks that live in Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. Spruce Grove and Stony Plain together – a population of 33,000 and 15,000 is 48,000 – in terms of population would be sort of a logical, coherent urban. The two centres have a lot in common, including a boundary.

It would also seem to me logical for the residual St. Albert, the northern part of St. Albert, to be joined with Morinville – there are a lot of connections, cultural and commercial and many other connections – and possibly Legal and a portion of Sturgeon, very much along the lines of what the previous speaker alluded to, into a St. Albert-North or a Morinville-St. Albert constituency.

I realize, of course, the effect that would have on Barrhead-Morinville to the northwest and the other one to the northeast, and that's all part of the challenge of drawing boundaries. As a geographer and a planner for many years, I'm very well familiar with the challenges of drawing boundaries and what the impact might be.

There is another area that I'd like to speak to which is further north, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo and Fort McMurray-Conklin. I notice on the map – and I hadn't realized this before – that the boundary between those two actually runs along the Athabasca River. You end up with a very curious situation up in the extreme north, where Fort Chipewyan is on the east side of the Athabasca River and Peace Point, which is a small community of a handful of houses and a handful of people, is west of the Peace River and the Athabasca River, but the people that live there are members of Mikisew Cree First Nation, which is resident in Fort Chip. So you have people that are members of Mikisew Cree living in another constituency from their First Nation.

2:00

The Chair: I'm going to interrupt you there and ask you to give me the spelling of these names because this is one of the things the act specifically directs us to look at. I'm delighted that you've raised it, but just so that when we get up to Fort McMurray later this week, we can ask the folks there about this, what is the part of the First Nation reserve that is in the other constituency?

Mr. Klippenstein: The Mikisew Cree, most of the people, the on-reserve population, reside in and around Fort Chipewyan, but the Peace Point portion of Mikisew Cree lives out right in the middle of Wood Buffalo national park. So it raises questions about equity

but also access to the political process for these people, that are almost the most isolated community in northern Alberta.

Ms Munn: Fort Chip is in Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo?

Mr. Klippenstein: It's in Fort McMurray-Conklin as far as I can tell from the map. That was sort of a revelation to me.

Ms Munn: Whereas Peace Point is in Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo?

Mr. Klippenstein: In Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, to the west of the river. One would think that all of Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo would be sort of Wood Buffalo north and that Fort McMurray-Conklin would be Wood Buffalo south. That's sort of what I thought was the case, but I see on the map that it's not the case.

Peace Point is almost as isolated as Fort Fitzgerald, with a population of nine, right at the top, just below 60. There are questions in my own mind there about their access to the political process, but that's continuing.

Coming back to the issue of Fort McMurray-Conklin, which had, I think, the lowest number of electors in 2015 although perhaps not on a population basis, the logical thing there would be to extend it to the south and include possibly Lac La Biche. I'm just speculating here because I will leave it to the folks that live there to speak to that, but as a southerner I'm thinking about this, and having spent a fair bit of time with a number of the communities up there, that would be a logical sort of thing to do in terms of connections up and down highway 881. That said, of course, it ripples through Cold Lake, Bonnyville, St. Paul, and the existing Lac La Biche constituency. Again, I'm offering these observations just as a citizen and as a geographer.

Finally, Grande Prairie, where I've done some work over the years. The population of the city is now over 60,000, and you wonder whether, in fact, it could be a constituency in its own right. There would still be a residual population, which would join up with either of the two county jurisdictions, and how that line would be drawn would be something that, again, I'd defer to if it was the wish of the people that live there. But there seems to be a certain rationale to one city, one urban area, one constituency, one MLA representing them.

I found this whole exercise in the last couple of days fascinating, the comments of people here encouraging in terms of the commitment to the political process. I do certainly support a narrowing of the eligibility of numbers in terms of fairness and equity.

Finally, the final bit of advice I'd give is to think not only about today's population but about where the growth areas are, especially in urban areas, and to think about the planned population. That could skew things again in another five or 10 years.

In conclusion, I'd just like to say thank you for the opportunity. I wish you well and the wisdom of Solomon in carrying forward your deliberations and your recommendations.

Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm just going to raise a question here about the Fort McMurray figures. We are going to Fort McMurray, and of course we don't want to be presumptuous. They are indeed the people who should have direct input into what should be done up there. One of the two constituencies has a population of about 30,000 right now, and one has a population of about 60,000, and this doesn't include temporary residents in the camps. It's just residents in the city proper plus the reserve residents. So, totally, that's about 90,000.

Divided in two, that's about 45,000 each. Just looking at this in our initial figures, we thought: gee, this might be solvable just by moving the boundary within the city of Fort McMurray itself. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Mr. Klippenstein: I think that would be a much preferred solution to moving it south. You know, the Athabasca River is a natural boundary, but recognize there are two, that most of the population growth in Fort McMurray will take place in Parsons Creek and in Timberlea, especially Parsons Creek, which is on the north side. Taking that into account, it might move the boundary to the west of the Athabasca River. Again, I would certainly defer to the people that live there. I'm just offering my observations having spent a bit of my lifetime up there.

The Chair: I used to be the supervising judge in Fort McMurray for seven years, so, yeah, I've been interested myself in their story this last year in particular.

Before I ask for questions from the rest of the panel, do you have any observation about boundary changes? St. Albert itself is almost right on the provincial average. You've given some observations about moving the boundaries to accommodate the balance of St. Albert and how it might be better done by moving north. Is there anything else you want to say on that point?

Mr. Klippenstein: Not a great deal. St. Albert itself still has a small growth area in Erin Ridge North, which will take the population up over time, but the main areas of population growth in St. Albert are in what is now Spruce Grove-St. Albert. That would be taken into consideration if you were to have sort of a Sturgeon-Morinville-St. Albert North constituency.

You know, we find ourselves in the situation where my friends that live in the constituency in the northern part of St. Albert formerly were represented by a resident of Cardiff. Now they are represented by someone in Spruce Grove. There's a bit of distance there, and there's a bit of a different sense of community in between those two places, so if each could be sort of established as a stand-alone, it would, I think, reflect community interests a bit more.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions?

All right. You've been very clear and helpful. Thank you very much.

Mr. Klippenstein: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Jenny Adams? Reg Woelfle? Else Smart? Okay. Is Gary Horan or John Ashton here? All right. Well, we'll take an early break. We were going to break from 2:20 to 2:40, but let's break from 2:10 to 2:30, and perhaps these other speakers, who've registered for later in the afternoon, will be here by the time we get back.

Thank you very much.

[The hearing adjourned from 2:08 p.m. to 2:33 p.m.]

