



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

Red Deer

Monday, July 24, 2017
10:55 a.m.

Transcript No. 32

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission

Justice Myra Bielby, Chair

Gwen Day
Laurie Livingstone
W. Bruce McLeod
D. Jean Munn

Support Staff

Robert H. Reynolds, QC
Shannon Dean
Aaron Roth
Shannon Parke
Tracey Sales
Janet Schwegel

Clerk
Law Clerk and Director of House Services
Administrator
Communications Officer
Communications Consultant
Managing Editor of *Alberta Hansard*

Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Red Deer

Public Participants

Pat Alexander, Reeve, Clearwater County
Erin D. Babcock, MLA, Stony Plain
Kathy Barnhart, Deputy Mayor, Town of Beaumont
Ian Borody
Lee Cooper
Scott J. Cyr, MLA, Bonnyville-Cold Lake
Elizabeth Hagell
Neil Korotash
Curt Maki, Deputy Reeve, Clearwater County
Eleanor Mohammed, Director of Planning and Engineering, Town of Beaumont
Richard Poole, Councillor, Town of Blackfalds
Kevin Smook, Reeve, Beaver County
Elaine Spencer
Doris Splane, Reeve, Athabasca County
Wes Taylor, MLA, Battle River-Wainwright
John Whaley, Mayor, Leduc County

10:55 a.m.

Monday, July 24, 2017

[Justice Bielby in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning. Welcome to this public hearing of the province's Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Before we get going, I'd like to introduce us. I'm Justice Myra Bielby of the Alberta Court of Appeal resident in Edmonton, but at the moment I'm also chair of the boundaries commission. With me in this task are, to my right, Bruce McLeod, the mayor of Acme; to his right, Gwen Day of Carstairs; to my left, Laurie Livingstone of Calgary; and to her left, Jean Munn of Calgary.

Together we were asked by the Legislature last October to form this commission under the provisions of an act passed in 1990 called the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, but various versions of this system have been in place since the province was created in 1905. It requires the province to establish a boundaries commission every eight to 10 years to examine the boundaries of provincial constituencies prior to the next election and to determine whether any recommendations should be made to adjust the sizes of those boundaries, taking into account a number of different considerations. As a result of that, we held public hearings in January and February in different parts of the province, including here in Red Deer. I must say that we had a great turnout in Red Deer, and I'm pleased to see such a good turnout this second time around.

After we completed those hearings, we considered the representations made at them along with the 749 written submissions we had received and came up with the set of 87 recommendations contained in this book, called our interim report. That's one recommendation for every electoral division, for every constituency. We didn't recommend changes in each case, but we talked about every constituency and what we recommended and why. That report was tabled with the Speaker on May 24, and the act then obliged us to undertake a second round of written submissions and public hearings to get feedback from the public as to the recommendations that we are making. That's why we're here today. We had nine hearings last week in various parts of the province, and this is our last hearing. With that and our 604 written submissions this time, we'll be gathering in the future to review those recommendations and the submissions and to decide whether we want to amend any of them and how they should be amended.

I want to review the rules here so that you can understand maybe a little bit about why we came up with the original recommendations and what we have to nonetheless consider, to take into account, on a go-forward basis. The legislation sets out an approach. The Supreme Court of Canada and the Alberta Court of Appeal have expounded on that, have talked more about what's to be done, and there's a structure that was created.

That structure requires us to, as a first step, calculate what the average population would be in each of our 87 constituencies if we took the whole provincial population and divided it by 87. Now, that's not relevant because we should be aiming at setting any particular constituency at the exact average of 46,697, that is arrived at by dividing our population of 4,062,609 people by 87. All of the data that we're using comes from the federal census conducted in May 2016. That's the most recent federal census, and the legislation requires us to use those figures. We look at each individual constituency in turn and compare the population in it to 46,697.

For example, looking at Red Deer-South – this must be our proposed here. Do we have an actual for Red Deer? Aaron, are there actual maps for any constituency here? Oh. Thank you.

Okay. Looking over my right shoulder here, when we started our task of looking at Red Deer-South, we saw that it had 50,296, 8 per

cent over the provincial average population. Our next task was then to decide whether we should recommend that the boundaries go in to bring the population closer to the provincial average, if there was any particular reason for that. The factors that we consider, set out in the legislation, are common community interests and organizations. We're to try to avoid cutting up common community interests and community organizations. That doesn't mean that you can't have more than one community interest or organization in an individual constituency. Every constituency in Alberta has lots of different communities of interest because we're not just talking about geographic communities. We're talking about people with the same ethnicity, the same first language, the same way of making their living, the same style of life, and that sort of thing. But the goal was not to cut those up if we could avoid it.

