



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

Calgary

Tuesday, February 21, 2017
1:16 p.m.

Transcript No. 16

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Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Calgary

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[Justice Bielby in the chair]

The Chair: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for coming out, and thanks for being patient to wait until our official start time. I was tempted to start a few minutes ago, but I didn't want to miss anybody who was counting on us not starting until 1:15.

I will point out that people have registered for different times throughout the afternoon, so even though the room looks pretty empty right now, in our experience in our hearings to this point, people do tend to filter in just before the time they've signed up to speak. I'm expecting that's going to happen this afternoon as well.

I'm Justice Myra Bielby. I'm a judge of the Court of Appeal of Alberta, and I live in Edmonton, but at the moment I'm also chairing the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Alberta. With me are the other commissioners: to my far left, Jean Munn of Calgary, Laurie Livingstone of Calgary; to my far right, Gwen Day of Carstairs and Bruce McLeod of Acme.

Since we started our work on the Electoral Boundaries Commission, a number of people have asked: why are you doing this now, and what exactly is your task? I thought that I'd start off by making a few comments about that.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission has been created to research and make recommendations to the Legislature as to how and where our provincial constituency boundaries should be changed to ensure the continuation of effective, proper representation by our MLAs in future provincial elections. Now, we'll all remember from school that representation by population is a principle of democracy, and that is that everyone's vote should be relatively as effective as everyone else's vote in any election.

Our commission's work is needed particularly at this time because Alberta has experienced such a huge growth since the time of the last Electoral Boundaries Commission, in 2009-2010, say, eight years ago. When our Statistics Canada census figures from 2016 were released, on February 8, we were all, I think, rather proud to see that Edmonton and Calgary were the fastest growing cities in the country. I noticed that it depended on which newspaper you read as to which of those was number one and number two, but in any event metropolitan Calgary and metropolitan Edmonton were both over 14 per cent population growth, and you had to go down to Vancouver, at 6.9 per cent growth, to get the third-largest growing city in the country. That rate of growth has been matched in the rest of the province.

Since the time of our last Electoral Boundaries Commission, notwithstanding the outflows due to the recent economic downturn, our population has increased provincially by more than 14 per cent, by more than 600,000 people. That has impacted the design of our electoral constituencies in the province.

How is that? Well, Alberta has 87 provincial constituencies. If you look at the map here on the screen, that's the outline of each one of these constituencies. There's another map in colour on the wall, which shows the names of the constituencies and, in blue, the population of those constituencies in 2009-2010, which is the basis for the current constituency size that we have now, and, in red, the change in population, the current population as revealed by the census figures released last week.

We the commission have no power to change the number of 87. If you remember last time, you might recall that the Legislature increased the number of constituencies to help deal with the increase in population size. They went from 83 to 87 constituencies. That didn't happen this time. The Legislature left the number at 87. We can't change that. If there was going to be a change in that, it

would have had to have occurred before the commission was constituted, and it didn't. Basically, I've been saying that we've got the same pizza, and we're just dividing it up into 87 pieces. Our challenge is to decide the size and the shape of each one of those pieces.

Of course, we all know that each constituency elects one MLA in each provincial election. There are 87 MLAs sitting in the provincial Legislature. Our population has increased by 14 per cent. In 2010, the last time this was done, each of Alberta's 87 constituencies contained an average population of 40,880, but today the average population size is 46,697. That figure is reached by dividing 87 into the province's current population of 4,062,609 people. As I just mentioned, these figures are taken from the Statistics Canada population data just released. We're fortunate in having available really current information for the work of this Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Our challenge is that our population growth has not been equal in each of the constituencies. The 600,000 people that moved into Alberta did not move equally into each of our 87 constituencies. No surprise there. They've moved disproportionately into some constituencies and not into others. Whereas in 2010, when the last Electoral Boundaries Commission finished its work, half the province's constituencies were within 5 per cent of the provincial average figure and 85 per cent of them were within 10 per cent of the average figure, today the populations in our constituencies range from 17,129 people in our smallest constituency to 92,248 people in our largest constituency, which is Calgary-South East, at the bottom of the Calgary map there on the wall, the lower right-hand corner. This variation has arisen, as I say, because the people who have moved into Alberta have moved disproportionately into certain constituencies: Calgary, number one; Edmonton; Red Deer; Grande Prairie; and Fort McMurray.

Our job as the Electoral Boundaries Commission is to make recommendations to the provincial Legislature as to how to change our constituency boundaries so that we can better reflect certain principles. The first principle, of course, is that each voter's vote should be relatively equal to other voters' votes, subject to an overwhelming or overriding concern for effective representation. It's not simply a mathematical exercise. If it was, we wouldn't have to be here. We'd simply sit down with a ruler and a pencil, and we'd divide the province up into 87 squares, each of which has the same number of people, and our work would be done. But the legislation that controls the Electoral Boundaries Commission, which is called the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, says that we're to consider other factors in addition to population density, and those include common community interests and organizations.

We're to try as much as possible to avoid dividing up communities with common cultural interests and backgrounds in developing constituencies, and in particular we're to try to avoid dividing up First Nation reserves and Métis settlements. We're to respect community and neighbourhood boundaries within Calgary and Edmonton, so we're to try to avoid, if we can, dividing neighbourhoods up between two constituencies. Elsewhere we're to respect municipal boundaries, so we're to try to avoid dividing up towns and villages at all if we can manage that. Where possible we should use a geographic feature to form one or more of the boundaries such as a river or a major highway or a range of mountains or whatever.

But this isn't a closed list. We can consider any other factor which bears on your MLA's ability to effectively represent the voters in your constituency. So we're looking for public input, your input, in going around the province – this is our third week of conducting these hearings – and inviting people to tell us what they think is important in their MLA's ability to represent themselves,

with a goal of developing clear and understandable boundaries for each of our 87 constituencies.

I thank everyone who's registered to make an oral presentation this afternoon. You'll certainly be given priority, and anybody who's here who hasn't registered who'd like to speak will be invited to do so at the end as time allows.

1:25

Now, in addition to the oral presentations that we've received at our public hearings, we received 749 written submissions by the deadline of February 8 from various people in Alberta. We invited them via our website, www.abebc.ca, by e-mail, by social media, and by post. I'm pleased to say that there's been a great response in regard to the written submissions. Last time, in the course of a year they had 500 written submissions. This time, in the course of six weeks we got 749 submissions. Now, I think that's because we made it easier to send in those submissions. You could just go onto our website and type in your submission. Nonetheless, there was a great uptake on that.

We're going to consider all the information we get from the public hearings, from our written submissions, and census information, meet together as a commission, review the boundaries of each of the 87 constituencies and also their names, and come up with 87 interim recommendations. They'll be compiled in an interim report, which we have to file with the provincial Legislature by May 31. That will then be published on our website and also, I'm sure, on the Legislature's website, and we'll invite further public comment on the specific recommendations that we're making. My hope is that once people see the specific recommendation that affects maybe their constituency, they'll again have some observation to make about what our ideas are.

