



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

St. Paul

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1 p.m.

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Electoral Boundaries Commission

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Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – St. Paul

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Gene Sobolewski, Mayor, Town of Bonnyville

Steve Upham, Reeve, County of St. Paul

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[Justice Bielby in the chair]

The Chair: Hello, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks very much for coming out today to this meeting of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I'm Justice Myra Bielby. I'm a judge of the Court of Appeal of Alberta, but at the moment I'm also chair of the Alberta's Electoral Boundaries Commission. Let me introduce the other members of the commission: at my far left Jean Munn of Calgary, then we have Laurie Livingstone, also of Calgary, on my far right Gwen Day of Carstairs, and then Bruce McLeod of Acme.

Over the past few weeks, ever since some of our publicity started getting out there, I've had a number of people ask me about the Electoral Boundaries Commission and what it is and why we're having it now. So I thought I'd start out with a thumbnail answer to those questions. This commission has been created to research and then make recommendations to the 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. Representation based on population is a fundamental democratic principle. The commission's work is particularly needed now because Alberta has experienced a huge change in population since the time of the last Electoral Boundaries Commission, about eight years ago. Our population has increased by net more than 20 per cent since 2010, notwithstanding the recent economic climate.

Alberta has 87 provincial constituencies. In the past, the last time the commission sat, the Legislature created four new constituencies to help deal with some of the new population that had then moved into the province. This time that didn't happen. We are left with the existing number of 87. So this group, the five commissioners, have no power to increase or decrease that number. Our obligation is to look at the current map of Alberta's provincial constituencies, which is right behind me here, and make recommendations as to how the lines might be changed to bring the population of each constituency closer to the provincial average after taking into consideration a number of other factors that I'll talk about.

Needless to say, each of the 87 constituencies has one MLA, and the MLA is chosen by the voters who vote in every provincial election. As I said a moment ago, our population has increased by over 800,000 people since 2010, more than 20 per cent. Eight years ago, in 2010, our average constituency size in Alberta was about 40,880 people, but today it's estimated that our average size is 48,884, about 8,000 people more per constituency. Statistics Canada has announced its intention to release the 2016 census figures showing our population on February 8. Once we get those figures, we'll revise this estimated figure into the correct figure shown on the census, but I'm not expecting that there will be that much change.

We've brought with us a number of maps, not just the one behind us but the one showing this particular constituency, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, at the back, Bonnyville-Cold Lake, and then maps showing the constituencies around St. Paul as well. Now, on the maps the blue number and the blue percentage show the number of people who lived in the constituency in 2010 and the difference in population percentagewise from the provincial average. For example, last time this constituency had 38,489 people. You were about 6 per cent below the provincial average. But based on the estimates that the Alberta Treasury Board has provided, the population now is 38,260 people, a very slight drop since the last time, but you're now 22 per cent below the provincial average.

Our population growth hasn't been the same in each constituency. That's because 8,000 people haven't moved in equal

numbers to each constituency. The majority of them have moved to either the larger cities or to Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Red Deer. While almost all of our constituencies have grown to a degree, some have grown much faster than others. So today our population ranges from an estimated 25,192 in our smallest constituency by population to 79,034, almost twice the provincial average, in our largest constituency. As I say, that variation has arisen because people have moved into constituencies in unequal numbers.

Eight years ago when the Electoral Boundaries Commission made its recommendations, it led to 87 per cent of the provincial constituencies being within 10 per cent of the provincial average. The Legislature passed legislation to enact that, and that's how we got our current constituency size today.

The commission's job is to make recommendations to the Legislature as to how it should enact legislation to bring us back in line with the provincial average, if you like. Our job is to make recommendations to the Legislature as to where and how constituency boundaries should be moved to ensure that each Albertan has effective representation by their MLA.

In doing that, we're obliged to follow a piece of legislation enacted by the province in 2009, called the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. It sets up the commission, and it constituted us. It also sends some directions, things we have to consider in addition to population when we're going about our work and constituting our recommendations.

So we're not just going to make recommendations as to relative population; we're also to take into account common community interests and organizations, including those of First Nation reserves and Métis settlements, existing communities and neighbourhood boundaries in Edmonton and Calgary, existing municipal boundaries. So we're going to try to not put a constituency boundary right through the middle of a town or village in Alberta; we're going to try to get all of the towns and villages within one constituency or the other if we have to move a boundary. We'll have the opportunity to correct some mistakes that were brought to our attention from what happened in 2010, when the commission then didn't achieve that goal, and sometimes they cut things in half that they didn't intend to do. We're going to try to clean that up.

Another thing that we're to consider is geographical features that suggest natural boundaries like, for example, the province line that we share with Saskatchewan. Well, obviously, we can't go beyond that. We're also to consider things like highways and rivers and use those to be boundaries of a constituency, where available. I assume that means that the Legislature thought that people intuitively might better understand where their constituency lay if they knew it was bounded on one side by one thing or another.

But this isn't a closed list. We're here because there are other things that you may think we should consider in making recommendations to adjust constituency boundaries in Alberta, and we want to hear from you. Over the next few weeks the commission will hold public hearings throughout the province to seek community input to assist us in developing the 87 recommendations that we'll be making, one for each constituency in the province.

My thanks to those who have registered to make an oral presentation today. Registration was open online. We're hoping to have time at the end to allow a couple of other presenters to say what they have to say, but we are due in Wainwright at 7 o'clock tonight, so we have to keep that in mind, too, in regard to when we leave here today. Everybody will be limited to 10 minutes for their presentation, and then there may be some questions, maybe five minutes of questioning from the commissioners on your presentation.

In addition to the comments that we've received at oral hearings like this one, we've invited written submissions. I'm pleased to say that we've received, actually, an overwhelming number of written submissions. As of Friday we had 350 written submissions, and last time they had 500 in the whole year that they did their work, so we're well ahead of that. I think that's true in part because we now have a variety of ways that you can make a written submission. The easiest, perhaps, is to go onto our website, www.abebc.ca, and there's a place there where you can write in your comments. Another option is to e-mail it into us. We've got a Twitter account, a YouTube account, a Facebook account, and, of course, we're accepting submissions by post.

1:10

We'll consider each of those submissions, written and oral, in preparing our interim report, which has to be filed with the Legislature by May 31, 2017. That report will be published – it'll be put on our website; I'm sure it'll be put on the Legislature's website – and it will make specific recommendations as to the size, boundaries, and name of each of our 87 constituencies. That doesn't mean that we're going to be recommending change to all of them or most of them, but it will make a specific recommendation for each constituency.

After that report is made public, there will be a second opportunity for you to make written submissions or come to a public hearing. We're going to have a second round of public hearings in late July and early August all around the province. I understand that sometimes people find it easier to respond to a specific recommendation or suggestion than to comment in general about an idea. So, hopefully, we'll get some good suggestions then, good comment on our draft recommendations.

The commission will then take all of that into consideration once again and will prepare a final report, which we have to file with the Legislature by October 31 of this year. The Legislature will then consider that report and may well enact legislation accepting those recommendations and changing the boundaries accordingly. In the past the Legislature has always accepted the recommendations of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, the majority recommendation, so we're hopeful that that will happen for us as well.

Equality or parity of population is not our only consideration, and I want to stress that. While our courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada, have interpreted our legislation as meaning that each one of us has the right not to have the political strength or value of our vote unduly diluted, our legislation permits variances, where necessary, of up to 25 per cent above average and for a maximum of four constituencies up to 50 per cent below average. Last time, as I say, the recommendation saw 87 per cent of the constituencies of Alberta come in within 10 per cent of the provincial average. Almost half of them were within 5 per cent of the provincial average.

If you look at the maps around you, you can see that virtually all of the constituencies in this area are well below the provincial average. Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills is now 22 per cent below the provincial average population; Bonnyville-Cold Lake, 19 per cent; and Vermilion-Lloydminster, 12 per cent. That doesn't mean that there will necessarily be changes, but it means that there may be changes, and that's why we're here. We don't want to make mistakes. We want to hear from you as to where, if it's necessary to make change, those changes should go.

In summary, legal interpretations of our legislation direct us, the commission, to consider the actual current population size of a constituency, compare it to the average of 48,800, and then decide if there's any acceptable reason not to move the boundaries in or

out to increase or reduce constituency size until something closer to that average number is reached.

We're here today. We have a number of registered speakers. In addition to anything you might have prepared to say, at the end of each of your presentations I'll ask you about what specific ideas you have, if any, about moving the boundaries of the Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills constituency. You don't have to say anything, but it would be really helpful if you could think about that so that if we find that we have to do something, we know the right way to do it in the attitudes and minds of the people who actually live here.

Please also be aware that these meetings are being recorded by our staff from *Alberta Hansard*. They're going to be completely recorded. The oral recording of this will be up on our website in a couple of days, and a written transcript will also be available on our website in a couple of days. So everything you say here is going to be recorded and made public, just so there are no surprises there.

I'll call on Steve Upham, who's the first registered speaker. It would be great if as each speaker started their remarks, you told us what constituency you reside in.

Mr. Upham: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Steve Upham. I'm the reeve of the county of St. Paul so, therefore, from the Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills constituency. First and foremost, I want to thank the commission for inviting the county of St. Paul here today. The county strongly believes that the commission's work is vital to the democratic process, and we are pleased to provide our comments for your consideration.