The Chair: Okay. I think we'll get started again, ladies and gentlemen.

I'm going to invite Reg Woelfle to come forward. Good afternoon.

Mr. Woelfle: Okay to proceed?

The Chair: Yes. Could you tell us first what constituency you live in?

Mr. Woelfle: Yes. I'm from the southern part – I was looking over there at the map – and it's moved quite a little bit because I live down by the Anthony Henday. Of course, it's Edmonton-South West, there. Ultimately, there's been a big shift in population there, of course, over time, some fairly recent time, too.

I'd like to thank the panel for hearing me. My presentation is quite simple; perhaps it won't be that long. I'll just let you know that my name is Reg Woelfle, as you well know. I'm a lifetime citizen of Alberta, born and raised in rural Alberta. I've lived in a few different urban settings in Alberta. I've been residing in the southern prairies, have resided in the northern boreal forest area, and I've come to understand this province fairly well.

I think that the issue that is being looked at here is very important in terms of what I view as democratic principles. I guess I come from two different points of view, two different pillars of the presentation here. One is that Alberta has undergone significant changes: population, economic kind of dynamics, which you all know. I'm not telling you anything you don't know, and of course you'll hear a lot more, I guess, as you go on for the next little while about what the views are on that. The second thing is that I have a fundamental belief that a vote is a vote is a vote – a full vote, not a partial vote, not a diluted vote, but a full vote – and that electoral boundaries should reflect that kind of thing. I've realized a number of things, and I'll go into it later on as I go along here.

To me, some things have become clearer over time. We all believe in the basic tenets of a democracy, and the population dynamics of the province have changed dramatically. So you're working on this at a time that's pretty critical, I think, to what is going to be for the future of this province. I'm here on behalf of myself, my grandchildren, and those citizens whose electoral vote has become diluted and dissolved into a less than full value vote. I believe the generations to come deserve to inhabit a healthy, vibrant democracy where all citizens can rely on a reasonable expectation of equality in selecting those who will govern. It's important to have very good governance.

My view is that this province is long overdue for a serious electoral boundary overhaul to reflect new provincial realities and that all voters are equal. Realities of today are not the realities of 50 years ago, much less 10 years ago. The plurality of voters decides who will govern and what direction the province should be going. I don't believe you can have preferential votes and achieve this. Over my lifetime the population demographics have changed dramatically with regard to the urban and rural population numbers, and I've lived in both. The vast majority of citizens now reside in urban settings. That's not a statement that anybody doesn't know already.

I also believe that one vote is a whole vote, not diluted to a fraction of its full value, be it urban or rural, and equal. It is understood that you cannot create totally equal constituency vote numbers. There are geographical proximity considerations or other anomalies. Of course, you've heard all of them to this point, but you'll hear some more, I'm sure: somebody who wants special consideration because they have a particular thing that they view is not going to be their democratic right being recognized. But I think that electoral constituencies can be brought much closer in line with the principle of an equal number of voters per constituency.

Some folks who live in some of the areas of the province: yes, they're not well populated, but I shouldn't have to sacrifice the quality of my vote because they choose to be in an area that isn't highly populated. Democratic fairness and vibrancy is neither left nor right, old or young, rural or urban. It's just equal. The quality of each voter is central to allowing a whole decision as to who should govern. Allowing for favourable circumstances in some constituencies does not promote a fully functioning democracy; it

creates a class democracy. This may sound highly idealistic, especially at my age, when I should know better than to be idealistic, but it nonetheless carries a great deal of truth to it. So your work is very important.

Allow me the liberty of a footnote. I do not believe we need additional constituencies in this province. We need redistribution of existing voters per constituency. If there are pressure points in a particular constituency, that becomes the work of the MLA to address: kind of too bad, so sad; you ran in it.

I thank you for your time and attention. May your deliberations be fruitful, and I look forward to the results of your deliberations. You're working on one of the most central tenets of our democratic functioning.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Just before I turn to the other commissioners and ask if there are any questions, I'll ask you about your constituency. I've asked everybody who's spoken. You said you were in Edmonton-South West?

Mr. Woelfle: Yeah.

The Chair: Okay. The estimated population of Edmonton-South West at this moment is 66,489 people, which is about 25,000 people more than the average, or 35, 40 per cent higher than the provincial average. If we find in the course of our deliberations that we have to look at adjusting the boundaries of Edmonton-South West, do you have a view as to how we should we do that? Should we contract it by moving it all east of the river, for example, or move the northern barrier south? Do you have a view as to how commonality of interest in Edmonton-South West would best be preserved if we had to change the boundaries?

2:40

Mr. Woelfle: To give a totally selfish answer, we've been – I live in Twin Brooks. I've been in – I'm talking provincially – a couple of different constituencies already. I don't know if that makes a big difference. But I suppose I would say that members of that particular community have a greater affinity, if you will, to being with other constituencies north of the Anthony Henday, so to speak. But having said that, I look at the growth in that Heritage Valley area, and I don't know, really, how possible that is. So I say that looking at it strictly from, you know, kind of a selfish, personal view, where I think would prefer to have my directions. I'm quite flexible about it in terms of where as a citizen I want to vote.

I am much more concerned about the fact of, say, democratic equality. I know, when I look at these maps around here, that you've got a lot of tough decisions to make with regard to, you know, a lot of pluses and minuses there, with populations up, populations down, and so on. So preferences are nice, but I'm not so sure that we can come around and say: well, you know, I think that this is where I should be.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks so much.

Any other questions?

No. All right. Thanks so much, sir.

Mr. Woelfle: You bet.

The Chair: All right. Our next presenter is Else Smart.

Ms Smart: Good afternoon.

The Chair: Could you say what constituency you live in?

Ms Smart: I'm Edmonton-Rutherford. I've been the returning officer there for the last two elections, 2012 and 2015, so I know the area quite well.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Smart: I guess I'm expanding a bit on this fellow, which is just kind of coincidental. We don't know each other.

Anyways, Edmonton-Rutherford is a very encapsulated constituency. We border the Whitemud freeway to the north, Blackmud Creek and Whitemud Creek on the west, Calgary Trail on the east. We don't currently have Twin Brooks, but my proposal is that Twin Brooks become part of Edmonton-Rutherford. This is what this fellow was talking about. Twin Brooks is where he lives. The reason for that is – okay. This is going by the numbers from the last election. There were 40,000 electors in Edmonton-South West, which Twin Brooks is part of. In Edmonton-Rutherford there were 26,000, almost 27,000. So there's quite a discrepancy between the numbers. If we add Twin Brooks to Edmonton-Rutherford – and this is data that I took from the city of Edmonton census. They did an age distribution. They had an interesting, you know, 15 to 19 category, but I didn't use that; I used the other one. That would put an additional 5,000 electors into Edmonton-Rutherford, which would put it at about 31,000.