We'll have another round of public hearings in relation to suggestions on the specific recommendations in late July, early August. We'll then fine-tune our recommendations and file them with the Legislature in our final report before October 31 of this year. In the normal course of things the Legislature will then consider those sets of recommendations and may well – in fact, it always has in the past – pass legislation amending the boundaries in accordance with the recommendations in the report so that the new constituency boundaries will be in place for the next two provincial elections.

This is all set out in a piece of legislation, as I said earlier, called the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. This most recent version was passed in 1990, but the first version was passed when the province was created, more than 100 years ago. It's been revised from time to time. This current piece of legislation requires the calling of the commission every eight to 10 years. It said that this commission had to be created before October 31, 2016, and it was. It dictates the timelines for filing our interim report and our final report. It describes how the composition of the commission is made up. It's chaired by a judge normally – I am a judge – has two rural and two urban representatives, and has two representatives appointed by the government and two representatives appointed by the Official Opposition in consultation with other opposition parties. So we're all working together on the commission to work toward getting the best possible recommendations for the constituency boundaries in Alberta.

Equality or parity of population, as I say, isn't our only consideration in undertaking this work. 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 from provincial average, where necessary, of up to 25 per

cent above or below the average figure and, for a maximum of four constituencies, up to 50 per cent below the average population.

As it currently stands, there are two constituencies that fall within this special or exceptional group. They're up against the boundary with the Northwest Territories. We've got Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley, which in fact has a population now 51 per cent lower than the average, so it has to be adjusted by us to bring us within the requirements of the legislation, and Lesser Slave Lake, which has a population 41 per cent below average.

We're here to invite your input as to what you think we should do. The legal implications of our work say that we have to look at each constituency by looking at the provincial average of 46,697, then looking at the number of people who live in a given constituency, comparing that to the average, seeing whether it's above or below the average. In a couple of constituencies it appears to be almost right on the money, but the rest are a little bit above or a little bit below or quite a bit above, quite a bit below. In the latter case we have to then decide whether there's any acceptable reason for leaving them so much above or below the provincial average or whether they should be moved and, if so, why they should be moved to achieve an acceptable number. Then we'll record that for each of the 87 constituencies. Of course, you can see that when we make a recommendation regarding one constituency, it affects all of the neighbouring constituencies because if you move a boundary so that the next-door constituency has some of your population, well, there's a ripple effect all through the province every time you move a boundary.

Hansard is here. The staff is here. They're recording everything that is being said in the hearing. It will be available on our website orally and in a written form within the next couple of days, and all of the written submissions that we receive will be posted on our website in early March so they're available to everybody.

For each one of you who speaks, in addition to anything else that you have to say, I'd invite you to comment on your constituency and whether you think a boundary should be moved and, if so, specifically where you think it should be moved to. We've had some really great suggestions this morning about fine-tuning certain boundaries within Calgary and in the environs of Calgary. I think those are especially helpful to us because we don't know everything, of course. Even though two of our members here are Calgarians, people who live in a certain constituency are much more familiar with the particular boundaries and the neighbourhoods it encompasses, and if there should be a change or something is illogical or what have you, those people would be the best people to tell us about that.

Now, we've got these maps on the wall. There's the map of Alberta, the same one as you see on the screen, which is two in from the right. There's the map of Calgary constituencies right at my right here and then the map of constituencies that surround the city of Calgary. So if you have a recommendation to adjust a particular boundary, I might invite you to come up. The clerk will give you a marker, and you can mark on the map where you think the boundary should be. He'll take a picture of that, and then we'll have the assistance of that photo when it comes time to actually do our work and deliberate and decide what recommendations we're going to make. We don't want to lose the benefit of sometimes what's a pretty specific description, so hopefully having it marked on the map will help us.

Thanks very much for listening to all of that.

I'd now invite our first registered speaker, Wayne Anderson.

Mr. W. Anderson: For *Hansard* my name is Wayne Anderson. I'm the MLA for Highwood. I'm here to talk a bit about my constituency, Highwood. It's a constituency that I've lived in for

well over 20 some-odd years. It's a very brief oral presentation. My understanding is that there will be other representation later on this week from our Wildrose friends on behalf of our caucus mates to talk more in detail about some recommendations we may be making regarding some of the boundaries.

Again, Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity. Respective commissioners, thank you very much for your diligence in your duty to this because it is definitely a duty that you've got. It's a daunting task considering the pizza analogy, one of my favourite foods. That being said, now that's recorded in *Hansard*, by the way, so everybody will be able to know and reference that some day for the media.

I want to talk a bit about Highwood. As you know, the electoral boundary for Highwood in 2010 was changed. The Electoral Boundaries Commission at the time, which took effect in the 2012 election, downsized the constituency of Highwood. The area called Blackie to the east was given to the Little Bow area, and the area of Cayley to the south was given off to Livingstone-Macleod constituency.

That being said, the main gist, I believe, in 2010 was to keep the economic corridor of High River, Aldersyde, and Okotoks in play. That's a corridor that has a huge economic benefit to that area. That also being said, there's a huge social benefit to that. In the centre is the town of Aldersyde, and there has been a sportsplex, an arena put in place which both areas, High River and Okotoks, and other areas in De Winton and Davisburg take advantage of for various events. There's cultural, there are club sports, and there are social clubs that meet kind of in that centre area, that corridor also having the ability to transport goods and services with a rail system and two major highway routes. It's imperative, if we want to continue growing in that area long after I'm gone, that that Aldersyde corridor remain in place. That's one of the things I'd like you to consider.

1:35

Now, the northern boundary is a natural boundary, and I'm really proud and glad to hear that you're looking at natural boundaries. The northern boundary for Highwood is the Bow River, and that is the southern boundary for the city of Calgary city limits. That boundary is still in place, and I recommend highly that you keep that specific boundary in place. To the east of us is the Gladys Ridge area and 256th Street down highway 557 to the Aldersyde turnoff – the Aldersyde turnoff, as I said before, is really the centre of the constituency, if you will – down to highway 2. Highway 2 runs directly south to High River. In 2010 the electoral boundaries changed, so south of High River is the south end of the constituency now. That runs over to 96th Street, which runs directly north towards the city of Calgary again. So you can see Highwood just sits south of the city of Calgary but remains very much a rural-urban constituency.

Now, you've got the two major centres. You've got High River and Okotoks. The High River population, I think, has had a very small increase. It's a little under 13,000 people, I believe, a small increase of about 150 people. I'm going to talk a bit about that, maybe, if I can recall, and put it on the record. In 2013 one of the most tragic events in history happened in southern Alberta, and that was the flood. High River was one of those constituencies that was heavily impacted by the flood. That economic change or that economic turn put a lot of people in a very tough situation, where a lot of people left the city, and a lot of businesses left the city. A lot of them have slowly come back. It's very, very trying for that city. I've worked very closely with the town, with the MD, with the current government to talk about disaster relief funds and the disaster relief program. We've slowly managed to turn the corner, I think, on rebuilding High River. You can see by the statistics and

the numbers that we ran just recently that there's been a small increase in the population out in High River, but in 2013 a lot of people left the city and did not return, and a lot of businesses left and did not return.