Unlike previous Electoral Boundaries Commissions that were tasked with the allocation of additional seats to the Legislature, the current commission has not been afforded this ability. It is noteworthy that the reallocation of electoral boundaries is a zero-sum game whereby any redistribution of seats added to Alberta's urban communities is a direct loss for Alberta's rural communities.

The very core of Canadian representative democracy is based around the concept of an electoral district, which allows for efficient governance by a sufficiently small number of people on behalf of a larger group. Without electoral districts, Canadian democracy as we know it does not function. Simply, electoral districts are a necessary mechanism to achieve effective representation.

Now, effective representation can mean different things to different people. For example, there's a theoretical argument that representation should mean one person, one vote and that pure equality of voting power should be a desired aim; in other words, electoral districts should be all the same size. Under this theory the unequal size of electoral districts precludes Albertans from enjoying equal democratic representation by population. The underlying assumption of this argument is that equal electoral district size guarantees efficient and effective representation. Given this assumption, as large cities and towns grow, we would expect to see electoral districts subtracted from rural Alberta and added to larger metropolitan centres. There will always be a competing struggle to achieve relative voter parity and to attain effective representation when trying to predict trends in population growth.

This strict focus on population alone also risks overlooking a myriad of other critical factors that determine effective representation. The county of St. Paul strongly believes that representing a rural riding is fundamentally different from representing an urban one and that to overlook these core differences is to ignore important aspects of effective representation. First, rural ridings are much larger geographically and more sparsely populated when compared to their urban counterparts. There are ridings in Alberta that are bigger than the Netherlands and cover tens of thousands of square kilometres. Given the distribution of residents across

Alberta's landscape and the desire to achieve relative parity of voting power, many urban ridings are significantly smaller than Alberta's rural districts in terms of land mass.

This creates numerous challenges for rural Members of the Legislative Assembly as they may have to travel considerable distances to attend community events and listen to constituent concerns. This also means that rural MLAs must spend significantly more money than urban MLAs to carry out their representative functions. The inverse is also true for constituents to connect directly with an MLA's constituency office. In some instances they must travel hundreds of kilometres away. For example, in Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills some residents are more than two hours from their local constituency office, which means that a full day of work must be used simply to visit an MLA's office. Conversely, many urban residents can drive to their MLA's office or walk in 15 minutes or less. Even as technology advances, many rural residents are required to use long-distance calling to reach their MLA, and many rural and remote residents lack the high-speed broadband Internet infrastructure necessary to use e-mail or other electronic means of communication.

The county generally recognizes that this is a reality of rural life but also wants to emphasize the need to consider relative equity in the effort required to meet with MLAs. Keeping electoral districts to a reasonable size will also ensure that intangible social and cultural values can be represented by an MLA who understands them.

It also noteworthy that larger rural ridings tend to have multiple municipalities represented within their boundaries. Currently 56 of the 87 electoral districts in Alberta only include one municipality. Conversely, the riding of Whitecourt-Ste. Anne has 17 municipalities within its boundaries. There are many similar examples in rural electoral districts across Alberta. With municipalities having unique priorities, it places a large burden on the MLA in a rural riding to understand each municipality's positions on important issues and help them work toward their goals. Municipalities are an important part of the province as they govern over every resident and require a significant amount of government funding.

1:20

It is the county's position that the current electoral boundaries already present significant representative challenges and that expanding the boundaries of Alberta's largest ridings will only serve to exacerbate the existing challenges facing constituents and their elected representatives. Simply, size does matter. As the size of a riding grows, so do the barriers to effective representation.

It is also noteworthy that the Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills riding contains two important minority populations that have unique servicing needs. Many Franco-Albertans reside in this riding and rely on the provincial government to help provide services and promote the francophone culture. As well, our riding is home to many aboriginal Albertans. There have been significant efforts by the government of Alberta and government of Canada to improve relationships with our aboriginal citizens, and ensuring effective representation is an important step towards this goal. Enlarging ridings serves to weaken these minority groups' ties to their MLA.

Rural ridings face unique representative challenges that are not faced in urban ridings. The county of St. Paul strongly believes that informed commentary, academic research, judicial doctrine, court decisions, provincial and territorial statutes, and Alberta history, as outlined in our submission, successfully refute the concept of voter parity when creating electoral boundaries and justify deviation from strict voter equality.

The county encourages the commission to give full and generous consideration to these statements and rationale when submitting their final report. The drawing of electoral boundaries has penetrating and long-lasting implications for the quality of representation for Albertans. We must preserve the voices of rural Albertans, not diminish them.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have some questions, I'm sure. I always kick off by asking the same question. I think it's because I want to be able to say to everyone that I've asked this question of every presenter. That's the spirit it's coming from. Please know that we haven't made any decisions at all. But you hit the nail on the head when you identified some of the things that we've had to consider. Our task is, as I said earlier, that we start with the average number, we compare the number in a given constituency, and we ask ourselves whether factors exist that justify not making a change or making some kind of change.

Without saying that we've made any decisions, because we haven't, if we had to change the barriers of Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills to increase its size, to increase the population that the MLA would represent from this constituency, do you have any thoughts as to how that should happen? Now, we look at the map here, and I see that it can't move east to the degree that it's bounding Saskatchewan there, obviously. If we wanted to make it grow, we could incorporate, really, any of the other constituencies all around it: Bonnyville-Cold Lake, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater, Vermilion-Lloydminster, et cetera. Do you have any thoughts as to where that boundary should move?

Mr. Upham: No, not really because I think, you know, that our diversity is such that our MLA has an arduous task representing equally and effectively the area that he has to represent. I think we have enough uniquenesses that this is one that's very tough to move. That would be our feeling.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Any other questions?

Ms Livingstone: Last week we were up in Peace River, and we heard from the MLA there, who also has a geographically fairly large constituency, that she felt that the challenges of the MLAs who have large constituencies could be overcome with additional resources for things like a second constituency office. Are the issues your MLA faces resource ones or something that could be overcome with resources?

Mr. Upham: I think that it's a demographic thing just because of the makeup of our community. I touched on the ethnic diversity of the community. It takes a lot of effort and a lot of time to represent those different groups. I think the way we're stretched long and thin does present challenges. We're a lot different from a square riding, right? Being long and narrow means that it's incredible mileage between the north end and the south end. We're four times longer than we are wide, right? So there are some challenges in that makeup, you know, that can exacerbate the situation we're in.

Yeah. A second constituency office possibly, but our major centres – Lac La Biche is our north centre, I guess, a major centre. I guess that could be part of the conversation, but I think we sense that we have that uniqueness that sets us apart, that, I guess, doesn't leave us above massaging. You know, we feel that we're stressed at this point.

Mr. McLeod: A quick question. Grab your crystal ball. Looking out, what's the growth? Do you see any growth in the population within St. Paul and the county?

Mr. Upham: You can best tell by the price of oil. I mean, we've seen growth when oil has been good – right? – because we are a shadow population for the Bonnyville-Cold Lake development that runs down the east side of our county. That has created our population growth. From a rural standpoint, you know, we're like most rural ridings. We're pretty stagnant. We do have one really good-sized First Nation within our boundary that, obviously, has population growth. I don't think they're growing big enough to counteract rural attrition. I mean, I think it helps to keep us stable, but definitely our growth comes from people moving in for work opportunities, job and business opportunities.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you.

The Chair: Sorry. Where did you say the oil and gas effect is?

Mr. Upham: Down the east side of our county. Basically, the east half of our county has got a strong resource connection. The west half or the west two-thirds is strictly arable, agricultural, you know, and First Nations.

The Chair: Sure. I'm guessing that your county doesn't just totally match the boundaries of the constituency. Looking at our constituency map, would that oil and gas growth be on the east side of the entire constituency or just on the southern part of the constituency?

Mr. Upham: The southern, yeah. I would say that if you drew a line down, took the east 30 per cent on the main north-south block there and moved that across, that would be resource, and maybe Lac La Biche north, maybe all of that area – Lac La Biche north tends to be resource. Then once you get to the south half and the west two-thirds, it would be more agricultural, First Nations.

The Chair: Thanks.

Mrs. Day: Thank you for your presentation. In some of the other presentations people have said that with today's technology and telephone access, driving two hours to see face to face your MLA is a moot issue. I just wanted to put that to you and ask if you see it different in your region, people's ideal of sitting down with their MLA or for the MLA to be at different events around the constituency.

Mr. Upham: Yeah, I would agree that that's made life a lot easier. I think that with the uniquenesses that there are within our constituency, you know, for the MLA to get out is key, as key as to have the constituent come in. I think you can't always capture that with a high-speed connection or a cellphone, right? I think that because we're so diverse, that does give us some unique challenges. Yeah, I would agree absolutely that some connectivity has helped a lot, but, still, getting your representative out is a counterpoint to that or the other side of that coin.

Mrs. Day: You still hope to see him in person or her in person?

Mr. Upham: Yeah. I think there are times where the MLA just needs to go out to understand. I know myself that as reeve I've got 145 kilometres from east to west and 65 from north to south, and it's quite regular that I make a trip just to see what the issue is and try and deal with it from first-hand knowledge rather than word of mouth, you know, what came out at the coffee shop.