I would also like to suggest that – okay. I want Edmonton-Rutherford to continue on to Twin Brooks but also all the way down to Ellerslie Road, which then would encompass three other communities: Blackburne, MacEwan, and Richford.

The Chair: Just a sec here. Down to Ellerslie Road . . .

Ms Smart: Right.

The Chair: . . . and it would include Blackburne . . .

Ms Smart: Yeah. Blackburne, MacEwan, and Richford.

In terms of the demographics from that, again I took them from the city of Edmonton census because I was trying to look at kind of the voter distribution and trying to equalize it more in terms of – you know, like I said, Edmonton-South West had 40,000; we only had 26,000. So there's quite a discrepancy between the numbers.

If we were to incorporate these areas into Edmonton-Rutherford, it would give it approximately 35,000, 36,000 electors, which would be more in line with what's in the other ones. Richford has approximately – and this is from the city of Edmonton census – 646 people that would be of voting age; MacEwan has 4,385; and Blackburne has 1,160. You know, those are the numbers that we could look at in terms of potential voters in those areas, and that would put it more in line with 35,000 to maybe even as much as 40,000 electors. But Edmonton-South West already has over 40,000 voters.

Did the numbers add up, or did I screw up?

The Chair: Okay. Well, I'm just going to interject because our task is based not on voter representation but on representation by entire population. That's how we're tasked by the legislation, so my figure is also based largely on the city of Edmonton census last year. It showed that at the moment there are 66,489 in Edmonton-South West. In Edmonton-Rutherford you butt up against 45,255, so that's about 10 per cent below provincial average. I'm not sure what constituencies Blackburne, MacEwan, and Richford fall within, but it would be tempting to think that part of Edmonton-South West could be added to Edmonton-Rutherford to balance the numbers in Edmonton-Rutherford a bit better. What's your view of that?

Ms Smart: That, but there are some very natural boundaries there as well. Blackmud and Whitemud creeks, when one becomes the other, are on the west, and it goes, you know, all the way down to Ellerslie Road. There's Ellerslie Road. There's Calgary Trail. So you're going to end up with very distinct boundaries in terms of – because right now Twin Brooks is actually a bit of a cut-out in Edmonton-Rutherford. Even if you didn't go as far south as Ellerslie Road, Twin Brooks, really, even geographically and demographically should belong to Edmonton-Rutherford. There just aren't that many numbers, you know, in terms of voters, but in terms of the actual boundaries it just makes sense. It becomes its own constituency, and, like I said, it has natural boundaries to it.

That's my proposal. At least add Twin Brooks, you know, because then you're all north of Anthony Henday. If you want to go south of Anthony Henday down to Ellerslie Road, then we can, you know, look at incorporating MacEwan, Blackburne, and Richford. Again, those areas are just north of Ellerslie Road but in between the creek and Calgary Trail. There are not that many people in that particular area. It's just kind of a strip on the bottom there.

The Chair: Thank you.
Questions?

Mrs. Day: Yeah. I'm just curious if you could tell me: with taking in that area and the Edmonton-Rutherford area you're speaking of, is it already fairly built out? Is it already an established community of essence, or is it still new housing being built?

Ms Smart: No. It's a very established area, and it has very distinct natural boundaries because of the creek and the freeway, Calgary Trail. It's really pretty much at its maximum. There are some proposals before city council for some development in a green area in Blue Quill and for Century Park, but if you're looking at what they're actually going to put in there, you're looking at maybe 200 to 500 units at the most. There just isn't the room for growth in that area. It's just not there. It's very established. Most of it was built in, you know, the late '70s, early '80s, and it's a pretty static community.

The only thing that's happening there, too, is that they're doing some of the infills. Because we have large lots, some of them are being subdivided, and there are perhaps two houses or whatever being built now. It's not going to add significantly. There's no way in that area that you could all of a sudden add thousands of people. There just isn't the space to do that.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Okay. Well, you're our first returning officer, so a special welcome to you. I'm going to ask a question about something you didn't speak to. Are there any thoughts or suggestions you might have for us based on your experience as a returning officer on designing constituency boundaries that would help the actual running of a provincial election?

Ms Smart: Hmm. What can I say to that? I'm not sure. Repeat that question.

2:50

The Chair: Okay. You're a returning officer, so you have detailed knowledge about how Edmonton-Rutherford is organized to run an election, to actually have an election on voting day. Does the constituency boundary of Rutherford as it's been in the past cause you any particular burdens or problems in running an election?

Ms Smart: No. Absolutely not. Like I said, that area in particular has very natural boundaries, very distinct boundaries, and I've

never had any issues. It's got, you know, nice demographics, and it's got a wide range, you know, from more expensive housing to subsidized housing. It's got a nice, well-rounded demographic as well, I think.

The Chair: I suppose you have contact from time to time with other returning officers. Just guessing. Have you heard comments from them about challenges they might have because of the design of their constituencies? I don't know whether you have, but have you heard anything?

Ms Smart: Well, the only thing I've heard – and this isn't a problem in mine – is that certainly in some of the newer areas it's very difficult to put polls because they don't have the buildings. They don't have the community leagues. They don't have the schools. They don't have, you know, whatever it is in terms of putting a poll in, so they're ending up putting a lot of polls in one location. I personally don't have that. We have a lot of schools – elementary, public, that sort of thing – so that's not an issue.

I think that when you're getting into Edmonton-South West and Edmonton-Whitemud, that would be another thing in incorporating Twin Brooks. I think there are two schools or something in there, so it's very difficult to put polls in some of those areas. That's the only thing. I think that in a lot of the newer areas that's what you're going to be faced with: where are you going to put those polls?

The Chair: Well, I know in Canada sometimes polls have been put actually outside of a constituency to allow efficiency so that people don't have to travel so far. Have you ever encountered that situation?

Ms Smart: Not with mine, I haven't, no. I know sometimes we've had to put returning offices outside of the constituency boundary because there just isn't the office space available, but that's the only issue. We've sometimes shared space with some of the other returning officers because you can't find enough space. That's an issue as well because we do need a returning office. Some of these, especially newer areas, just aren't able to accommodate that because they don't have the office space or whatever it is.

The Chair: But you've been able to make it work where you've had issues.

Ms Smart: Yeah. I've been really fortunate. I've always found space. There are lots of strip malls in my area. There are lots of community leagues. There are, you know, schools: public, Catholic, everything. It's an older, established neighbourhood. I think where you're running into the problem is in some of the newer ones, where they have, you know, bigger schools, not the community schools like we have in ours.