Now, that being said, Highwood kind of sits in the middle, almost in the northern middle boundary of the MD of Foothills. We work very closely with the MD on various infrastructure issues. We've talked about some of the growth areas, and I'm very cognizant of what the MD's strategy and plan are moving forward. We sit in kind of like almost one-third of the MD of Foothills. Mostly true is that for the synergy of it we also include the Foothills school division and the Christ the Redeemer school division as well. Christ the Redeemer built a new school in the Davisburg-De Winton area, very close to my neighbourhood. So you can see that the town and the constituency and the MD and the educational system are making investments in that area.

Now, Highwood, for a rural constituency, is relatively compact compared to other rural constituencies. I believe this was part of the consideration by the 2010 commission at the time to keep the economic corridor in place and keep the rural and urban centre well balanced, if you will. There are a lot of rural businesses in there. There are a lot of what we call feedlots, a lot of grain farmers still along the riverside, the riverbanks of the Highwood River, and still a lot of rural development going on as well as in the urban centre.

Now, to quote some other individuals, High River is particularly a smaller town, more rural, if you will, more of a retirement community for a lot of the farming community areas, so a lot of those people there – you can literally drive through High River. You don't need your signal lights because everybody kind of knows where you're going. It's that small a town.

Okotoks is almost quite different. It's a younger town. It's more of a satellite for south Calgary, where a lot of people exit the city in the morning and come back at night, a lot of younger families. That's the town that's growing more and more as we speak. I think their population has gone up a couple of thousand since the last census was taking place. We looked at the census numbers last week, and we'll discuss that later. So, as I said, populationwise there's been a slight increase in the area of Okotoks, rural acreages, and as I said earlier, the 2013 flood had a direct effect on High River.

Now, one of the reasons why I wanted to come here today and not just talk about Highwood as a constituency and the fact that it has changed – I still think we're well within the parameters, and I don't really see any areas right now for boundary change. I'm believing that in the future – in the future, not this go-around but maybe in the next go-around, when the commission meets again, hopefully we all will have moved on and retired, some of us. That being said, I think the area 27, where the Gladys Ridge area is on the east side, would be an area you may want to consider moving into the Little Bow constituency because along that road there, along that east side, there is a natural boundary called the Highwood River. Just east of the Highwood River is another main street that runs strictly from 552 all the way to 557. There's a road that runs along there as well which would be a perfect natural boundary running right along the Highwood River and still would cut that area off, so poll 27 potentially I think in the future. That's my recommendation for future speak, if you will.

Now, not to take up too much more of your time, because my nose is running and I'm getting over a cold, my staff and I put together some numbers as well. Looking at your numbers and our numbers, we're still well within the boundary, I think, for not moving any boundary changes, well within the plus or minus 25 per cent. But our numbers are a little different than yours. You said you've come up with the latest 2016 numbers. We used the same

numbers, and we're about a 4,000 or 5,000 difference. We're coming around . . .

The Chair: We've had this problem before. Our numbers come from the Statistics Canada federal census, that was effective May 10, 2016. Censuses – I'm never sure whether that is censuses or censi, but anyway – that are based on municipal censuses which were done in 2016 often produce a different result because they take into consideration a different area of the city.

Mr. W. Anderson: Yeah.

The Chair: That may be the explanation there. But the numbers we're using: the legislation says we have to use the federal census in our work.

Mr. W. Anderson: Understood. So your numbers are 54,000. Ours are around 50,000 but still within the 54,000.

The Chair: Fifty-four thousand nine hundred seventy-eight, 18 per cent above the average.

Mr. W. Anderson: Which means we're still within the parameters of the plus or minus 25 per cent is what I wanted to emphasize. So that being said, I'm open to any questions or any issues you wish to raise with me. Thank you very much for your time this afternoon.

The Chair: Of course. Having interrupted you, I'm going to ask the first question. You're 18 per cent over, and we have to look at that. We have to consider all possibilities. You're right. Legislatively we could not touch something that was 18 per cent over, but we have to consider our options. If we had to reduce the size of Highwood, if we decided that we needed to make a recommendation to reduce the size of Highwood, you've already indicated that the Gladys Ridge area might possibly make a good match with Little Bow. Is there any other area of Highwood that could be moved into another constituency and respect the community of interest that you've described, with the people who live in Highwood being, as I understand it, agriculture, agricultural service industry, and suburban Calgary residents?

Mr. W. Anderson: Yeah. Not having the numbers readily available to myself on poll 27, but that poll into Gladys Ridge area is the one I would recommend considering. I can't think of anything else that would make any difference. Potentially maybe something to the west, but most of that's still all agricultural area as well. I'd say poll 27 would be the one I would consider. I can stand up at the map and point at it if that's what you wish.

The Chair: Okay. Well, what I'd really invite you to do – and the clerk's going to give you a marker so you can write on the map there; it's got plastic on top of it, and he'll take a picture of it – is write the dividing line between what is in your view, your experience, really the agricultural part of the western side of Highwood as compared to the part where there are more suburbanites from Calgary. Do you follow what I mean?

Thanks.

Mr. W. Anderson: Sure.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, if you'd come forward and give him the marker, that would be great. Thanks very much.

Now I'm going to turn to my fellow commissioners and ask if anybody has any questions.

Okay. Just one follow-up from me. That part to the west that you've just kindly marked off for us, thanks very much: in your

view is that similar to the composition of the part of Livingstone-McLeod that it's immediately next to?

Mr. W. Anderson: Yes. It would be.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.

1:45

Ms Munn: Do you have any idea what the population of polls 27 and 28 would be?

Mr. W. Anderson: I just said earlier, ma'am – it's on the record – that I did not know the polling numbers for 27. I'm assuming that since you have the latest Statistics Canada numbers, which we thought we had – you obviously have different numbers than we do – maybe you want to research that. I couldn't tell you that.

Ms Munn: Would it be appropriate to consider highway 2 and putting 27, 28, and 29 . . .

Mr. W. Anderson: No.

Ms Munn: No? Why is that?

Mr. W. Anderson: Well, 27, 28, and 29 . . .

Ms Munn: That whole eastern part?

Mr. W. Anderson: Yeah. You've got inside the Highwood River as a natural boundary for 27, so 28 is actually a peninsula. This whole area here: this is a peninsula. This sits up on fairly high land. This is the Davisburg peninsula, and the Highwood River runs just east of it, so the Highwood River is a perfect natural boundary.

Ms Munn: I see.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Any other questions?

Mr. McLeod: Do you happen to know what the population of High River is?