Mrs. Day: Okay. Great. Thank you.

The Chair: Anything else?

Ms Munn: I have no questions.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks so much, sir.

Mr. Upham: Thank you very much.

1:30

The Chair: Okay. We'll go on to Craig Copeland. Mr. Copeland, if you could let us know which constituency you live in when you start, that'd be great.

Mr. Copeland: All right. Good afternoon. Craig Copeland, mayor of the city of Cold Lake in good old Bonnyville-Cold Lake, number 52 constituency. For those that haven't been to our city before, we're sitting on the jewel of the north. Cold Lake is the seventh-largest lake in Alberta. We're the bedroom community of the oil patch, and we don't have a lot of industrial buildings, et cetera, for the oil patch in our community. We're basically the retail area for a wide area. Walmart does a great job of doing the census for you in terms of the number of shoppers coming to your community. Our radius is about an hour and a half, coming to Cold Lake to shop. We're also home to Canada's largest fighter base, with 4 Wing Cold Lake.

My presentation is going to be very similar to what I said a few years ago to the federal commission on boundaries. If you look at the map, a strange geographical land issue above the 52 number there on the map is an amazing piece of real estate called the air weapons range. For whatever reason back in time, the air weapons range was not part of the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency. If you're the wing commander and you're lifting off the strip at 4 Wing, your planes are fully engaged. That's a unique airspace, and the men and women fly into the range to do their manoeuvres and the training. We have the largest military exercise in all of Canada with Maple Flag coming in. Nobody lives in the air weapons range except for the moose and the deer, et cetera, but it's home to amazing military installations on that site, something that we and all Canadians should be really proud of. It's a unique space that the feds lease off the province. The wing commander controls the access to the air weapons range in terms of oil development.

It's always been odd that that area wasn't part of the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency, so I encourage the commission to look at the fact that if you're the wing commander – put your hat on – you now have to work with two different MLAs. It's not a big issue, but if we're going to do housekeeping and not only, you know, look at these things, this is what the federal commission looked at as an easy – it made sense to them.

I encourage you to look at that closely in terms of the oil companies. They get access in there, and it's one of Alberta's, you know, huge industrial plays up there. You've got Cenovus with Foster Creek, and you've got CNRL up there also. You have a lot of the pipelines going from the Conklin area coming down through the air weapons range and coming to La Corey, which is in the constituency, and from there oil either goes down to Hardisty or out toward Edmonton, so it's a major play. The oil companies have to go to the wing commander to gain access on that site because a couple of thousand people work there every day, and you can imagine that if they're dropping live bombs, you kind of want to know where people are working.

You know, our point, really, is to see that the commission brings the air weapons range into the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency as sort of a top priority from the city of Cold Lake's perspective.

We talked about this on Tuesday at council, so representing the city as I am, it's of sort of real takeaway importance for us.

In terms of helping you answer some of the questions that Steve answered, certainly I share a lot of Steve's thoughts on – he did a great job on presenting how difficult it is for a rural MLA. Sure, technology is wonderful. It sometimes makes your life, if you're a municipal politician or a provincial politician or a federal politician, very easy, doing your job, but there's nothing like a face-to-face.

I appreciate that the cities of Edmonton and Calgary feel that they need to have equal representation, but I encourage you to talk to the former MLAs, you know, guys like Doug Griffiths, when you go down to Wainwright. Talk to him about trying to service so many municipalities, especially municipal councillors and mayors and Reeves, because we can tie them up for days with all our problems. There has to be some play, allowance. One equal vote for everybody across Alberta is going to be very difficult because everyone goes to the urbans to live now, yet the rurals are really providing the lifeline for all of Alberta.

As Steve mentioned – he did a great job – our area, whether it's the Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills constituency or the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency and Fort McMurray, really is the driver economicswise of the province, in a huge way. Yeah, we're getting kicked in the teeth right now, but the area is a huge oil producer and an ag producer and, you know, the resources and the timber. We have a lot at play here. We're very rich in terms of providing economic wealth in the province even though we rarely see any provincial money coming back to our area. We don't get the bang for the bang, and it'll be upsetting for most of the people in our region if we see that we're going to be split apart because people in Edmonton and Calgary want to have equal rep.

The distance is just massive when you look at some of these ridings. The Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency is very tight, but when you look at Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills and others, somebody has designed these with an Etch A Sketch and just had, you know, a real free-for-all.

But if the people of Alberta, hearing this from the feds – they talked about this. They're hearing that there was this equal representation. The city of Cold Lake was a real wild card in the federal one, where they moved us to Fort McMurray. It came out of the blue. I was asked at the hearing by the judge – and I was like: wow; I didn't see that coming – because they had to move about 20,000 around the province. Lloydminster is sitting down there: where do you move Lloydminster to? So Cold Lake became the swing city because we're at the end of the highway. They granted our request, which was the air weapons range, and they moved us up with Fort McMurray. Our MP is from Fort McMurray down, Lac La Biche, and then over to Cold Lake. It was interesting. I think the population numbers were twice what the provincial average was looking at. I think it was around 90 grand.

For our sake and to answer to some of your questions, I would tend to think that in our area the North Saskatchewan River is a very important landmark down here. You know, it depends on what you're going to do, if you have to massage ridings out here and one of the ridings up here is going to be taken out or whatever. In the city of Cold Lake we see people that come from St. Paul, from down in this riding all the way from the Lac La Biche area. For us, we're at the end of the highway. If the commission is looking at redesigning boundaries, I see it only two different ways, and that would be either – I see that the mayor of Lac La Biche is here. I'll say that that riding, that area, Lac La Biche, has a lot of similarities with the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency in terms of the oil patch.

I would take it a bit further and look at the school boards. School boards are divided up almost like that, where Bonnyville, Cold

Lake, Lac La Biche, Plamondon are all sort of in the same area. There are other areas along Steve's area that are also part of it but going along highway 28. You know, it is being done right now with the school divisions. One would argue that, really, the school boards are too large in our area, having to go all the way up to Lac La Biche. What happens is that they feed off the – the poor school boards are only allowed to represent one school at a time. Now you pick communities in terms of new schools, and you actually rip communities apart: oh, Lac La Biche is going to get their school this year, then Cold Lake or Bonnyville, second, third. It really puts the school boards in a really tough position when they come for capital financing.

There's a lot of similarity. If you need about a 10,000 population swing, certainly Lac La Biche is an option and up towards Conklin. Conklin probably services more into the Lac La Biche area, and there's a lot of space in that top part of 65 here that doesn't involve a lot of people. If you're going to merge some of these ridings – not that we're supporting that; I just want to make that clear – if you had to redesign, certainly I see it only two different ways. Either Lac La Biche and area would come towards us, or St. Paul would join Bonnyville-Cold Lake. By the river, north of the river, however you want it – it depends on Two Hills and all that – there's a lot of call it the highway 28 riding. There are some similarities where communities can merge.

1:40

We all play each other in hockey, school sports. I mean, it all makes sense, but I don't see how in the world you would ever – if you were to blend both constituencies into two, I just can't see it except, of course, if Cold Lake is going to get severed like the feds did and moved up to the Fort McMurray-Conklin area, right? We do have the population. About 15,300 is our last census.

Just in terms of the census, I'm expecting that the numbers may come down. If we're at 15,300, it wouldn't surprise me if we come down to 14,800, something like that, for our city, but if we're 15,000 and above, great. We have had a lot of people leave our area because of the oil patch.

I think I've said enough. I think I've covered all of your questions, I hope.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Actually, yes. I don't have to ask my favourite question because you gave us two ideas there. I have to say that I understand completely that you don't want change, you don't want your constituency size increased, but I commend you for being able to put that aside for a moment and give us some good advice as to: if something has to happen, what we should do? If we don't get that advice – and in some areas of the province we haven't heard from anybody – then they're leaving it to amateurs, and why would you want to do that?

Mr. Copeland: It's really important to look at the highways in terms of: when you connect the dots between, let's just say, Cold Lake and Lac La Biche, how many people are between your dots? You can look all the way through northwestern Alberta, too, and into the south: where do people go to purchase? We all go to Edmonton once in a while, but urban communities are getting most of all the services. But people are moving, you know, in an hour, an hour-and-a-half's radius, and it's all about health care. If you look at the health care in our area, people in St. Paul, Bonnyville, Cold Lake have to go to one of the other communities for services. These hospitals in our area, depending on where you guys are from, are not all one-stop shops. Sometimes you have to come to St. Paul or Lac La Biche, whatever, Bonnyville, for certain treatments, specialized medicine. It's another way that you could look at it.

The Chair: Just so I understand that, you wouldn't have every specialty in each of the three hospitals. If you wanted to have an ophthalmologist, you might go to one; if you needed a neurologist, you might go to another. So you share the medical services in that fashion.

Mr. Copeland: We would love it if we had a regional hospital in our area, but this area is the forgotten one when it comes to health care.

The Chair: If you had a regional hospital, where do you think it would go?

Mr. Copeland: Well, every mayor is going to tell you that it's their community, right? No. If you really look at Cold Lake, the whole area between . . . [interjections] Yeah, yeah. There might be a fight breaking out here soon. We don't want to put that in *Hansard*. Actually, I forgot you guys are recording.