The Chair: Right. Okay.

Any questions arising, as we say?

Okay. All right. Thank you so much. You've been very specific in your suggestions, and that's really helpful.

Ms Smart: Well, that's what I was hoping to do.

The Chair: Okay.

Our next registered presenter is not registered to speak until 3:40, but I'd welcome her to come forward if she's here. Eve McDougall?

Is Gary Horan here?

John Ashton?

I'm guessing these folks have registered for the end because they are coming after work, so we'll take another break, and hopefully

one of those three folks will show up before long, and we'll resume proceedings. Thanks.

[The hearing adjourned from 2:53 p.m. to 3:46 p.m.]

The Chair: Hello. We're going to begin again in a moment. We understand that our next presenter has arrived, Eve McDougall.

Ms McDougall, when you're ready, if you could come forward and have a seat at the table, that would be terrific. I know you've just arrived, so you won't know that *Hansard* is here and is recording everything that we say, so a transcript of these remarks will be available on our website and also an oral recording in the future.

Dr. Nostrand: Do you want me to stand, or is it okay if I sit?

The Chair: Please. Everybody's been sitting.

Dr. Nostrand: Okay. It's just that I have a back injury, so sitting is really great.

The Chair: That's fine. Just note that your comments are going to be made publicly available.

Dr. Nostrand: Yes.

The Chair: Could you tell me what constituency you live in?

Dr. Nostrand: Well, I just recently moved – okay? – so I'm actually just a block from here. I would have to check and make sure, but I know the Member of Parliament. All I can say is that I'm actually just, like, a block from here.

The Chair: Probably Edmonton-Calder.

Dr. Nostrand: Yes, it is.

The Chair: The reason that we're asking is that at the end of your comments I'll ask if you have any suggestions for how the boundaries should change. Are you more familiar with another constituency in Edmonton, perhaps where you lived before?

Dr. Nostrand: Well, because I've worked in a capacity as an institute town director, you know, and listened to the information as well as worked in international news, I've had access to a lot of people's information on this. We worked on a committee on electoral boundaries quite a while ago, maybe 10 years ago, but the issues are still rather being generated.

Do you want me to spell my full name? There were supposed to be two of us here speaking today, but the other lady missed her plane.

The Chair: Sure. Please spell your name.

Dr. Nostrand: Okay. It's Dr. C. Paula v. Nostrand. It's a Dutch name. I'm the director of one of the institutes, and one of our committees is about elections, okay?

Would you like me to continue on . . .

The Chair: Please do. Yes.

Dr. Nostrand: . . . and if so, how would you like me to present this in terms of what I'm saying? Do you have some questions to ask of me first?

The Chair: We'll have some questions at the end, but you just go ahead and feel free to make your presentation.

Dr. Nostrand: Yeah. Well, one of my great concerns is that having worked on the previous Deputy Prime Minister's campaign, there was such a great deal of concern about adjusting the boundaries so that – I won't say he or she – the person could win, I will say. I felt that that was very much against our democratic principles and against some of the human rights that I represent, which would feel that everybody should be treated equally under the Canadian Charter of human rights, section 15(1) and (2).

So adjusting the electoral boundaries could in fact negotiate a constitutional claim for discrimination by some people who may have felt that their interests may be diminished or otherwise. Having gone to law school in the past, I realize that maybe not a lot of people think about these concerns, but I think they're real, and I think that adjusting the boundaries should reflect a proper weighting of all people, whether they be poor or rich or in a rich district or voting on a regular basis or contributing to the party more regularly or anything like that.

I think everybody should have a good say, and I think that more people should be encouraged to vote. In fact, I think they should be given mini credits for voting so that we could get the young people out again and get all the people to vote so that voting becomes a truly reflective democratic principle and contingency of our society and that people don't just say: well, there's no point in voting because no matter what we do, they're going to take in who they want. This not the U.S.A. Hopefully, we're not run by your friend Mr. Trump, but hopefully we're run by our democratic principles, I would like to believe.

In the past I thought this was heavily weighted and heavily changed at that time to reflect political interest groups, and it was very poorly structured to represent all of the people all of the time. I think we must get back to all of the people all of the time and not wait – I realize that democratic political interests pay your salaries, but I also realize that we still are a country, hopefully, with some freedoms, and these should be respected.

In the past there was a gentleman that worked on some of the news with me. He's since had an amputation and couldn't come here today, but he was very versed in much of the work on the electoral repositioning.

All I have to say is that more and more each vote should count for each person rather than some district counting for a hundred times the weight of some other district which has more poor people in it. All I want to do is to be here to re-emphasize the democratic principle and reunderline the fact that we should again get back to the reality of the democratic principles in this country and look forward to enlarging that so that we can get the young people out to vote who are saying: "Why vote? I have no influence. It doesn't count." We don't want that to occur in this country. We do not want that, I do not believe.

I think most of the people that used to come to our town hall meetings also said the same thing. They said: "Why even bother talking? They don't take down what we believe should be important. Why bother going to vote? It's not structured properly?" We have to get back the confidence of the people, we have to get back the confidence in our Canadian society, and we have to get that back by doing things in a more democratic procedure.

Now, I'm not an expert. I'm a medical doctor and a lawyer, but I did write a lot of laws for the North American society. I'm a multiple citizen, of more than one country, here. I've had a lot of experience in legislating things and doing things, working on government things, but I realized also how much the money backers and how much the political backers have had to say.

But I think right now that this is the time to get back, like I said, into the forefront of running a country in a proper way. This is our chance. I think people like you are probably the most important

people on the North American continent right now because you're at a very formative time. Times are changing in a markedly, incredible way. People are much more alert and well versed because of the Internet, because of Facebook. They're watching things with greater interest.

3:55

Maybe they don't all vote, but they will vote, I think, and increasing ability – again, one of the things in enlarging and changing the electoral boundaries, I think, one of the reasons should be to stimulate the vote of the people that haven't been there so that we come closer and closer and closer to getting a majority type vote out there at our next election. This is very important.

I can't say that I have too many intimate details to tell you other than the story, that I said, of when I was campaigning, but I feel that you could take to heart what I'm saying because of so many people who've rallied round me saying that these things are so important and that they are looking at what is going to be going on as very important and therefore, perhaps, get the weight of the vote properly back without restructuring it in this cycle, calculating dynamic divisions that don't really represent the weight of all of the people all of the time and the poor as well as the rich. I don't want to take all your time today, but I just want to underline how important I believe that is. I'm not important in the long run, but the votes we throw and the country we bring to the future and the growth of the vote in the young are going to be with us for ever and ever and ever.