Mr. W. Anderson: About 13,182, somewhere in there. Actually, I do. I can give it to you right here – just bear with me for a moment – 13,584. Does that coincide with your numbers?

The Chair: We don't have it broken down. I'm sure that we could get them broken down, but at the moment we just have the constituency population.

Mr. W. Anderson: As I said, since the last census the population of High River has only increased by about, I think, a little under 300 people.

The Chair: That would be the last municipal census?

Mr. W. Anderson: That's correct.

The Chair: Anything else?

Mrs. Day: I was just going to ask you if you see your friend to the east, Little Bow, at minus 14, as needing some population. You mentioned 27, which is – what did you say? – Aldersyde.

Mr. W. Anderson: No. That's Gladys Ridge.

Mrs. Day: The Gladys Ridge area?

Mr. W. Anderson: Yeah. That's just east of the Highwood River.

Mrs. Day: Okay. Do you know if that's acreage area or largely farming area at this point?

Mr. W. Anderson: It's mostly farming area except for the ridge along the Highwood River. Anything along the Highwood River is mostly acreage homes. The other side of the road would be the borderline, I would say. On the other side is all farmland. That would have been north of the Blackie area, and that whole area was the one that was seconded in 2010, so it's a natural progression to keep moving into that area. That area and further east of that and further southeast of that was the original Highwood constituency in 2010. That naturally moved, and Highwood was condensed, so it would be a natural progression for Little Bow to move into that area. That's why I mention it. It's all agricultural, actually.

Mrs. Day: So it would be cohesive with the other folks in Little Bow?

Mr. W. Anderson: That's correct, yeah.

Mrs. Day: I see. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Anything else?
Okay. Thank you so much.

Mr. W. Anderson: Well, thank you very much.

The Chair: All right. Our next registered speaker is Alexander Shevalier. If you could tell us the constituency in which you live, Mr. Shevalier.

Mr. Shevalier: I'm actually making a presentation about the whole province if that's okay.

The Chair: That's okay.

Mr. Shevalier: I live in Calgary-Currie.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Shevalier: Justice Bielby, members of the commission, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for allowing me to make this presentation today. My name is Alexander Shevalier, and I am the president of the Calgary & District Labour Council. The Calgary & District Labour Council was chartered in May 1905, and we support about 60 different affiliated unions and locals, representing about 44,000 members. In your initial comments you stole some of my presentation, so thank you.

According to the 2016 census Alberta has a population of about 4,067,175 residents. The size of each electoral division should be about 46,749 since no seats will be added. The law allows for a variation of plus or minus 25 per cent, making the maximum size 58,436 and the minimum size 35,062.

I would suggest that you try to keep the populations as close as you can. New Brunswick and Saskatchewan try to keep their variations within 5 per cent and Manitoba within 10 per cent. Alberta law, obviously, says 25 per cent, and the federal government and every other province says 25 per cent as well.

The law says that in prescribed circumstances you can have up to four divisions that can be 50 per cent below the average, and while it's not ideal, it is reflective of the Supreme Court decision in the Saskatchewan Reference case that Canadians have a right to effective representation. I'll quote Justice McLachlin when she said:

Relative parity of voting power is a prime condition of effective representation. Deviations from absolute voter parity, however, may be justified on the grounds of practical impossibility or the

provision of more effective representation. Factors like geography, community history, community interests and minority representation may need to be taken into account to ensure that our legislative assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic. Beyond this, dilution of one citizen's vote as compared with another's should not be countenanced.

I looked at some of the sizes. Lesser Slave Lake is 76,038 square kilometres. I've looked. It's about the size of the country of Serbia.

The Chair: Also Belgium when I looked.

Mr. Shevalier: These are huge amounts, and they don't have a large population centre, so I'm very sympathetic to those cases. Even then, they're going to have to be looked at because some of them have dipped far below the legislated average.

What I want to say is that this should not be framed as urban versus rural. It is simply demography. The population is growing, and it's primarily occurring in Alberta's cities. I think that part of your recommendation could be that representation needs can be met with more generous travel budgets, additional offices, and Internet and phone meetings. You know, an MLA that has to travel the size of Serbia will have some challenges. There'll need to be a redistribution of seats across the province because the growth has been focused in Alberta's cities. Alberta continues to urbanize, and that'll need to be reflected in the seat distribution.

The city of Airdrie will need to be split a little bit into an urban seat and an urban-rural hybrid. It's not ideal, but it exceeds the maximum allowable now and, as well, the city of Medicine Hat. Both have increased above the 25 per cent average.

I would suggest that the city of Calgary may have to add an additional seat or two seats. Since 2009 the city of Calgary has added about 173,765 people, or a Wood Buffalo and Red Deer combined. Calgary, according to the census, has 1,239,220 people, and if you divide that into 26 seats, it's a population of 47,662, slightly above the provincial average. If you do 27 seats, it's 45,897, slightly below the provincial average. If we keep it at the current 25, we're looking at an average population of 49,569.

Additionally, the city of Edmonton has added 150,107, or the population of Lethbridge and Airdrie combined. If Edmonton has 20 seats, each electoral division would have a population of roughly 46,627, and if Edmonton keeps 19 seats, it would have 49,081.

The cities of Lethbridge and Red Deer have maintained their population relative to the population of Alberta percentage-wise. Despite the recession they continue to grow. I'm not sure how you're going to manage the situation of Wood Buffalo. I don't know what effect the fire had on the population because I don't know when the census occurred, if it occurred before the fire or after the fire.

The Chair: Just as a factual interjection, Statistics Canada did an updated census after the fire. We received the results of that last week. There was a drop of 9,100 people, largely from Fort McMurray-Conklin.

Mr. Shevalier: Okay. Then I cede the point.

1:55

The Chair: We're thinking along the same lines.

Mr. Shevalier: Yes.

Within the cities – and I'm agnostic as to how you're going to redistribute – there's going to need to be a redrawing of the maps across, I would suggest, every city. In Calgary we've annexed. There are new communities in the periphery of the city, and the city's downtown core has also grown in terms of its relative population.

Again, the legislation states that you should, as much as you can, keep communities together, so please keep communities together because when communities are divided, it makes for confusion. My MLA has expressed his concerns about how he gets calls from Calgary-Elbow all the time, and residents call Calgary-Elbow from time to time.

Please keep contiguous divisions. I'm not sure why Wetaskiwin-Camrose is noncontiguous. I don't get it.

The Chair: I think it is contiguous.

Mr. Shevalier: I think it's noncontiguous.

The Chair: On my map it's contiguous.

Mr. Shevalier: There's one little section that isn't contiguous when I looked at the map.

The Chair: That's the jog around the Indian reserve?

Mr. Shevalier: Yes.

The Chair: So you want us to cut through the Indian reserve?

Mr. Shevalier: No. I'm not sure what it is. I don't know why, what the rationale for keeping it noncontiguous is.

The Chair: It's contiguous. It's just that they've put the reserve within one constituency.