The Chair: Everyone's proud of their city and town.

Mr. Copeland: It really is. When you look at Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, they all have regional hospitals, right? In this area – I'm sorry – they haven't spent a dime from Lloydminster to Cold Lake over to Lac La Biche when it comes to regional health care.

The Chair: Thanks.
Questions?

Mrs. Day: I do have one because I'm not from this area. When you mentioned that you're at the end of the road or connector – so with the federal government putting you with Fort McMurray, is there a good connector road now between your constituency all the way to Fort McMurray?

Mr. Copeland: Yeah. So what you do is that you just go along highway 55 from Cold Lake west and then up to Lac La Biche – we don't buy anything in Lac La Biche – and then we go all the way up to Fort McMurray.

Mrs. Day: Sure. Of course, you don't. No. Okay. Got it.

Mr. Copeland: It was more about population, right? I think it was about 90,000, but they needed a swing, so Cold Lake was looked at as a possible swing versus Lloydminster because: where do you put the population of Lloyd?

Mrs. Day: Exactly. But there is the same – there are good connector roads east-west as well. When we were far northwest just a couple days ago, last Friday, you know, road connection was a big deal in that area, so I just was trying to understand what's . . .

Mr. Copeland: You're right; there are not very good highways up in the Peace River area that go east-west, but in our area we do have that Lac La Biche to Cold Lake . . .

Mrs. Day: Okay. Fair enough. Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks.

And the road to Fort McMurray: that's the road that was doubled within the last few years.

Mr. Copeland: Yeah, 63, and then you've got the secondary road, 881, that goes up, you know, through Conklin, right? Also, just a lot of the people, whether in Bonnyville, Cold Lake, do work up in that Conklin coal play, too, because everybody is in a camp up

there. People are ants. That's all an ant colony up there, and then they move somewhere to live.

Mrs. Day: Sorry. Second question if I may. The 2,000 people you mentioned working in the . . .

Mr. Copeland: Air weapons range?

Mrs. Day: Air weapons range area. Where do they live? Is that a shadow population as well?

Mr. Copeland: Well, with the beauty of the way they're doing it now, people are flying in, and because of the way the oil companies are going with their shifts now, there's no commitment to be part of your community anymore. Now they're encouraged to live in camps. They work 12-hour shifts, and what's happening now is that you can live anywhere you want. You have to get to the Calgary airport or the Edmonton airport, and they'll fly you in. You talked about future growth. It is going to cause some issues because we had rapid growth in Cold Lake. It's going to be fascinating to see where the future Cenovus employees and the camp people live.

The big play for us will be Imperial Oil. The Imperial Oil people live just 20, 25 minutes outside Cold Lake. A lot of them, of course, 75 per cent of the workers, live in our city. When they expand Imperial Oil here, we will see an uptick in our community about 2019.

Mrs. Day: All right. Good. Thank you.

Mr. Copeland: Yeah. You're not going to see a lot of growth in Alberta for a few years. It'll pick up once the industry understands how much it's going to cost to produce a barrel of oil in Alberta when you look at it with all the taxes. Right now everybody is in a pause. If we get Keystone built by Mr. Trump here right away, then that is going to have the biggest impact in Alberta.

You might be wondering. It's because all the oil goes in two different directions. It goes to Hardisty. If you have another hose that's going to bring oil down into the United States, a lot of our plays have future growth. I mean, this is a big play up in this area. Industry will invest now because they know that there's a new siphon to get the oil out, because most of our pipelines in our area are all full.

Mrs. Day: Right.

The Chair: All right. Any questions for us?

Mr. Copeland: No. Thank you for coming here. We really appreciate the commission coming to this part of Alberta.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much for your very helpful comments.

Okay. Allen Preston.

Mr. Preston: Good afternoon.

The Chair: If you could tell us what constituency you live in, sir.

Mr. Preston: Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Preston: I am also identifying myself today as the president of the Progressive Conservative constituency association in this riding.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Preston: Along with being a long-time, all-my-life resident, originating from Vilna and coming from a family farm that we settled in 1907, that makes me a resident expert. I'm also a business owner in the constituency. My business has three different areas that we cover, including the Lac La Biche site, that goes up to Conklin and Fort McMurray; my Glendon site, that also services most of the constituency from the east to the centre; and Smoky Lake, although it's not in the riding, services the west side of it. I have business ties and friendship ties throughout most of the constituency.

I was also heavily involved with 4-H and was also St. Paul district president, so I do have ties through the constituency along with that.

I would like to thank you for inviting us here today and coming here and listening to us. With this in mind, I'd like to present to the commission the following points regarding the boundaries review. Boundaries are obviously included in geography, and geography is much more than hills and rivers and trees and roads. If anyone has travelled across Canada, particularly from west to east in this country, and has hit the Canadian Shield, you understand how geography affects people and their perception of their fellow Canadians. Geography is power. Despite technological changes that have consistently shrunk distance, people live and make money in a geographical space.

1:50

Post-Westphalian theory has been proven wrong by Russia in Crimea and China in the South China Sea. Control of territory and people matters. Urban ridings control more people, but rural ridings control more geography, and it is the geographical features in which Alberta's wealth in oil and lumber and agriculture is held. It is more democratic to represent relatively homogeneous regions in terms of economic and social interests. This is the reason the ridings can't solely be based on population size and why they aren't all perfect squares in the rural setting. It is more democratic when a constituent has easy or easier or nonrestricted access to their representative.

The Westminster system requires a close connection between constituent and representative. This is taken away when the representative knows less about his constituents, brought about by diverse economic, geographic, and historical experience or by sheer distance. We currently live in times where societal cohesion is at risk. In the U.S. we saw what happens when a more populous urban voting block consistently outweighs, even in perception only, a rural constituency. Populism takes hold when there are strains placed on the fabric of society.

Currently this state already exists in Alberta. Whatever your view, Bill 6, the carbon tax, and an urban infrastructure focus at both the federal and provincial levels have undeniably strained relations and left tempers high. The perception of exacerbating that divide and those tensions, again, whether in reality or merely perception, will only increase the tensions. Remember that the last census, the data that this commission will be basing its decisions on, was done in 2016, after the collapse in oil prices. This brings the potential that communities that were growing, that perceived their cash to be improving, may not have that reflected. Now, this is not to say that redrawing may or may not be necessary, only that there are a number of issues that must be considered. This is a structural concern that affects far more than individual elections. This affects the way Albertans view their fellow citizens in neighbouring areas, the perceptions of fair and unfair or of heard and unheard.

In closing, I ask that when decisions are calculated and finally arrived at, Albertans will feel that they have been heard and, more importantly, understood regarding their place in this province. It is my opinion and that of many others in this constituency that the

current boundaries are a fair reflection of the lifestyles and beliefs in this northeastern area. I have witnessed people's actions and I've heard their comments on how Lac La Biche feels more connected with Ashmont and Vilna than Athabasca or that Elk Point and Two Hills have very close ties with St. Paul compared to Bonnyville and Vegreville. Even our two large native reserves hold historical and family ties. These ties, again, include family, business, trade, and recreation, and that is why I'm here on their behalf, so that they can be heard.

Spreading out to a more provincial point of view, a person living on a family farm or in a small town in northeastern Alberta or in a large metropolitan area can and do feel like their voice is not heard sometimes, and that voice is going to be you on this commission. You are representing it and watching out for it. I ask that you please respect it and take good care of it.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks. In the spirit of that, I'm going to ask the question you don't want to hear but that the previous speaker was so helpful in answering. Would you agree with his views that if we found we had to move a boundary – I'm not saying that we will, not saying that that is going to be the end result, but we have to look at the possibility – his suggestions as to how that might take place are good ones, or do you have another idea?

Mr. Preston: Again, going back to my submission, my view is that it is much more than just having a boundary. It's what's within those boundaries and what the people represent. In my mind, the main mover that would change the way the boundaries exist now would be economic. If wealth and jobs came back within these ridings that we're talking about, then there should be no discussion as to whether we change boundaries. I know that that's not an answer that you're looking for, but in my mind I still believe that with the way the boundaries are right now, going back to, you know, a very short historical preference, I would say that they're as good as they're going to get.

The Chair: Thank you.

Questions?

Thanks so much.

Mr. Preston: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. I'll now call on Gene Sobolewski and Mike Krywiak. Thank you.

Mr. Sobolewski: Good afternoon. My name is Gene Sobolewski. I'm the mayor of the town of Bonnyville, obviously in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency.

Mr. Krywiak: Good afternoon. I'm the deputy reeve of the MD of Bonnyville. Within the MD of Bonnyville we have the city of Cold Lake, the town of Bonnyville, and the perogy capital of the world, and we don't want to add to or take away from the perogy.

The Chair: Okay. Well, we drove by the giant Mundare sausage today on the way here, so we're in that mindset.

Mr. Sobolewski: Okay. Thank you very much for having us here and allowing us to speak. Today the presentation is more going to focus on – we recognize it, and even the maps that you've presented to us here talk about it – population and how much the population has decreased. There's a population focus, and we recognize that your commission is also, under the legislation, a little bit population focused. The representation is that it's proportionate and effective and fair.