I thank you for letting me come today. I thank you for letting me say a few words to this effect, but I can tell you that there have been hundreds of people ask me to say just a word to that same effect and that they are very concerned. Most people don't like to speak in public. I've been able to speak in public because I've been a lecturer for many, many years. I just want to say that I'm speaking here today on behalf of everyone else who couldn't come and, hopefully, a better society as a result of whatever you do with what's here today, okay?

Any questions?

The Chair: Yes. Any questions?

All right. Thanks very much. We have no questions. You've been very clear in your presentation.

Dr. Nostrand: I thank you very much. Thank you for taking the time to let me come.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Dr. Nostrand: Goodbye.

The Chair: Bye.

It's a little bit ahead of time for Gary Horan or John Ashton. I take it that neither of those gentlemen are here as yet.

Okay. We'll take another break until Mr. Horan arrives. Thanks very much.

[The hearing adjourned from 3:58 p.m. to 4:29 p.m.]

The Chair: Our registered presenter for 4:20 didn't appear. Just so everybody knows the plan, we do have somebody registered to come at 4:40, so we don't want to shut things down before 4:40. But if that person doesn't appear, I'm going to let the staff go at 4:40 so that we don't have to wait any further. So that's another 10 minutes.

Ms Loomes: Can I say something, or do we wait?

The Chair: No, no. Sure. Let's fill out our time with that.

Ms Loomes: Okay.

The Chair: Excuse me. A variation on that plan. Sorry. We have somebody who would like to make a presentation although she hasn't been registered, and I've invited her to make that presentation.

If you'd sit down, if you wouldn't mind, and give us your name for *Hansard* and also the constituency you live in.

Ms Loomes: Hi. My name is Edda Loomes. I live in Edmonton-Strathcona. I'm interested in election reforms, and what really bothers me about the elections in Canada, in the federal and the provincial elections, is the system we have. I think we should have proportional representation. The system we have, first past the post, is ancient. It goes back to the 1200s or whatever, and there are only three civilized countries that still have that: England, the United States, and Canada. I think it's a good idea to make sure that the constituencies are the right size and that you have correct proportional representation, the correct number of people in the constituencies, but as long as we still stick to the first past the post system, I don't think it's going to change very much.

Not in the last federal election but the one before, Mr. Harper had 39 per cent of the votes and a majority government. Now, mathematically it doesn't make too much sense. Thirty-nine per cent is not a majority. We need reforms. We need proportional representation. There's a group in Edmonton called Fair Vote Alberta. They meet and they talk about proportional representation, and you can find out about them on the Internet. You can find out about proportional representation. Changing the boundaries is just putting a Band-Aid on it. It's not really changing the system, and we have to change the system.

The Chair: Okay. That said, our task is to look at the boundaries. We don't have the ability or the jurisdiction to impose change in the method of electing officials in Alberta or federally, certainly. What we do have authority to do is look at the boundaries of your riding, Edmonton-Strathcona. At the moment it has an estimated population of 44,400, which is about 10 per cent below the provincial average. So without suggesting we've made any decision, because we haven't, when we get to looking at Edmonton-Strathcona, we're going to have to ask ourselves: should we move a constituency boundary to increase the geographical size so that it's closer to the provincial average of 48,800? If we had to do that, do you have a view as to whether that boundary should be moved east, north, south, or west?

Ms Loomes: Well, I think that the boundary has been changed once before. I think it was changed because, well, Riverview was included and because if they had left it the way it was, the NDP definitely would have won. But since they moved it over to Riverview – I think it was a political movement.

The Chair: Okay. But now, today, looking forward, do you have any suggestions?

Ms Loomes: I don't really know enough about it.

The Chair: All right. Any other questions?

All right. Thanks so much.

Ms Loomes: Thank you.

The Chair: One of my commissioners has just said that I should invite you folks to say something. You've been here all along, and I bet you're here for a reason. Why don't you come forward and tell us what you think?

Ms Wodak: Thank you. My name is Carol Wodak. We're from Sherwood Park. I don't have a comment yet. I'm waiting eagerly to see your interim report and then to come and respond with a little more information. But I have a question. It's clear to me that there are going to have to be boundary shifts, in some areas significant and in other areas as a consequence. Do you have any idea of how you start that process? I mean, where do you start?

4:35

The Chair: That's the \$64,000 question. Do you have any suggestions for us as to where we should start?

Ms Wodak: Well, without giving it a great deal of thought, only in the last couple of days, I've thought: well, if I had to do that, I think I would look first at the urban areas of Calgary and Edmonton, and I would try to identify the constituencies that had approximately the right number of people in them and look at their boundaries and then work out from there. I have no idea what happens when you get out to the end, but at least, I would think, that's a starting place. I think that maintaining community integrity is important, and I do not believe, necessarily, that the existing constituencies do represent community integrity always.

Do you have any thoughts about how to go about that process?

The Chair: Well, before I answer that, I'm going to take advantage because you're our first person from Sherwood Park, so welcome. Now, looking at my list here, Sherwood Park has 45,474 people, so it's also about 10 per cent below the average number. Do you have any thoughts as to, if we decided we had to increase the geographic area to increase the population, how we should go about that?

Ms Wodak: Yes. Well, I think you're going to have to increase the population of that. One of the things that has been somewhat distressing to those of us who work with the constituency there has been that eastern border, which leaves part of the urban part of Sherwood Park in a separate constituency. I would very much like to see that included within the Sherwood Park constituency, just to sort of maintain that, because we have neighbours who are in different constituencies.

The Chair: What is that constituency that has the rest of Sherwood Park?

Ms Wodak: Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Wodak: I do know that the population of Sherwood Park itself, you know, just sort of the suburban area as opposed to the acreages, has increased enormously in the last few years, in the last couple of years particularly.

Mrs. Day: And mostly to the east?

Ms Wodak: That's right. Yeah.

The Chair: Has most of your population growth in the last eight years been to the east?

Ms Wodak: Yes. I understand there's some talk about sort of north, but the part that I see being really developed is east. In my father's day Sherwood Park was Sherwood Park. My brother, who hadn't visited for a number of years but who had worked there way back, came in and was absolutely astonished that it was almost out to highway 21. Well, of course, it's past 21 now. It's just astonishing, yeah.

The Chair: I'm just looking at our maps here to try to find Sherwood Park. I think we have it up over there. In looking at that constituency, you're bordering Strathcona-Sherwood Park here on the east, and you're suggesting that the border be moved out to border on this edge of the development. What is the population of Sherwood Park? You said that you knew it.