Mr. Shevalier: Okay. Right. If that's the rationale, great.

The Chair: You're okay with that?

Mr. Shevalier: Yeah.

The Chair: I'm not sure they did that perfectly, from our written submissions, but I think that might have been the idea.

Mr. Shevalier: Okay. In conclusion, each riding is obviously going to have to increase in size since no additional seats were added. As much as you can, please keep the variation to a minimum. The commission should look at adding new seats to the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary. The cities of Lethbridge and Red Deer maintain their seats. The rest of Alberta will need to be redistributed accordingly.

The Chair: Okay. The price of coming is that you have to answer questions about Calgary-Currie. We don't want to miss the opportunity to ask people who actually live in these ridings about their riding so that later, when we're deliberating, we don't say: gee, we wish we'd done this or that.

Mr. Shevalier: Right.

The Chair: In looking at Calgary-Currie, it looks like you're 5 per cent above the provincial average now, which isn't a huge amount, but knowing the constituency as you must, is there any part of the boundary of that constituency which you think doesn't make sense, that perhaps should be adjusted to account for natural roads, bridges, waterways, or that otherwise makes better sense being part of another constituency?

Mr. Shevalier: The community of Sunalta if you had to lob off a part of it. That could easily be given to Calgary-Buffalo. Yeah, Calgary-Buffalo would probably make more sense if you're going to lob somebody off.

The Chair: Okay. So that's to the eastern part of Calgary-Currie, is it?

Mr. Shevalier: Sorry. I'm thinking relative to where I live. Sunalta is 17th Avenue and 14th Street, heading towards the river, so it would bridge nicely into Calgary-Buffalo more than it would go anywhere else.

The Chair: All right. Aside from that helpful observation, again, just because we have to consider all possibilities, if we could not avoid moving a boundary of Calgary-Currie to try to hive off 5 per cent population, do you have any other suggestions aside from the one about Sunalta?

Mr. Shevalier: No. On the far western region you hit a major road, so you'd have to cut it up along a major road, which doesn't make sense. Along 14th Street is another major road, so I'm not sure where – Sunalta is the one that makes sense to me because 17th Avenue is already a natural boundary. It's a major road in the area. Other than that, you'd be looking at making it look odder than it already looks.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much.
Anybody else with questions?

Ms Livingstone: I'm not sure if you have an answer for this one, but you had suggested that the centres of Calgary and Edmonton should receive at least one more seat each. Do you have any suggestions, since we can't add more seats, where those seats should come from?

Mr. Shevalier: I will leave that thankless task to you because I don't know. The demography is simply indicating where the growth is occurring, within the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary. I'm not sure. I don't think any constituency is going to volunteer to be the one that disappears, so the answer is: I don't know the answer to that question.

Ms Livingstone: I thought I'd try, anyway.

Mr. McLeod: You talked a couple of times in your presentation about the urban-rural balance. Can you expand on that a little bit?

Mr. Shevalier: Alberta is urbanizing, for lack of a more artful term. I don't know how you achieve the perfect balance, but demography is just happening. It needs to be reflected in the seat distribution.

Mr. McLeod: In Calgary-South East there they're up against highway 22 and Dunbow Road. When you go south from highway 22, you find a lot of large acreages, but it's urban in the sense of that, sure, there's ranching going on, but there's not, I would call, high-intense agriculture going on in there. So there is that community of interest between them and the city in a sense. They either come into Calgary or they go to Okotoks, and Okotoks comes in to work.

Mr. Shevalier: Right.

Mr. McLeod: Do you consider those rural-urban kind of hybrids, as we've heard them called? Is that a working way to do things also?

Mr. Shevalier: My understanding is that within the boundaries of Calgary – I don't know if you're permitted to do it, like, within the city of Calgary, an urban-rural hybrid. Maybe you are.

The Chair: Let's say that we are just for the purpose of discussion.

Mr. Shevalier: For the purposes of discussion, I'm not sure what the answer would be because I'm not as familiar with the southern outskirts. I grew up in the north, so I know the north better than I know the south.

The Chair: Okay. So let's change that. If in our work we concluded that the large population in Airdrie couldn't be contained within a single constituency in the future and we looked south into moving that into Chestermere-Rocky View and then possibly into the northern part of Calgary to try to make something closer to the provincial average, how do you think that would work, looking at the population between the southern boundaries of Airdrie and the northern boundaries of, say, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill?

Mr. Shevalier: Oh, I wish I'd prepared more on each riding. I'll give you the thoroughly unsatisfactory answer of: I don't know.

The Chair: No. No. Thanks, and thanks for being prepared to be on the hot seat.

Mr. Shevalier: Unprepared to be in the hot seat. Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks.

All right. Larron Northwest. Good afternoon.

Mr. Northwest: Hi.

The Chair: Could you start by telling us the constituency within which you reside?

Mr. Northwest: Okay. We're part of the Wetaskiwin-Camrose constituency, and my partner, who is going to help me today, is from the Drayton Valley-Devon constituency.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Northwest: [Remarks in Cree] Good afternoon. I just wanted to do an introduction in my Cree language. My Cree name is Mahihkan, which is wolf, but my English name is Larron Northwest. I'm one of the council for Samson Cree Nation located in Maskwacis, Alberta. I want to thank the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission for giving us a few minutes of your busy schedule to come and do a presentation on behalf of the people of Maskwacis.

2:05

I bring greetings on behalf of our four chiefs of Maskwacis. As part of our culture, you know, I'm offering each of you some sweetgrass here, which I'll give to you at the end of our presentation. I ask my colleague here – she'll introduce herself. She's got a better reading voice, so I brought her to come and help me out today. I want to thank you once again.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Wildcat: Thank you. My name is Anne Wildcat. I'm from the Ermineskin Cree Nation, and I'm also on the tribal council. Again, on behalf of our Ermineskin Cree Nation we appreciate this opportunity you've provided us. I'll proceed in reading the letter. It'll highlight some of our concerns and then after which time we could maybe express some additional concerns that we have.

The Chair: Sure.

Ms Wildcat: Appreciate that. It is addressed to yourself, Myra. It says:

The Maskwacis Cree People are situated in south central Alberta approximately 100km south of Edmonton between the City of Wetaskiwin and the town of Ponoka. The Maskwacis Cree People consist of four separate Tribes: Samson Cree Nation 137, Ermineskin Cree Nation 138, Louis Bull Tribe 138B, and Montana First Nation 139. The Four Nations of Maskwacis collectively look after the Pigeon Lake Reserve [area] 138A at Ma-Me-O Beach, 50km away from Maskwacis. Ermineskin also looks after Buck Lake Indian Reserve 133C, 116km away from Maskwacis. The Maskwacis People are Signatories to the Sacred Treaty No. 6 signed in 1877 at [Blackfoot] Crossing.