But what I'm going to tell you today is that mathematically what's being proposed, the idea that all the populations need to be represented in a fair and equal manner, is a fallacy. We have a number of examples all across Alberta and British Columbia as to why you don't want the balance of power and the balance of representation, particularly in Alberta, framed in the two largest municipalities in Alberta, which are Edmonton and Calgary, and also by some separate ones: Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat.

What happens is the same issue that happened in the capital region, in Edmonton, not so long ago, that there has to be or that there is this perception of a veto. You've got a cluster of representation in Alberta, right now in Edmonton and Calgary, who hold almost the balance of power. What happens in the balance of power is that the MLAs get together and they do their debates, but it also is a large population base that they're favouring.

Take a look at AHS and EMS, probably two of the most horrific examples of why you don't want to centralize and why you don't want anybody having a balance of power. Right now out in my community it costs the same to replace a waterline as it does in the village of Glendon and as it does in Edmonton. Right now Edmonton and Calgary get the lion's share of all the funding in Alberta, two-thirds as a matter of fact, and the rest of us get bread crumbs. Why? Because they're the largest populations. Their focus is transit. Their focus is freeways. Their focus is a lot of other things. Our focus is replacing waterlines. We can't get funding. Why? Because the MSI that's created in Alberta is population based and population proportionate. We can't get the funding, yet that same waterline I referred to – I know villages that are starving. They only get \$87,000 to repair and replace a \$1 million waterline. How in the devil is that possible? Well, I'll let you know. The way these constituencies are and your representation in the constituencies is, you do not want the balance of power in population centres.

2:00

If Edmonton and Calgary choose to grow and they grow because people choose to live there, that's fine. Then what you do is you continue to have equal amounts of representation between your clustered and concentrated population centres against the rural so that there is an equal voice and equal representation. Rural is rural, and we do things differently out here. We have different requirements and different needs and necessities.

Mike, on that it's your turn.

Mr. Krywiak: Thank you. Good afternoon, and thank you very much for coming here. I wasn't expected to speak this afternoon, so my presentation will be very brief, just adding on to what Mayor Sobolewski had to say.

First of all, effective representation should not be done only by population. There are many other factors that we should take into account, and one of them is geography. In addition to geography we need to think about community history, community interests, and their identity. Those are very important factors in considering whether we want to divide or add on to our constituencies.

The other thing is that in the rural we do need personal conversations with the MLAs. Now, there's a large portion, especially northern Alberta, that does not have even Internet, so to have an MLA not being there present in a community – it's very important. People want their MLAs to come and visit them, to be part of their community.

The other thing is: how large should a constituency be? We need to limit that. We have, I think, at least one constituency that is the size of PEI. How much larger do we want to make them? Like, one and a half times the size of PEI? I think that's too large.

The other thing is that combining the rural with the urban to have a hybrid municipality, I think, is not right. We are very fortunate in our MD of Bonnyville that we also have the same constituency as the MD of Bonnyville federal riding. In part of my ward, ward 3, which is only one ward out of the six, some people belong to the Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills riding and some belong to the Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo. My MP is Dave Yurdiga. For me to travel all the way to Fort McMurray to see my MP, it is very distant.

Please take into consideration the factors I expressed in whether you want to expand the constituencies. The average constituency is 48,882, and if you're within 25 per cent of that, I think you should be okay. You don't want to make the constituencies too large. If you're within a certain percentage – like, we're within 19 per cent of the average, so I think that's very fair.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Sobolewski: In closing, earlier in my presentation I had alluded to that there are other areas in the country where we've had these disproportionate rural and urban centres. Some of the ramifications – let's travel to B.C. Let's go to Vancouver and Victoria, where the cluster of population is basically in those two municipalities and so are the MLAs. In the province of British Columbia the government is in the greater Vancouver regional district and in Victoria. In terms of policy setting and in terms of direction and jurisdiction that happens in legislation to the other parts of the province, the rest of the province has to use things like sewage lagoons and treatment and things like that whereas Victoria and Vancouver are allowed to discharge their sewage directly into the ocean. Why? Because of the impact of the costs on their constituents to properly treat.

We can go into our own province of Alberta and take a look at Edmonton and Calgary. We've got some fantastic ring roads, some tremendously advanced interchanges and things like that on the Anthony Henday, if we want to take a look at that. I mean, there are multi, multimillions of dollars of work that was done whereas out in our constituency and over about St. Paul we can't even get work done to put traffic lights or proper lighting at intersections. Why? They're not sexy.

We only have one MLA that represents this vast area even in Bonnyville-Cold Lake and Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills whereas you've got 16 to 18 in Edmonton and about 25 in Calgary. So we're never going to get anything. That's what I'm talking about, the disproportionate representation. Even though this population is a good way to continue and further the cause, we do not want to have a continuing AHS with ambulance services and the lack of regional health care allowed to happen here when the centre and the balance of power would then be converted and strengthened to Edmonton and Calgary. They do a lot of hard work – I understand – but we also need to make sure that we have a voice and an equal voice.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Well, I'll start off by asking my question. I understand your position that you don't think any change is warranted taking into account all of these factors, but in our discussions that the commission will be having among the group of us in the next few weeks, where we're looking at all 87 constituencies in the province, if we decide at the end of the day that we have no choice but to adjust your constituency, do you have any view as to whether that should be north, west, or south?

Mr. Sobolewski: None of the above. What they should be doing is allowing Edmonton and Calgary and some of those other municipal centres to continue to grow on a proportionate basis within a

boundary. In other words, the constituencies can grow on a proportionate basis and leave the rural alone.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Krywiak, do you have any views as to how you might like to see the boundaries change if they had to change?

Mr. Krywiak: No, not really. I think we're a fair-size constituency. I know Edmonton has 19 constituencies; Calgary has 25. That's 44 out of 87. They have over half, plus the other cities as well. The rural are already underrepresented, so I can't really think of any way to expand our constituency. No. Sorry about that.

The Chair: Okay.
Questions?

Ms Munn: I don't have any questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Questions?
Thanks so much to both of you.

Mr. Sobolewski: Thank you.

Mr. Krywiak: Thank you very much.

The Chair: All right. Raymond Danyluk. Good afternoon.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much. I very much want to thank you for coming to St. Paul and being able to present here. I'm probably going to come to you with a lot of experience but very minimal knowledge, so we'll start with . . .

The Chair: Which constituency do you live in, sir?

Mr. Danyluk: I live in Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Danyluk: Now, I need to give you a little bit of history to give you a feeling of why I'm speaking the way I'm going to. First of all, I was the MLA for the area here for 12 years. I was a minister for six years. I was a reeve of the county; also the chair of the school board; more importantly, the chair of the Northern Alberta Development Council; and, probably what's very important, the Youth Secretariat for the province. I want to also say that as a public servant this is my fifth public hearing on boundary reviews. Also, this constituency – and I speak of Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills – has changed, differently than the larger urban centres or the urban centres.

2:10

Number one, we have four hospitals, I think 22 schools plus the schools on our reservations, 20-plus municipalities plus hamlets, miles of road, colleges. I need to say that there was some discussion, and I felt that you were implying that the roads here were very good and had access. Well, let me say to you that we are in a heavy oil area. There is no piping of any type of oil. Everything is hauled by trucks, so any refuge of water, sand, oil: everything is hauled, which provides a very major impact on the roads that we do have. Highway 63 has approximately 4,000 vehicles per day, while 881, which isn't twinned, which we talked about going through, has over 10,000.

My experience in the area – and I say the whole area – has also been as Minister of Municipal Affairs, Transportation, Infrastructure, housing, and emergency management. I believe that your responsibility as a commission is to provide equitable representation, and that is representation for all people and communities. What should this

hearing be about? Of course it should be about population but also about community interests, existing municipal and First Nations boundaries, natural boundaries, geography, community, history, interests, and identity.

I want to say that, yes, there is a challenge. In rural Alberta we have about 85 to 90 per cent of the land mass and about 18 to 20 per cent of the population. Are fewer rural MLAs in the best interest of urban areas? I suggest to you not. What happens is that rural Alberta is still the heart of industry and is also the heart of agriculture. I think it's very important that when you look at Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills – and you can ask the present MLA or the MLAs that were there – it takes four hours to make it from one end to the other end. So for anybody in between, it takes either a two and a half or three-hour ride each way in order to see the MLA or for the MLA to see them if they have some needs. I say to you that that's not equitable as far as representation is concerned. To add to that, there's the staff that's necessary to try to serve a large area with, what I said, the diversity of the different services.

It's very interesting that, when I was an MLA, the office for Edmonton-Centre was across the street from the Leg. If the person wanted to go to see the MLA, they could have a choice. They could go to the Leg. or they go to their office. As well, MLA offices in rural Alberta are very busy as opposed to in the urban areas. I talked to one MLA – of course, this is an extreme – in the city that in one year never had one visitation. In rural Alberta people do not have the services that they do in the larger centres, and they use their MLA offices to a greater extent.

I want to say to you that when you start talking about how boundaries should be or how they should be different, please know that when you look at that map and you look from the top to the bottom, we go from lumber, trapping, heavy oil, agriculture and hay, light oil, recreation, and grain, and it's kind of in layered areas. When you have a constituency, my first choice is: leave it alone. But if you just happen to revamp everything, then you need to look more at what happens in the areas and where it is. We are very diversified, much more, different communities than in the cities.