Ms Wodak: Oh, gosh, 67,000.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Wodak: There's also new development happening south of Wye Road, which is that bottom boundary, the south boundary. That would be my second place to go. Of course, if I were to try to do that, I would probably run into something somewhere along the line that would make me go back and rethink my process.

The Chair: But it's helpful to hear from people who actually live there and know things that we don't know.

Any questions of comments? Okay.

Ms Wodak: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Okay. This takes us to the time set for our last presenter today, who may have just walked in. Great.

Yes. Good afternoon. Would you please take a seat and give us your name and the constituency you reside in.

Mr. Rumbold: Absolutely. I've got a letter. Can I pass it along?

The Chair: Of course. Thank you.

Mr. Rumbold: Okay. Firstly, I'll say thank you for fitting me in today. This came together at the last minute, and I really appreciate you including me in here. My name is Dave Rumbold. I am currently president of the Edmonton-Whitemud PC Association. As I speak to you today, I'm going to be wearing other hats I've worn in the community over the years. I'm currently past president of Riverbend Community League. I was president there for three years. We just went through a similar advocacy discussion with the city on the ward 9 changes, which I'll refer to, and it's in the letter.

I was also active in TRAC, which is the area council, the Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council. I believe it was incorporated in '01. I became active in '02-03. I was a fundraising chair for I believe it was seven years, and I led the fundraising part of the community agenda to get the Terwillegar community rec centre advocated for and funded. The community added a diving tower in the centre due to our community advocacy and fundraising. I've also been active in the Edmonton Riverbend Conservative Association, which is, of course, the federal Conservative organization. We just went through, about two years ago, a similar boundary/borders discussion. I wasn't the key person in that, but I was involved in the formulating of the position and so on. I've been active in many other formal and informal groups in the community. I'll just refer to the topics I bring up in the letter. Please don't hesitate to ask any questions or interrupt. It's all good.

Again, this letter is from the Edmonton-Whitemud PC Association. Our hope is that as much as possible the existing Edmonton-Whitemud boundaries can be maintained. The reason for this is that the Edmonton-Riverbend and Terwillegar neighbourhoods are somewhat unique, in our opinion, in the city of Edmonton. It's kind of evolved and grown organically from the oldest neighbourhoods, Brookside and Brander Gardens, to the new ones, and partly because of geographical separation with the ravine and the river and the commonality of people's activities within the

neighbourhood, basically staying within those boundaries to a very large extent, to my knowledge it's always been a separate electoral area at all levels. I believe that in the distant past civically, when the neighbourhood was smaller, it was merged in with the neighbourhoods to the east, more by Southgate and so on. Certainly, in my experience, living in the neighbourhood since 1994, broadly speaking, the ravine and the river and then extending south as the community grew south have been the boundaries for the civic, the provincial, and the federal areas, give or take some of the other, newer neighbourhoods coming and going as growth happened. The first point there refers to that.

Having been a very active person in the community league structure in the neighbourhood, I can speak from experience that having singular voices at those three levels of government has made a real impact in the various agendas that we've had over the years. The current hot topic, which is sorely needed and caused me to be very tight for time today, was transportation. We're in the middle of, hopefully, strong community advocacy for transportation issues, and this is just the latest in many. The rec centre is another one. Schools are a fairly recent one, of course.

4:45

My point is that having single representation for the councillor, MLA, and the MP, who have in the past worked together very effectively in our experience and meet at the area council meetings virtually every time that they are able to, has worked very, very well in terms of getting our message across and eventually getting to our goals. Again, the rec centre is the classic example.

The other thing the second bullet refers to is the fact that the established community leagues, especially Riverbend, have had a very large role in helping the starter and the junior community leagues in the neighbourhood come along. The example right now is the Riverbend league, which began, I think, in '70 or '71, before I was involved, of course, and has aided and grown the Brookview Community League, the Ridge Community League, Whitemud Oaks, and most recently the Terwillegar Community League, which, of course, is the Terwillegar Towne neighbourhood and South Terwillegar neighbourhood.

Right as we speak, we have very strong community leagues in the older, more established parts of the neighbourhood and up-and-coming, younger family neighbourhoods in the south, that are benefiting very much from the sharing of resources through the area council and shared functions and event planning and so on with the very strong, very established older leagues. Again, I had an opportunity to be a part of that over my active community years and continue to, and it makes a real difference.

Because of the geographical and the town-within-a-city nature of the Edmonton Riverbend and Terwillegar communities it would be a shame, in our opinion – and I wear my many hats here – to cut that in half or something. We understand that population growth is an issue and that our riding, according to the number that I saw, is roughly 10,000, 11,000 over the average or mean that I believe the goal is. Obviously, there's no easy answer. To slice our community down the middle and join us as part of other ones to the east and west, I would advocate, would be a big mistake because we would become a split neighbourhood. Although we would function as we do now, the political representation at the provincial level at least would be diluted because perhaps messages to the other sides of the ravine and river, that our political reps would be listening to, of course, as well, might take precedence over our discussions. Transportation is the key issue that we think of when we say these things. Again, you know, the community leagues, the area council, the community newspapers have evolved and in a planned way have shared the neighbourhood in terms of the representation

by the leagues and the ranges of the newspapers and all those things. It's very much, again, a town within a city, and those of us that have been active there and helped to build and grow it and also work on the political side of things, as I've started to do, feel that it would be a real shame to compromise that. Our fear is that by slicing things drastically, it would do that.

Understanding that the numbers are big, what do we do? The consensus that we have is that, painful as it would be, the South Terwillegar neighbourhood, which is a very large population – I believe it's 8,500, which I got out of the 2014 census, and it would have grown, I'm guessing, by a thousand or more since then – would accomplish the goal that I believe you're after, which is to bring us down by, you know, roughly 10,000 to kind of the median value. I'm not an expert on the numbers that you're shooting for, but painful as it would be to separate that younger, developing area out of our kind of political provincial representation, that's the only thing that really works without really chopping the neighbourhood up drastically.

Other points that I refer to in the letter: virtually every neighbourhood function – soccer, hockey, school boundaries, neighbourhood promotions of things like our Southwest Edmonton Farmers' Market, the TRAC 10k community run, which I actually founded, and the Art in Our Park community arts festival in the fall – is delineated within the ravine and river boundaries, and it's worked well.

Having a sole representative, Dr. Bob Turner at this point in time, has been really handy because all the leagues can speak to him when he comes out to our area council meetings on shared issues. Again, the fear is that if we had two or perhaps three people representing all those neighbourhoods and community leagues, our message would be lost amongst other leagues and neighbourhoods in other portions of the city. Not to take away from the effectiveness of our representation, but I have seen it where we have that single voice, and they become a strong advocate and are able to push our agenda forward in those areas.