The population in Samson has grown in the last 8 years from 6992 . . . to 8436. The population of Ermineskin is 4210 and has increased from 3943 in the last 8 years. The population of Louis Bull is at 2285 and has grown in the last 8 years from 1884. The population of Montana is at 972 and has grown from 861 in the last 8 years.

We are physically divided when it comes to supporting a specific candidate for the provincial elections. Presently the people of Maskwacis are divided into 3 separate Electoral Constituencies. The Hamlet of Maskwacis is included in the Ponoka-Lacombe Riding; Samson and Montana . . .

The Chair: Okay. Excuse me. I'm going to interrupt . . .

Ms Wildcat: Sure.

The Chair: . . . so that you could speak slowly, so that I could write the gist.

Ms Wildcat: Oh, okay. Sure. You'll get a copy of the letter, too.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. But if you could, just so that I have it from both sources.

Ms Wildcat: Sure. Okay.

. . . are included in the Wetaskiwin-Camrose Riding; and Ermineskin, Louis Bull, Pigeon Lake, and Buck Lake [area] are [identified under] the Drayton Valley-Devon riding. This division impacts the potential of a First Nation . . . to run for MLA. This limits a collective voice for representation.

In the past, we have had local nation members put forth their names to run in the provincial elections. The recent candidate was Samson Cree Nation member, Katherine Swampy, who ran in the Drayton Valley-Devon Constituency as an NDP Candidate. The current electoral boundary creates a divisional situation that does not reflect a fair on an "effective representation" for the First Nations of Maskwacis when it comes to supporting one of our own candidates.

The Maskwacis Cree people share many common and political interests. The Maskwacis Chiefs and Councils meet on a regular basis to discuss common issues and concerns relating to the collective. Recently, the Maskwacis Cree people came together to declare Cree as the official language. Presently, the Maskwacis Cree are [collectively] working together to bring their separate school boards under a proposed umbrella of the Maskwacis Education Steering Committee.

As a distinct . . . Nation, we want a say with the rest of Albertans and Canadians in addressing government matters and decisions that affect our people. The people of Maskwacis have never been consulted nor have given . . . prior, or informed consent on electoral boundaries running through our traditional lands, which invisibly splits any effort for any fair and effective representation. Therefore, the people of Maskwacis are requesting input in the review of the electoral boundaries. The Chiefs of Maskwacis would like to recommend that the Maskwacis people have their own Electoral Constituency and have a seat that represents our best and collective interests.

According to Statistics Canada dated March 14, 2016, the population of First Nations in Alberta was listed at 116,670, the Metis at 96,870 and 1,985 for the Inuit people, with a total population of 215,525 Indigenous Peoples [identified] in Alberta [that year]. The average population is 48,884 per constituency in the 87 ridings in Alberta. We believe Aboriginal people of Alberta should be represented with 4 Indigenous MLAs. As a people, we have a Constitutional Right to vote as it states in Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Also, with Canada adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) the province of Alberta should make every effort to include Indigenous peoples in the governance systems and ensuring fair and effective representation for all Aboriginals. The articles of the [United Nations Declaration] that relate to our right to be involved in the governance systems and that help support this . . . submission are stated in Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 13-1, 18, 19, 20, 31-2, 35, and Article 36.

Our population in Maskwacis continues to increase and many of our people are demonstrating stronger interest with the many forms of governance systems and structures throughout Canada. The Maskwacis Chiefs and Council would like to meet with the Commission to discuss and share our thoughts on this important matter. We'd like to recommend an Engagement Session to dialogue, in good faith, a more detailed expression of our concerns in with how we view is a fair process when it comes to mapping out the Alberta Electoral Boundaries.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to this opportunity to share your thoughts with an audience that would allow for a clear expression of our input into this review process.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much for coming along, and thank you for your letter, which I read when I was reading through the written submissions over the weekend, and also there was another letter from an individual making the same point.

So that we more fully understand the problem with the reserves being divided among three constituencies, I'm going to try to put my hand on the map of the Wetaskiwin-Camrose and Drayton Valley-Devon constituencies if we happen to have them in our package. I'm giving a big hint to our staff here in case we don't because I'd like you to maybe just point us to exactly what we're talking about. Okay. I found Drayton Valley-Devon here. All the maps were redrawn last week because of the census so we're practising on you. I apologize for that.

Mr. Northwest: I was asking Aaron to give us one of the nice, big maps there so I can really show what we're talking about with our reserve being broken into three.

The Chair: Right. No. Exactly. We have small models of some of these maps, but . . .

Ms Wildcat: Maybe while you're trying to locate the map, I'd like to also mention that Maskwacis straddles two counties, and that's Wetaskiwin to the north, above secondary 611 highway west and east. That's the division. So Wetaskiwin county to the north and then Ponoka to the south. Most of us do our business – whereas Wetaskiwin from the core part is only about eight miles and it's 12 kilometres to the north and Ponoka is, like, 12 miles south.

The Chair: If I could just to interrupt for a sec. I've got the Drayton Valley-Devon one here, but we don't seem to have the Wetaskiwin-Camrose. We don't have that.

Ms Wildcat: Or the Lacombe-Ponoka? It's three.

The Chair: Okay. It's partly shown on this, you know, the surrounding areas of this map. If I were to hand this to you, ma'am, could you draw a line? If we were just forgetting all other considerations and you were going to design a constituency that contained the four bands that you've described to me, draw that circle or draw that shape.

Ms Wildcat: Sure.

Oh, can I get just one more? I failed to identify Buck Lake. That map's so tiny that my progressives are, obviously, not as good as I thought they were.

The Chair: I understand completely, I assure you.

I understand what you're saying about wanting your own constituency, and we have to consider all possibilities here. I also was listening, but I didn't quite catch all of the population, but my impression was that it wasn't 46,000 in total. If we couldn't fulfill that request but nonetheless wanted to consider putting everything in the same constituency, would you consider you're more closely aligned to Drayton Valley-Devon, Wetaskiwin-Camrose, or Lacombe-Ponoka?

2:15

Ms Wildcat: In the past it's always been primarily Wetaskiwin. Then, eventually, when Ponoka began to become a little more populated, we slowly started sliding into their constituency. We have found that Drayton Valley is too far off for us. Even just looking at the map there, you can see that Maskwacis is located in the far bottom southwest corner, if you will, and Drayton Valley is way over here, so we're finding that our interests are not best served with this particular boundary.

You know, we recognize the fact that we are a federal entity, being a First Nation; however, we have programs that have been divested by the federal government to the province such as child welfare and the NRTA, the natural resources transfer act, which deals with lands and resources. Those are some of the issues that we have that we feel that we'd be best served – our current population within Maskwacis alone is 17,000 with just the band membership itself. But we have anywhere from 4,000 to 5,000 additional people residing in the community because of, you know, spouses, children, or relatives coming to stay with other relatives within Maskwacis, so we're a large-sized group. We were estimating that probably, approximately 80 to 90 per cent of our people still reside on the reserve.