The government of the day got rid of the planes. Accessibility for MLAs is very difficult now, so it makes it more and more imperative that the MLA of the area is able to work with their area. So you can't make it bigger.

One interesting fact. There are more MLAs in the city of Edmonton than there are councillors. City council has fewer people than there are MLAs. What ends up happening is that if you are an MLA in the area, you work together for one hospital or one school. In Julius Yankowski's riding a number of years ago he didn't have a hospital; he didn't have a school. Yes, he had some people. But, in essence, your workload is so minimal as compared to what I said happens here.

I think I want to close by saying that you as a commission can change the scope of power in your decision. Really, that's what it's about in rural Alberta. It has been traditionally right or traditionally – well, it's been right. But in the cities it's right and left, and presently it's left, and if you make more, you are changing the power base. That's all I'm saying.

You need to be equitable, as I said before. MLAs need to be able to meet with their constituents. Also, in rural Alberta we do not have the technology that you have in the large urban centres or in the corridors, able to have access to the services, able to have access to the technology in the cities.

I know we're here to say suggestions of what you should do, but I would ask: do not take the pie effect. Don't have the centre as a piece of the centre of the pie and go out in a pie effect because in essence what happens is the vote will still end up with the MLA

being in the large centre, and the rural areas will not have representation and will not have a voice.

Whatever urban gains, rural loses. You can add – doesn't make any difference; that's what happens.

Last word: equitable and not equal.

The Chair: And effective hopefully.

Mr. Danyluk: And effective.

The Chair: Just to build on your point where you were giving us the list of different industries that your constituency has within it which you say are kind of one on top of the other moving north to south, would you be prepared to tell me how those should be divided up? You say that if we have to divide, divide up according to that, but I don't know how. So what's your idea there?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, my point in saying that is that if you go north of Lac La Biche, traditionally what was there was lumbering, some recreation, some heavy oil, because there was no grain. The cattle came in a little bit further south. Then you get more into light oil and natural gas, and then you get into some grain farming or agriculture as further south that you go, right?

I'm not sure if the best suggestion when I talk about industry is going in a longitudinal fashion or if the straight up and down fashion is the best. The straight up and down, north and south, I think has some challenges with it because there is such big distance and diversity, and everybody needs to have a voice. In the cities, where you have a lot of MLAs working on one issue, that's a little bit easier. Here, when you're dealing with all the interest groups – we didn't talk about chambers; we didn't talk about industry; we didn't talk about all of the different avenues that people have. Usually, even though you try, you know – and you can talk to the present MLA – it doesn't work out that you start in the south and work your way north. No. It's emergency meetings in the north and emergency meetings in the south, and the cell service isn't very good in between.

Oh, sorry; we're not supposed to do that anymore.

2:20

The Chair: Would it help you if you had a second constituency office here, do you think? I just say that because last week, when we were up in Peace River, the MLA who serves that constituency was present. She was helpful in her comments and said that she found having a second constituency office was a great help.

Mr. Danyluk: When I was an MLA, I had sort of what I would call one and a half and a half because I had a sub office in Lac La Biche and a sub office in Two Hills. The challenge with that is that let's say that you have meetings arranged in one community, and something just changes a little bit, where you have to cancel meetings, those individual communities don't get visitations, like, once a week. They may get visitations once a month because if you're in session, you only get Friday plus weekends, right? You may get one in a month, and if you have to change that, it makes it very difficult. Extra staff very much helps in taking care of those isolated areas.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other questions?

Mrs. Day: I have one. Nice to see you here, Mr. Danyluk. Garnering somewhere in my reading or from presentations at some point, would you say that there is more of an expectation by the rural folks to have a face-to-face with their MLA than, say, by their

counterparts in the city, who may choose to send an e-mail as opposed to actually expecting to see the MLA face to face? Would that be a fair assessment?

Mr. Danyluk: That would be a very fair assessment, but please know that a lot of that comes from that you don't have the services localized like you would in the cities, right? You don't have the options of either going to the MLA's office or to the Leg. or being able to see an individual in that way. What ends up happening is that you're going to get more visitations because we don't have any contact. The contact has to be through the MLA for the larger centres, and you can't stretch them more than you've stretched them already. People do come to the MLA. Listen; there are a lot of times that you will have visitations to the MLA that have really nothing to do with the MLA's duties, but they have no place to go. So if you end up in such a vast area, there are people that just will not be served.

Mrs. Day: Right. Great. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other questions? No. Okay. Thanks so much, sir.

All right. David Hanson, hello.

Mr. Hanson: Well, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on the possible changes to the electoral boundaries. A little bit of background: I'm the sitting MLA for the Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills area. I have a pretty extensive background in the oil and gas industry as well as some mixed farming that my wife and I have done for most of our lives. I also have a bit of a medical background.

First and foremost, I'd like to talk about effective representation, and I'll give you a few examples of that as I go through. For the folks sitting behind me, this is in no way meant to be a complaint about the region I represent but rather a simple comparison of the representation of rural constituents compared to those of urban constituencies. I believe that we need more representation of rural Alberta in the Legislature rather than less, and I would like to see that reflected when you do your report in May.

The main economic drivers of our economy – the oil and gas industry, agriculture, forestry, and tourism, and I'd like to mention our lack of ability to fish in this area while I've got the mike – they're all represented primarily by rural MLAs. I know that there are a lot of big business head offices in Calgary and Edmonton, but the bulk of the industry activity is in rural MLA constituencies. Mr. Danyluk reflected that with the, you know, heavy impacts of the heavy truck traffic from oil and gas on our local highways, a lot of that is left up to municipalities to bear.

I'd just like to mention that as many people or more leave the cities on weekends and come out to rural areas as rural people going into Edmonton to do their shopping. So, you know, when you look at population base only, a lot of those people that live in the centres of Edmonton and Calgary spend a lot of their time out in our recreation areas and out in our constituencies.

I've had conversations with MLAs from Calgary and Edmonton that have told me kind of braggingly that they can walk across their constituency in 20 minutes. They don't represent any schools. They have no hospitals. They're basically representing bedroom communities with a high concentration. Most of those people in a lot of those areas are very well employed, so they don't have a lot of the issues that we have with low-income people and people on AISH that we do out in the rural constituencies.

I did a quick summarization of my constituency last night. I might have missed some things, but, you know, as close as I can gather, these are the numbers. I represent an area of approximately 26,000

square kilometres. I represent 22 towns, villages, and hamlets, three full counties as well as part of the Smoky Lake county, and 10 municipal governments. I have five First Nations in my constituency, two Métis settlements, five hospitals, four school boards, and 20-plus schools in those divisions. That's a lot of graduations, a lot of school visits, a lot of requests for their MLA. We also have at least 11 seniors' complexes. I've had requests from 10 4-H clubs to speak or visit, and there are countless nonprofit groups that seek our help in my constituency office for funding and help with grant applications.

When we talk about effective representation, it should not be based on population alone. If you look at the fairness of a person from my constituency as compared to somebody, say, that lives in Terwillegar in Edmonton that can access their office within a 10-minute drive if there is actually an office open – one of the comments that was made was that some of the MLAs don't get one single call in a year. That is quite true, compared to our area, where we get calls from, you know, everywhere up by Lac La Biche, Conklin all the way down to Lindbergh, Willingdon area. It's quite huge. Again, I'm not complaining.

Based on current populations, the current number of seats are distributed fairly, with 44 ridings currently in Edmonton and Calgary and the remaining 43 in rural Alberta. That's based solely on the numbers that we see on the board there. Again, if there's to be any redistribution of seats by this commission, it should be to decrease the total number of urban seats in Edmonton and Calgary and increase the number of rural seats to give proper, equal, and effective representation to all Albertans.

I don't agree with the combined urban-rural constituency idea that's been floated around the areas of Edmonton and Calgary. I don't think it's a fair representation to those people living in the rural areas, to be combined with and overrun by the larger urban areas. I feel that effective representation should be taken into account, not only population but overall its representatives as well as the major economic drivers of the province, that being oil and gas, agriculture, forestry, and tourism. Like I said, those are mostly centred in the rural areas, and they need to be recognized for that.

2:30

I'd like to end by saying that I'm very proud to represent all of my communities and I'm not really willing to give up any of them. Well, maybe Lac La Biche. No. Just kidding. I'm very proud to represent my constituency. I try very hard to get to every corner of it and give equal representation to all. I spend a lot of time up in the Lac La Biche area, Elk Point, Two Hills, Willingdon, Hairy Hill, all the small communities in between, whether it's a rodeo – I attended 10 parades last year.

Mrs. Day: I was going to ask you about parades. You missed parades. I knew it was hard.

Mr. Hanson: No, I didn't miss parades. You know, it's trying to spread ourselves across this constituency, especially in the summer months. When every little community has their festivals and they've got their parades and their rodeos, it's wonderful. We try to hit every one that we can. I have an example. I believe it was October 22. It was a Saturday evening. I had five events to attend from Lac La Biche down to Elk Point and Two Hills. I tried to hit every one of them, but it's a lot of driving.

Anyway, that being said, again, you know, if we're looking into making some changes, then it should be based on effective representation and not just population. Thank you.