As I mentioned, we just went through the ward 9 function. In fact, what the city proposed there was to take the Brookside neighbourhood, which is colloquially known as old Riverbend – it's the original Riverbend neighbourhood – and put it over to the communities to the east, on the other side of Whitemud ravine, because that would have solved the numbers problem that they were seeing, similar to what you're seeing. On behalf of the Riverbend Community League I did a similar letter and statement and advocated for them to keep Brookside in with the greater community. In fact, it was the original community there. At the end of the day, the city did agree with that and achieved their numbers split by taking some of the brand new communities in the central south – Blackmud, MacEwan, Rutherford, those areas down there – and merging them in with the central south areas like Southgate, Greenfield, Blue Quill, and so on.

In that instance, these same talking points with respect to neighbourhood cohesiveness and representation carried the day, and I would advocate again that we keep that in mind. If I could wave a magic wand, we would not break it up at all because, in fact, the South Terwillegar and the Terwillegar neighbourhoods are key, young family, growing neighbourhoods for us, are very vibrant, and need our assistance, quite frankly, in a community-building phase because so many of those young families have both working parents. They're kind of starting out and busy with their young kids and sports and so on, and they're not able to build a community just on their own, as they can with the support and advocacy of the older, more established neighbourhoods. Riverbend, Brookview, and the Ridge community leagues would be that. So if the change has to happen, I would regretfully or painfully say that carving off

one of the new neighbourhoods would have less impact on the neighbourhood as a whole although it would still be a mistake, in my opinion.

I've kind of covered off my points that I wished to raise there. We've always been very well served, geographically delineated as we are now, and I would really advocate that as little change as possible happens to that, understanding that you've got tough decisions to make.

Thank you for listening. I don't know if you have any questions or comments.

The Chair: Yes. I'll start off the questioning. Well, I might have happy news for you. Looking at our list of estimated constituency sizes, Edmonton-Whitemud is at 52,574. That's only about 3,000 above the provincial average, not 10,000. Now, these figures are going to be adjusted February 8, when Statistics Canada releases the census figures from 2016, but I'm told that the Alberta Treasury Board provided us with this estimated figure based on the 2016 municipal census. So I'm not sure what the explanation is for the variation in numbers, but it looks to me like you're maybe 6 or 7 per cent over the provincial average. Knowing that and mindful of your view that if we had to take something out, the newer neighbourhoods to the south would be the best target, have you anything to say to modify your view that it should be South Terwillegar to go?

Mr. Rumbold: Yes. Thanks for that. What I did, just to give you background, is I went to the city website. Well, the data they had was the 2014 census data, and knowing all the neighbourhoods, I simply put the numbers in that they showed, and the total was 51,822. So it appears to have grown, you know, about 700 and some. South Terwillegar: I showed it as about 9,000 people. That's more than would be needed to be removed. Mactaggart is 2,117, and it would have been growing also. It's the latest, newest neighbourhood in the riding. It is probably 2,500 or 3,000 now, I'm guessing, and that would accomplish the goal.

Again, regrettably, I've got friends and neighbours there. I feel bad about throwing them under the bus, so to speak, but that would accomplish the goal if the goal is around 50,000ish. The 42,000, 43,000 number I saw published is kind of the median across the province?

4:55

The Chair: It's 48,800.

Mr. Rumbold: Oh, okay. I just googled it. Okay. That's good to know. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay, so it's not . . .

Ms Munn: You might have been dealing with the 2010 number.

The Chair: Yeah, the 2010 number was 40,800.

Mr. Rumbold: Okay. There was a whole bunch of stuff when I googled it. Again, I didn't know till about 9 or 10 this morning that I was going to be here.

The Chair: Sure. No, no. This has been very helpful, actually, because we're always interested in people who can comment specifically on their constituencies because, of course, we don't have intimate knowledge of every one of the 87 constituencies.

In your work, your extensive volunteer work in the city, have you any other observations, specifically, about any other constituency that you might have worked with?

Mr. Rumbold: You know, most of my community involvement, so to speak, is weighted towards APEGA, which is an engineering association. I'm 25 years active with them, and that, of course, has no engagement here. Almost all my community work has been within the boundaries of the neighbourhood, and in fact that's kind of telling because it's a strong set of community leagues now. Riverbend has kind of been the granddaddy, so to speak, and the other ones in my active years since '02 are coming along and looking at building buildings and going from barely having quorum at their AGMs to engaging with many young families and so on. So, no, I don't have extensive experience outside of the Riverbend, Terwillegar neighbourhoods.

The one thing I do have is that I was active with the Southwest Area Council – SWAC they call it – and that's the area council which originally covered everything from the river to the east of Calgary Trail and the Saskatchewan river, including all the Riverbend neighbourhoods, back in the day when there were just a few of them, and then going over to Southgate and everything to Calgary Trail. What happened was that TRAC, the Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council, like I said, was set up in '01 and then took over, essentially, our neighbourhoods. We chose in Riverbend to kind of stay involved on the periphery of SWAC for a couple of reasons. One, they had a casino, and we were able to access casino funds, which was helpful to us because we have two buildings and ongoing capital needs and maintenance needs. We did find that we were able to help them with advocacy, but that's a few meetings compared to the dozens or more that I've had in the neighbourhood.

Again, not to berate it, but that speaks to – the focus within the neighbourhood is really within the neighbourhood, and I have the sense that the ravine and, for sure, the river are more than just a geographical boundary. It's kind of like our activities and sports and the parents that you get to know through your kids' activities and schools and things. It's generally all within the hub. Until the kids get into the midget and older levels, they don't even really play on the teams with other kids from other neighbourhoods. Now, that's just a very specific example, but it really is a unique thing. If you go to the TRAC website, they talk about the vision of a town within a city, and I've always felt that that was very apt.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions from any of the other councillors?

Mr. McLeod: You were talking about – there are actually in those newer neighbourhoods well-established community associations or community leagues?

Mr. Rumbold: Well, they're beginning, starting. In Terwillegar Towne, which is known as Terwillegar, and South Terwillegar, which is just a neighbourhood – like, you can't tell the difference when you're driving through. It's just a line on a map. They have a community league which is about 10 years old. If I said that they're well established, that was erroneous on my part. They are getting on their feet. They are very much I don't want to say dependent, but we're very much able in the older leagues and through the Arts Council to support and help them. The Arts Council has an office in the Terwillegar rec centre, which is one of the advocacy things that we were successful with with the city, and we sell their memberships through that office, for example, and when people want to know when the swim times are for the free community memberships and stuff like that – so if I said that they're strong, I apologize.