As you are aware, on the news we're always bringing up the issue of housing shortages. I know that specifically in Ermineskin we did a feasibility study two years ago, and back then we identified that we were 408 houses behind. You know, our people are there.

Yes. Wilton Littlechild once expressed to us, you know: if you're not at the table, you're going to be on the menu. We prefer to be at the table. Therefore, we appreciate this opportunity that you gave us to come and speak to you.

The Chair: Just for kind of an out-of-the-box idea – we heard this when we were up in Fort McMurray. Somebody made this suggestion, which was new to me, and we've raised it with other aboriginal presenters subsequently – they didn't necessarily embrace it, but I'm going to offer it to you – and that is the idea of having a virtual constituency for aboriginal people in Alberta. There wouldn't be any land, but anybody who was aboriginal and chose to vote in that constituency could choose to vote. This isn't within our jurisdiction on this round, but we have the ability to make recommendations. That would be a possible way to create a position for an MLA or MLAs that would just have an aboriginal

constituency. Do you think the people you represent would be interested in exploring that concept?

Ms Wildcat: I think it would depend on the type of authority assigned to this virtual. If it were just a token opportunity, then, no, we definitely would not support something like that. We would like something where we can actually advocate and have voting authority and that type of opportunity, like a regular MLA.

The Chair: No. It would be just the same as a regular MLA: a seat in the Leg., ability to vote, represent a political party. What I understand is that there would be different candidates from political parties running, but only aboriginal people could vote. It wouldn't be tied to one particular area of the province because we don't have, I understand, any particular area with anywhere close to 46,000 aboriginal people living contiguously with one another, but it would represent, possibly, people with a greater commonality of interest than we currently have. Have you ever talked about that sort of thing?

Ms Wildcat: Well, we did identify it in our letter. We did say: maybe, potentially four of those. So, you know, that is the direction that we kind of, I guess, offer a counter-offer of possibilities. Yeah. You're thinking around the same lines as we have.

The Chair: It's just an idea for another time.

Mr. Northwest: I also know that the Confederacy of Treaty Six and some of the other treaty areas have their big chiefs' meetings, and I'm surprised that they haven't done a submission themselves because I thought maybe – one of the ideas that I had was to maybe take all the First Nations lands in Alberta and figure out the population, and maybe people will support, you know, a certain number of First Nations people just within the reserve boundaries. Then all those reserve boundaries are kind of separate from the other ridings that they fit within, right?

The Chair: That's a possibility. The other model is more like a European model. In some countries they want to guarantee so many seats for women. So women can choose to vote only for women, but it's not related to their neighbourhood or their town. There would just be so many guaranteed spots for women in their Legislature.

I think this idea was kind of along that line, so there'd be maybe more flexibility than if you actually had to find a land mass to tie the population to that would vote, because this would allow urban native people to also participate if they chose to rather than just people who live on reserves. Anyway, I wanted to run that idea by you just as a possibility.

Ms Wildcat: Yeah. Considering that we have 48 First Nations in Alberta, this is something that definitely we can run by – twice a year all the chiefs of Alberta meet at what they refer to as the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs. That's maybe an idea that can be introduced to the chiefs. Maybe introduce the idea by letter first to each of the chiefs and get the feedback, what happens there. For us specifically, though, I think that's something that would definitely tweak a lot of people's, a lot of chiefs' and councils' interest. Specifically, though, in our community we are severely affected by the representation and by being divided into three areas, as you can see by the map, the way Wetaskiwin just kind of . . .

The Chair: Absolutely. Would you happen to know approximately what the population is of the 48 First Nations in Alberta?

Ms Wildcat: I think . . .

Mr. Northwest: With just Stats Canada and what we read out, including the Métis and the Inuit, I think the total population of First Nations is about 215,000.

The Chair: Okay. But there's a bit of slippage, if you understand what I mean, with Métis because they don't have to register anywhere, and of course maybe some people really live on reserve and live as if they were First Nation. Just the registered number of First Nation . . .

Mr. Northwest: It's 116,000, I think it says on the letter there.

Ms Wildcat: In the letter we indicate all four, so we take about 10,000 off that number.

Mr. Northwest: There are 116,670 First Nations registered in Alberta according to census Canada.

The Chair: All right. I just wanted to run that idea by you.

Any other questions?

All right. Thank you, and thanks for coming and sharing. I am really grateful for the map because I did read your letter, but I wasn't quite – I didn't want to rely on my own understanding. Thank you so much.

Okay. Our next presenter is scheduled for 2:30, so I think we'll take an eight-minute break at this point, taking us up to 2:30.

[The hearing adjourned from 2:23 p.m. to 2:32 p.m.]

The Chair: Okay. We'll get going again.

Mr. Alan McNaughton, if you could come forward. Hello.

Mr. McNaughton: Hello. I was actually going to make a joint submission with Don Ray. Don was actually going to make the presentation. I think he's just coming in.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. McNaughton: I think he thought there was one speaker before us.

The Chair: Okay. That's all right. We'll just wait till he comes, but perhaps you could give me your constituency.

Mr. McNaughton: Calgary-Varsity.

The Chair: And that's the same for both of you?

Mr. McNaughton: Yes. I could answer questions about Calgary-Varsity, if you've got any, before we start.

The Chair: Sure. I think your colleague might have just joined us here. Just before he sits down, I note that you're about 4 per cent under the average figure for constituencies, which isn't a whole bunch, but if we found in the course of our deliberations that for whatever reason we had to move a constituency boundary, either to pass population through or whatever, do you have any observations about which boundary it would make most sense to move, either in or out?

Mr. McNaughton: On the southeast of the boundary there's a little community called Point McKay, that could be easily added to the riding. It has very similar demographics to the rest of the riding, and it would be a very clear boundary because it's a community boundary, again, although I don't know how much population that adds. It's a fairly dense area.

The Chair: Is it part of Calgary-Mountain View now?

Mr. McNaughton: Yes, it is.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.

Mr. McNaughton: What's more difficult is to figure out on the northern or the western boundary where you could move it without it being quite odd, because those boundaries are such large roads.

The Chair: Just looking at the map for the first time now and looking into Calgary-Klein, what's the boundary between the two? Do you have any recollection of what that might be?

Dr. Ray: Well, the boundary with Calgary-Klein comes down from John Laurie and along 19th Street.

The Chair: Would there be any particular problem with crossing 19th Street to pick up some of the Calgary-Klein population if we decided we had to do that?

Dr. Ray: No, no. There's a strange little jog at the bottom, where 19th Street goes. When you reach 24th Avenue, it moves over to 18th Street, and that's purely to take into account the community boundary for that particular part. There is along that boundary – let me just pass out some maps, okay? Thanks, Alan.

Okay. If you look at section 79, that's part of a recreation area, and on the other side in Calgary-Klein there's a golf course there. Otherwise, 19th Street is not such a major street that it would interfere with people moving from one side to the other. John Laurie: that's another question.