The Chair: I'm going to ask you a question. I'm sure you don't want to answer, but I want to be able to say that I've asked it to

everyone who presented across the province. My question is this: if notwithstanding your persuasive comments today we found we had to adjust a boundary, it then becomes important for us to know things like trading areas and where people tend to shop. Looking at Lac La Biche – and I understand you're not the primary representative of Lac La Biche here – do you think they're closer to the Fort McMurray area? We all heard about people stopping in Lac La Biche on the way to give services to Fort McMurray during the fire, and then Lac La Biche was so hospitable to people who were fleeing the fire. Is there a stronger connection there than Lac La Biche-St. Paul?

Mr. Hanson: I don't believe so. I believe that the evacuees – being that Lac La Biche was the first stop especially on highway 881 and the fact that the people in Lac La Biche and the mayor and council and all the volunteers jumped to the pump and anticipated the need and opened their arms to those people, that was the major reason for Lac La Biche being the main centre. It's the first road on the way south. I'd also like to mention all of the companies and volunteers and just individuals that jumped in their vehicles and hauled gasoline and water up to the people that they knew would be stranded on highways 63 and 881. It was a phenomenal effort, and a lot of those people go unrecognized.

That being said, from Lac La Biche I would think that more people would be coming down to the St. Paul and Athabasca areas than going north to Fort McMurray.

Mr. Danyluk: Just for logistics, it's still further from Lac La Biche to Fort McMurray than it is Edmonton to Calgary. So, you know, when it's the first stop, when you think about what Lac La Biche really did, it's that distance.

Mr. Hanson: Yeah.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Hanson: If I could throw in that Mr. Copeland mentioned the air weapons range.

The Chair: Right.

Mr. Hanson: When you look at the boundaries there, they're kind of a straight line up with the boundary of the air weapons range on the west side. There's virtually no access there from Lac La Biche. Most of the access to the air weapons range goes up highway 41 from Bonnyville north. I spent 25 years working up there. I'm very familiar with the area, so I do see that that would be an opportunity other than the fact that there's still some discussion around the linear assessment from up in that area, where it's going to.

Mr. Moghrabi: It's in negotiations.

Mr. Hanson: It's in negotiation.

You know, that being said, if it remains that the only access to the air weapons range is through the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency and that the linear taxation ends up primarily going to that area, then that may be a part that makes sense, but, again, there's no population there anyway.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Questions?

Mrs. Day: I do have just one. Just hearing some of the other speakers here today, in regard to the way the boundaries are now, do you or maybe Mr. Danyluk have any idea: how long has your constituency been formed this way between Bonnyville, Cold Lake,

and Lac La Biche? Is this going way, way back, or was it changed last time? Like, how long have you been in this spot?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, I think the challenges, of course, are for the people on the outskirts. Whether you look at the southeastern part, where . . .

Ms Livingstone: Sorry. Mr. Danyluk, do you want to come back to the microphone so that *Hansard* . . .

Mr. Hanson: Sure. They'll be able to hear you better.

Mr. Danyluk: What happens is that the extremities of the boundary definitely have changed, right? Yes, I believe Lac La Biche has been in . . .

Mr. Moghrabi: It's in 1993. I can explain it to them.

Mr. Danyluk: Yeah.

. . . about three or four different areas. Southeast has been in a different area. What ended up happening before is that Two Hills was with Vegreville, so, you know, it just has continually changed, right? At one time I believe Elk Point also was with Vermilion, so it's been a little bit hectic. Stability would be very helpful.

Mr. Hanson: Yeah. You'd almost have to take an overlay from previous boundary changes.

Mrs. Day: Yeah. I was just curious.

The Chair: Is there much trading with Saskatchewan from your communities? I don't know what's located on the Saskatchewan border just right off the top of my head.

Mr. Danyluk: I would say more so from the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency. I know that there are a lot of companies and people that work in the air weapons range that actually live in Saskatchewan as well, so there is a bit more that way. Getting down farther south, Elk Point possibly, but I wouldn't say a lot, no.

The Chair: Thanks.

Ms Livingstone: Because you and Mr. Danyluk both brought it up, that you're aware of constituencies where MLAs have not had a single call from the public in an entire year, would you like to share with us which constituencies those are?

Mr. Hanson: Not on record, no. Sorry.

The Chair: Other questions?
All right. Thanks so much.

Mr. Hanson: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Yes. Omer Moghrabi.

Mr. Moghrabi: I should never ask Ray to speak after he's stopped, or Mr. Copeland.

Mr. Copeland: Do you want me up there?

Mr. Moghrabi: No, that's fine.

Thank you very much for having me here on short notice. I have a whole file here, but everybody has basically said a lot of the things.

The Chair: You're the mayor of Lac La Biche.

Mr. Moghrabi: I was just going to get there. I am the mayor of Lac La Biche county, which is a specialized municipality. It encompasses around 16,000 square kilometres of Mr. Hanson's 26,000. I just want to touch on a little bit of history. In '93 we ran east and west. We were called Athabasca-Calling Lake-Lac La Biche-Wabasca, I believe. Does that sound right? Yeah. Basically that's our trade area also, which runs all the way up to Conklin and Janvier. We do trade with them.

Now, you know, Mike from the MD of I think it was Bonnyville, he mentioned that Calgary has 25 MLAs and Edmonton has 19. That is 44. They have a lot of the population, no doubt about that. But just to give you an idea, I spent most of my life travelling Alberta, playing sports. I did work. I was with a college, and we have a business. A road trip for us is a minimum of four hours to eight hours, and I did this from the '70s till 2014. A road trip for the kids in those urban centres is across the street, across the city. So let's be very clear. We are different. Rural Alberta is different.

2:40

I didn't mention Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray. Those are considered urban centres also. If you add the MLAs from those areas, you know, it's not equitable.

Now, when you look at all the distances, maybe we should have more money assigned to the MLAs to have another office in areas that are that big.

Just in closing, we are going to have a submission, which we will have to you guys. I know you're going to ask me the question, and you may not like the answer. Actually, it's: the answer is the answer. You know, I'm glad you have given us an opportunity to speak. I can't add much more other than that we'll probably try to annex Cold Lake next and Bonnyville if they keep bugging me.

The Chair: Okay. Is there any truth to that rumour?

Mr. Moghrabi: There is.

The Chair: Lac La Biche right now is 22 per cent below the provincial average. That's one of the largest variances we're looking at here. So if we found that we had no choice but to recommend that a boundary be moved, would it make sense for part of Bonnyville-Cold Lake to be annexed to Lac La Biche-St. Paul?

Mr. Moghrabi: That could be. The other trading area we have that we're very close with is also Athabasca. When you look at it, a lot of the school boards are the same. There's Athabasca. If you run east and west – even use some of the highways that we have for borders. When you look at 28, Lac La Biche county has 36, 881, 55 – I'm forgetting one more – and 63. We can use those boundaries to draw those lines.

The Chair: Does it make more sense to be longitudinal and lateral?

Mr. Moghrabi: For us it does, to be east to west. Yeah, it does for us. My suggestion is: take five seats away from Calgary, give one to Edmonton so they have 20 apiece, put the other four in rural Alberta, two in the south, two in the north. Very simple.

The Chair: All right. Questions?

Ms Livingstone: I have one. I'll just play devil's advocate for a minute because sort of exactly what we've heard in the room today, we hear the exact opposite in urban ridings. We hear that, you know, an MLA dealing with 60,000-plus people from dozens of different cultures, language barriers, poverty – we hear that urban MLAs are overworked. So I'm wondering, if I were to take your suggestion that ridings should come out of Calgary and Edmonton

and go into rural areas, what are my speaking notes to tell the people in, you know, Calgary-South East that their vote, when they go to vote, should count for half of what a vote of someone in rural Alberta counts for?

Mr. Moghrabi: Again, you think equitably. You look at the size, the distances. You talk about diversity: Lac La Biche county is one of the most unique communities in the province if not in Canada, with a large Lebanese population, indigenous population, French population, White Russian, Filipino. Diversity is not just set for urban centres. It's just the ability, the distances that make a difference, and also the technical, the Internet: all those things come into play. Right now they have over half, 44 seats. That's not counting the other mid-size cities.

Let's take the constituency. Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche, Cold Lake – you guys forgot to mention that Lac La Biche is in the middle of that constituency – and Wabasca is the largest oil-producing constituency in the country and has been an economic driver for this country for the last 20 years, and we haven't received nothing. So what do you tell your people when you look out at the skyscrapers in Calgary? I don't see any oil rigs there; I don't see any oil sands there: that's what I would tell them. My brother lives in Calgary, so you'll hear about it.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah. I played devil's advocate with the urban municipalities as well, but that's the argument that we hear from them, you know: if we're in a system that is based on representation by population, why should my vote count less than my cousin who lives in Peace River or wherever?

Mr. Moghrabi: I understand.

Just on the point of the pie shape, I mean, just do the math. The point of the pie, if it's in an urban centre, will have more votes than the larger, sparsely populated part, so that doesn't work.

Ms Munn: This is a very old problem in Alberta. There were governments in this province that held almost every single seat, yet the rural voice still wasn't heard. So tell me how you think it would be different if we limit the cities to 20 each and we evened out the other cities so that maybe there was some kind of parity between rural and urban. How would that make a difference in the Legislature?