They're able to tap into the strong resources of the community because of the infrastructure of older, vibrant community leagues such as Riverbend and Brookview and the Ridge and so on. In fact,

they have taken an active role in the roster of community events. We kind of have a year-round calendar now. Riverbend has a couple of marquee events in the community in the fall, and the winter festival is one. Terwillegar does the Canada Day thing. The Ridge does New Year's Eve fireworks and a summer thing. Brookview does, just before Christmas, I think they call it their winter festival. Through the kind of working together of the neighbourhoods – that's a good example of where we've worked together.

The leagues like Terwillegar are very much – I don't want to say struggling – having a real hard time getting excitement built and getting people to come out because there are so many demands on the young families' time. The older leagues tend to have people like myself in their 40s and 50s with teenagers or grown kids and more time and sometimes more resources to devote to community activities.

It was a long answer. I'm sorry.

Mr. McLeod: But if you took that group and moved it south, would they lose that?

Mr. Rumbold: It would be some dilution, I think, yeah. Not so much at the community building level: they would stay in the area council because that has no . . .

Mr. McLeod: No. It doesn't have any bearing.

Mr. Rumbold: But the political representation aspect: I would feel that there would be a loss. Actually, it would be minimized there versus an older neighbourhood because they do have things in common with the neighbourhoods in Edmonton-South West riding right now. You know, compared to those neighbourhoods, they are the older ones but only by five years or something, so the impact would be less there. That's why I reluctantly threw that out there.

As far as the functioning of the Arts Council, what would happen is that Dr. Turner and Stephen Mandel and then Dave Hancock before him, going back, who actively attend and participate in the functioning of the area council and the leagues when they can, would probably still do that, but they wouldn't be advocating and speaking for those neighbourhoods anymore. I wouldn't be so sure that, say, Terwillegar or Magrath or Mactaggart, if they were separated out, wouldn't be kind of lost, I'll say, as part of 10 other neighbourhoods that are represented by I think it's Thomas Dang right now. No comment on Mr. Dang at all. But they would become a small piece of another kind of bigger neighbourhood structure as opposed to kind of where we always have evolved to. Tough choices.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you.

Mr. Rumbold: Of course, yeah. Thank you.

Mrs. Day: Thank you for your presentation. It's a really good look at a community – and people spoke to that today a few times, about the importance of community – and contiguity, holding those together and valuing those. Then, of course, the other side of the coin is doing the numbers, right?

We talked about: how do we access more of you, more people like you in the city? If we don't, maybe recommend to the next commission to have spokespeople like yourself, who can come and talk to us about: where are those communities? I don't think it's anybody's goal ever, you know, to cut something in half. I mean, it's not intentional, but if you don't have the information – and there are some, as you say, natural boundaries, but there's so much more information about communities.

I must say that your community sounds very, very fortunate to have people like yourselves and so much going on for it. It's well done and a great example. Perhaps some day you'll be mentoring other areas of the city to duplicate what you've done there. Yeah.

Is there a community league list or, like, other stakeholders that we could reach out to in a natural way?

Mr. Rumbold: Yeah. Absolutely. I would recommend that letter that I got in my role through Edmonton-Whitemud and filed away until this morning, unfortunately. I would recommend going to the community leagues and the area councils.

Mrs. Day: So the city of Edmonton would have a community league list and contact people?

Mr. Rumbold: Yeah, the city would. What I would say is: go to the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues' site. It's the umbrella organization for all the 80 or 90 community leagues in Edmonton. They do get some funding from the city, but they are a separate entity. In fact, you might want to get representation from them because they would not have such a neighbourhood focus; they would have a broad, city focus. So efcl.org is their website, and they also could introduce you or tap you into the area councils. TRAC, which I keep referring to, is the classic example because it does advocate for a geographical corner of the city. Then there's SWAC. Mill Woods has MCARFA – I'm not sure what it stands for – and it's all the community leagues of Mill Woods.

5:05

Mrs. Day: So there are area councils in each quadrant of the city.

Mr. Rumbold: Yeah. Exactly.

Mrs. Day: Great.

Mr. Rumbold: There's about a dozen of them or so. Yeah. I think that would be a great thing because you'll get a different perspective than you might from just political people.

I thank you for listening to me talking that way because, obviously, the letter says, you know, Edmonton-Whitemud and stuff, but I think that if Riverbend Community League had a chance or maybe thought of it, they would probably advocate for a similar message. I know that because I was the president for three years. I'm a civics director now, actually, now that I think about it, so I do advocate for intergovernmental stuff, mostly within the city, of course.

Mrs. Day: Great.

The Chair: It's not too late in your work to invite other community leagues to make written submissions because we're accepting written submissions until February 8, and it would be, speaking for myself, very helpful to have specific input such as the input you gave on: if we had to reduce your community league by 6 per cent, which part would be the most logical choice? We're at the greatest risk of not making wise decisions there because we don't have specific knowledge. You've now given us that knowledge with regard to Whitemud, but there are many constituencies here on our list where nobody has come forward specifically. Not to fault them, but, you know, it just happened to be that way. I know that Edmonton has a very active community league network, so if you can tap into that and ask people to make written submissions by the 8th, it would really help us.

Mr. Rumbold: So that's the 8th of March?

The Chair: The 8th of February.

Mr. Rumbold: Sorry. February.

The Chair: It's abebc.ca. They can make written submissions right on the website, or they could e-mail it to us or snail-mail it to us. There's a variety of different options. It doesn't have to be fancy. It doesn't have to be on letterhead. It doesn't have to be long. Of course, they're invited to say whatever they want about boundaries, but it would be really helpful if they would talk about: if they had to have variations, what do they see those variations – what would work best for them?

Mr. Rumbold: Yeah. Perfect. Thanks for that idea. I'm actually working with the president of TRAC right now. This person has made a decision to run for the upcoming ward 9 election, on October 16, because Bryan Anderson has announced he's going to retire. Long story short, I'll go to the leagues which I have connections with and the area council, TRAC, and just make a little

blanket e-mail to them all saying: know that you can do this, and it's a good idea to do it . . .

The Chair: It would be really helpful. Yeah.

Mr. Rumbold: . . . because the panel is very receptive.

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Rumbold: Yeah. I will definitely do that.

You know, unless there's anything else, I'd pretty much like to thank you for fitting me in today.

The Chair: Thank you. No. This has been terrific.

Mr. Rumbold: Yeah. Thank you for saying that.

The Chair: Thanks.

That brings us to the end of the day. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for attending.

[The hearing adjourned at 5:08 p.m.]