The Chair: Right. Okay. Thank you. Well, I've probably taken you out of the order you planned to make your presentation in, so please go back to what you were originally going to say.

Dr. Ray: Okay. Well, we sent in a copy of our presentation. I'm not sure if you all received it. I'll just go over some of the highlights from it. This is a joint presentation by myself, Donald Ray, and Alan McNaughton for the Calgary-Varsity NDP EDA. For purposes of identification I'm an emeritus professor of political science at the U of C, and I created the first course on Alberta politics back in 1977. Alan is a businessperson, and he's lived in the riding since 1998.

We had two concerns. The first one was the electoral district of Calgary-Varsity. To summarize our argument there, we would say that basically things are fine. The riding comes close to the provincial average, to the magic figure of 49,000.

The Chair: Actually, that's been revised, with the new census figures, down to 46,697 people.

Dr. Ray: Okay. So, you know, it's fairly close.

Then we wanted to also address – along with that, we were thinking that if there was going to be an addition to the riding, it could well be in Point McKay, which has a population that's similar in many ways to those in the rest of the riding.

2:40

The second point we wanted to make was on the need for equity of representation within the province as a whole. This is a very serious problem. It has gotten better over the decades. When I was teaching Alberta politics in the late '70s, early '80s, there were all types of inequities such that it would take four or five urban votes to be the equivalent of some of the smallest numbers in terms of population for the rural ridings. The dynamic that we've seen there is that you have large areas and smaller populations. Even within the limits of 25 per cent above and 25 per cent below, if that was

implemented, then it would mean that something like one rural vote would be the equivalent of one and two-thirds urban votes. So there's that inequity there. We would argue for the basic principle that democracy works best when everybody has an equal vote.

The principle to be balanced there is the question of how to have rural ridings which are large in size and which can effectively represent their people. We argue in our paper that there are a number of mechanisms in terms of constituency office allowances – there are the fixed allowances, and then there are the more flexible allowances, which can be added for a larger riding – and that in the age of the Internet it's possible for electronic representation to take place. This is now possible. We're not yet at the stage where people can wake up and vote in a referendum on whatever issue they're concerned with, each and every morning, but we are moving to a situation where extensive communication can take place. We would say that we're concerned to make sure that that is taken into consideration.

We have spreadsheets using the data from – these are not based on the revised census but on the 2016 estimates. They're colour coded. Green represents those ridings which we saw to be pretty close, within about 10 per cent above, 10 per cent below. If you were to use those figures, those ones require perhaps less adjustment. The ones in the yellow band are ones where the range of divergence goes from 11 per cent to 15 per cent and then the ones in the orange, 16 per cent to 23 per cent, roughly speaking.

Then we said: take the four or five ridings which are the largest in terms of geography and the discrepancy between their actual populations. Those are the ones in red on the front. Then we go, at the very end, to the five ridings there, the ones in contrast to the first set of red constituencies, the ones which are overrepresented, say, with 25,000 in population, like Calgary-Northern Hills. When we switch to the ones which are underrepresented such as Calgary-South East, with potentially 79,000, you know, these are the areas that we would say: the red, especially, the orange.

Certainly, this is a good opportunity to try to narrow down the discrepancies from 25 per cent down to 15, down to 10. That, of course, is up to your judgment in these matters, but we wanted to bring that to your attention. I think in the interests of proceeding, if you take a look at the joint submission, which I think you've all got access to, that goes into more detail about those two questions.

Alan, would you like to add to that?

Mr. McNaughton: Just the summary: I think Calgary-Varsity is fine the way it is, and we need to move to more parity. The law allows you to suggest ridings that are plus or minus 25 per cent. It doesn't require you to, and certainly it allows you to sort of aim for a much, much narrower band and then let the variances over time drift apart until they're again corrected.

If you really want to get sophisticated, I guess you could look at projected growth in each of these areas. I don't know whether there's good data for that. For example, within Calgary-Varsity there's an entirely new community being created. Although it's an older area, it's actually going to have quite a bit of population growth coming from – they call it the University District now – the west part of the university campus.

I think that's the summary I'd have.

Dr. Ray: Yeah. I think you said that the projection was how many thousand people to move in there eventually?

Mr. McNaughton: Off the top of my head I think it's just under 12,000.

The Chair: Is that student housing or something else?

Mr. McNaughton: No, it's not student housing. It's an area of the land that the University of Calgary decided was surplus to the campus's needs, and it's been put into a land trust, and it's being developed for mixed use but mainly housing. It will have some pretty high-end housing. It's not really student housing, given the cost of the housing. It's an area that kind of surrounds the Alberta Children's hospital.

Dr. Ray: Yeah. You cite the figure of just under 12,000, but then the question is: when will people actually start to move in there? The first new occupants are in 2018. That is off in the distance.

Mr. McNaughton: Yeah. So whether that'll see Calgary-Varsity growing faster than Alberta as a whole, I don't know.

The Chair: Thank you.
Questions?

Mr. McLeod: If I may, you've outlined that one as potential growth. That's north of the Children's hospital and kind of south of Market Mall and that kind of area, wouldn't you say, all that university area? I'm visual. I used to live in Calgary, and I remember there was hardly anything there.

Dr. Ray: That's the area.

Mr. McLeod: Okay.

Dr. Ray: Whether it's south or east of Market Mall is a really good question.

Mr. McNaughton: It's kitty-corner.

Mr. McLeod: I think it's south and east.

Mr. McNaughton: South and east. It's sort of kitty-corner across the main intersection there.

Mr. McLeod: Oh, okay. I just wanted to get a visual where that was.

Was there any other development that's up in the Silver Springs area or anything up there that you're aware of?

Mr. McNaughton: None that I'm aware of that's of any, you know, significant development. The big development in Brentwood has partially taken place already although there'll be more taking place for some transit-oriented development, but the timetable on that is pretty far out, I think.

2:50

Mr. McLeod: Just one more question. You talked about 19th Street and that little jog down in the bottom, but the next major thoroughfare would be 14th Street. Is that too far to the east?

Mr. McNaughton: I think it depends on what you're trying to do, whether you're trying to add or subtract there. The little jog that's there is for the community of Banff Trail, I believe.

Mr. McLeod: But if you were trying to respect major roadways and things like that and rivers, if it's not 19th Street, even though, you know, 19th Street I know kind of wiggles all over the place, the next one is actually 14th Street, which is the main north-south one.

Mr. McNaughton: Correct. Yes.

Mr. McLeod: And you're saying that that would be too far.

Dr. Ray: That would add a very significant number of people to Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. McLeod: I just was wondering. Thank you.

The Chair: Anything else?
Thank you so much.

Dr. Ray: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: All right. At 3 we have Matthew Morrissey, but if Mr. Morrissey is here – I see no Mr. Morrissey. Okay.

We'll take a brief break, and I'll use this opportunity to speak to the journalism students who are here if they'd like to do that. Anybody else can join me if they'd like.

[The hearing adjourned at 2:51 p.m.]