Mr. Moghrabi: You know, I think the rural area has been heard – I don't mean to say that it hasn't been heard – and it has been represented. What we fear is that we may lose that voice. When you see every week the Minister of Infrastructure standing beside a big-city mayor saying that they're going to spend billions of dollars on the Yellowhead or \$400 million on an interchange, all we want is for highway 881, considered the most dangerous road in the world, to be wide enough so somebody can pull over. I think they've been heard. We just want to ensure we don't lose our voice. I do think the rural has been heard. Like, I think we've had a fair shake other than – I think the northeast has been left out in terms of infrastructure.

Ms Munn: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks so much, sir.

Mr. Moghrabi: Thank you.

The Chair: We're almost out of time, but a couple of gentlemen spoke to our clerk right before we started today and indicated that

they didn't realize they had to go online to register, so I promised that I would invite them to come up if we had any extra time.

Mr. Fox, would you like to come up?

Mr. Fox: Thanks for letting us have a chance. I don't have a lot to say because everybody has said it already.

Going to the border on the north there, the weapons range, for instance: we worked on the border of the weapons range for years. You are not allowed to walk over the border into the weapons range. If they caught you in there, they would probably have sent you to the grave.

I worked on the surface of Primrose Lake, stuff for the military: unbelievable, the things that they expected us to do and the conditions that they put on us, that we could not do this, that we could not do that. One fellow told us: "You've got two feet of ice and 98 feet of water. Watch what you're doing. Don't listen to those guys because they don't know."

One of the other things that is a condition in our area, especially in this constituency or the bordering ones: our railroads are gone. All of our conditions there are gone. All of our elevators are gone. From my farm my closest elevator is 80 miles; my second closest is a hundred miles. It's a five- or six-hour round trip to take a load of grain to the elevator. I've hauled two loads of grain since we harvested back in the snowstorm in November. Why can't things be improved a little bit? The road is so rough that you can't even travel more than 40 miles an hour with a spring-ride truck. Those are things that need to be looked at. Don't worry about moving the border. Fix something on here so that we can get to the other side of it, because we're going through two or three different constituencies to get to where we have to go. It's not a case of this or that one. There's a horrible mess.

That's just one of the things. There are some other things, but I won't trouble you with that now if you have any questions.

2:50

The Chair: What constituency is your farm located in?

Mr. Fox: In the Bonnyville one. Our closest railroad is following highway 16, going from Edmonton to east of Lloydminster.

The Chair: Okay. Are you more likely to go into St. Paul or Cold Lake when you have the need to go into town?

Mr. Fox: Actually, I would go to St. Paul for parts because I can get no parts whatsoever in the Bonnyville area – nuts and bolts but nothing else for machinery parts – and otherwise to Vermilion or Lloydminster or Paradise Hill, Saskatchewan.

The Chair: How far is that from the border, may I ask?

Mr. Fox: Oh, it's about half an hour from the border, depending on the day, of course.

The Chair: Okay.

Questions?

Okay. Thank you. When you came, your friend Gordon Graves came, so would Mr. Graves like to come up?

Mr. Graves: Thank you. My name is Gordon Graves. I'm in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency.

Just a little bit of a joke, because I heard lots of reference today about communication being so much better than it was before. Mike Krywiak and Gene Sobolewski are both on the Bonnyville Regional Fire Authority. I'm a fire chief in the MD of Bonnyville, so that's one of the concerns I'm going to bring up. But the joke within

regional is that we'll send an e-mail to everybody, except for Gordon we'll get the pigeon going.

Emergency response is something that's often overlooked in almost every aspect. If we look at the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency, there are two fire authorities. Those fire authorities sort of control the ambulance within. I won't go into the experiences I've had with AHS in great detail except to say that it's not acceptable. When you are trying to manage your department and two others on an incident and you've got someone down and you're trying to tell some clown in Edmonton that you need an ambulance out of where you need it because you know where they're at and they don't and they have this list of things down, that when you get done telling them what you need, they start to ask you questions on because they didn't listen – you need to get rid of that system. You need to put it so it's based on constituencies. Our 911 call centre is in Bonnyville. When I phone them, they know where I'm at, and they know what I need.

There was a comment put forward about poverty in the urban centres. I'd point out to you that poverty is not necessarily an urban issue. There's an old saying: land rich, money poor. That applies to a lot of the rural.

Bill had talked about trade with Saskatchewan. In terms of the oil patch, yes, there are lots out of Meadow Lake, Goodsoil, and Pierceland that work in the Bonnyville area and up into the air weapons range. As a producer I trade more in Saskatchewan than I do in Alberta because of availability. They're bigger dealers, and they're no farther away from me than my Alberta dealers.

I'd point out – someone had talked about diversity and minorities – that I am a minority. I'm a farmer. I grow food. People in the urban centres need to realize that. The hinterland, as we're called in terms of geography 104 out of university – I did go to university, so I kind of understand some of this stuff; they were actually the better days of my life because I didn't have to pitch so many bales – is the economic driver of this province.

I recognize that representative democracy versus direct democracy is a far superior system based on the distances we would have to travel – we're not like Athens, Greece, in the ancient days – but that being said, you have to recognize that if we don't grow food, if the oil patch shuts down, if there's no one cutting timber, if there's no recreation, there's no need for the cities. There are absolutely no economics in the cities if we aren't vibrant.

Talking about seeing the MLAs, I don't know that much about the cities. I know that my son in Edmonton doesn't even know who his MLA is. He says that he knows he's got one. He says that he knows he didn't get the guy he voted for. I see my MLA as often as I can, I phone him as often as I can, and when Telus allows me, I e-mail him as often as I can. He is my contact with my government. And I'll point out to those here who seem to think that the government is the NDP that everyone who was elected is my government. There is a governing party, and there's a government. There is a difference.

The MLA workload: I'll agree that between the miles they have to travel just to get from the Leg. to their office and their home, it is a huge disadvantage for the rural MLA. That needs to be considered in all the decisions that are made.

We talked quite a bit, some of the guys before me, about municipal overloads. When you have within Bonnyville-Cold Lake four different municipal governments that that MLA has to deal with versus however many a guy in Edmonton or Calgary or Red Deer deals with, the structure is flawed. The flaw is that the economic driver – the economic driver – doesn't have a fair say. We are dictated to by people who have zero comprehension because they're three, four, five generations removed from the hinterland.

Do I think the constituency boundaries should be changed? Yeah. I'll agree with the fellow from Lac La Biche . . .

Mr. Moghrabi: The mayor.

Mr. Graves: The mayor. Well, you're still from there. You're still a fellow from there.

Mr. Moghrabi: It's okay.

Mr. Graves: . . . the mayor of Lac La Biche county: equalize it some because – sorry, Craig – in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency I am outnumbered by the town of Bonnyville and the city of Cold Lake. So we're rural, but we're semirural.

If you change things the way that they did federally, I'm in with Fort McMurray. Other than for a few horses that they got out of the fire, there are no farms up there. Absolutely none. So do I have a say federally? No, because the importance is the oil.

They talked about infrastructure and how it's destroying the roads. I'm not on a highway; I'm on a side road. I have over 300 oil field trucks a day going past my farm. Do I complain? No, because I burn fossil fuels. Without them my tractor, my combine don't run. But it creates a challenge for me in getting my produce out, in getting from field to field, and in moving my livestock, because I am a mixed producer. Maybe I'm just mixed up.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thanks.

If we had to adjust the constituency boundary, notwithstanding that I hear you clearly that you don't think that should be done, do you think it would make sense to include the Cold Lake weapons range in your constituency, as has been suggested?

Mr. Graves: Where's Craig? Has he got something to throw?

Actually, I don't see where it's relevant. Yes, there are camps up there, but my oldest son works for Cenovus, and he takes the bus every day. There's basically no population there, you know. Yes, the camps are there, and if the military has their way, those camps won't exist.

The Chair: Okay. So at the moment there's a shadow population but not permanent residents.

Mr. Graves: Well, yeah. Craig is right that there are a lot of them that fly in, but there are a lot that live within. There are buses for Cenovus that come from Lac La Biche. There are also buses from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, daily.

The Chair: So, in your view, is your trading area in Bonnyville-Cold Lake closer to Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills or Vermilion-Lloydminster?

Mr. Graves: Oh, man. Paradise Hill and Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan.

The Chair: Right.

Mr. Graves: That's just on the farm side.

3:00

The Chair: That's okay. My family farm was in Meadow Lake, so that's okay.

Mr. Graves: Oh, okay.

Unidentified Speaker: You should have told us that before.

The Chair: I might have been quizzed. I could have been in trouble.

Okay. Questions?

All right. Thank you so much.

Mr. Graves: Thank you for your time.

The Chair: All right. Well, thank you to everybody who spoke and to the people who came up who hadn't registered and contributed so much. I'm sorry we don't have more time to spend, but we are on our way down to Vermilion.

Our report will be on the website on or before May 31. We'll make specific recommendations for each of the 87 constituencies, and we invite your further comment at that time. We'll be back in late July, early August. Sorry about the timing of this, but we didn't have any control over that. We look forward to hearing from you further.

Thanks very much.

[The hearing adjourned at 3:01 p.m.]