The next thing to consider was community and neighbourhood boundaries in Edmonton and Calgary in particular. While there are numbers of constituencies in each of those two cities at the moment, in revising that and considering whether additional constituencies should be added and how the changing boundaries should be reconfigured, we were to try to avoid cutting up neighbourhoods. In Edmonton there are over a hundred communities, with community leagues in each one of them. In Calgary there are, I'm sure, as many community organizations with community associations. This is particularly highlighted in the act. We weren't able to achieve that result in every case. In Calgary in particular there are many neighbourhoods that have a population greater than 46,697. It's quite dense in certain areas of the city, but where we could avoid cutting it up, we did.

The next consideration is municipal boundaries. We've attempted to avoid crossing municipal boundaries, and we were successful in regard to every village, town, and city except for those cities that are too large to have one constituency but too small to have two. Examples of that are Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, St. Albert near Edmonton. Happily, perhaps, for you folks here in Red Deer there's enough for two constituencies and not much over.

I should say in regard to cutting up neighbourhoods and divisions that the reason that we've got different recommendations here in Red Deer than we had the last time is primarily because people from your Deer Park community came and said: we don't want to be split up if you could possibly avoid it. They have been split in two in the past. We looked at that, and to avoid splitting them, to keep them together, that's why we have 13 per cent in Red Deer-South. Last time they split it and had it roughly equal, the same percentage over in both communities. But we took into account the community feedback, and we're interested in hearing what you have to say about that today if that's a concern.

Another consideration is that we're to follow natural boundaries if we possibly can. Now, that's not available in every constituency. Not every constituency has a major roadway or a major river that can form boundaries, but where those do exist, we have tried to use them. When you look at a constituency and you see that one boundary has a really wiggly line as part of the boundary, that's invariably where a river lies.

The act allows us to consider things that are relevant in the circumstances of the time even though they're not listed in the act. We've concluded that projected growth rates are relevant as well because Alberta has grown so rapidly in the last eight years, since the last time an Electoral Boundaries Commission did a review. Alberta has gained 600,000-plus people in the last eight years net of anyone who might have left due to the economic downturn in oil and gas. That's a growth rate of over 14 per cent. That's far and away the highest rate of growth in Canada. The next fastest growing area was the city of Vancouver, at 6.9 per cent, so you can see we've grown twice as fast as Vancouver.

The newcomers, largely from eastern Canada, didn't move equally into each of the 87 constituencies. Not too surprisingly, they moved into Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, and Fort McMurray predominantly, so the growth rates in those centres have been higher than the provincial average generally. Because there has to be an equal amount on each side of an average, that means the population growth rates in other parts of the province have been below the provincial average.

11:05

Virtually every constituency has grown. That's another testament to Alberta's incredible growth rate in the last eight years, the largest in history in terms of numbers, but, again, not equally, so we decided in a general way that we would take that into account, particularly in Edmonton and Calgary. If an area was growing very quickly, the areas where we essentially created new constituencies, split existing constituencies up to create new constituencies, if those areas are likely to continue to grow in the next eight years because they have houses being built right now and people are going to move into them, we've assumed that they're going to grow faster than the downtown areas that are fully built out. I mean, you can still have infill housing and high-rises downtown, but it's generally slower than suburban construction. This isn't a scientific calculation of, you know: how many per cent does the city of Calgary think it's going to grow in this area versus this area? It's more our assessment of what's happened over the last eight years and projecting that that might or might not continue in the future.

Another consideration not in the act but that I think is important in the minds of many submitters is ease of communication within a given constituency. The overall test, the application of each of these factors, is effective representation. What does it take for a citizen to be effectively represented in the provincial Legislature? Communication is a very key, important component to that. How can that constituent communicate with their MLA if they want to? How can the MLA respond? How easy is that to do? What are the circumstances which foster that kind of relationship?

We also are directed and happy to consider the public input that we've received, including your input here today.

All of that will be put into our final report with any modifications of the earlier recommendations. We have to file that with the Speaker of the Legislature no later than October 23 of this year. After that, it will be up to the Legislature to pass legislation making any changes to provincial boundaries before the next election. It sounds like this is being done well in advance, but I understand the strategy is that the returning officers need a long time to get ready for a new election, particularly if there are changes in constituencies, and they have persuaded the powers that be in the government to give a long time for this. Sometime after our report is tabled, there will be provincial legislation, I expect, changing the constituency boundaries, to a degree, at least, in Alberta.

Thanks very much for coming out and taking part. Before I turn to the first registered speaker, I should say that we are being recorded here by *Hansard* today. There's a *Hansard* reporter here. Everything you say, everything I say will be recorded and put on our website, abebs.ca, tomorrow or the next day. There will be both an audio recording and a written transcript so that anybody who wants to can go onto our website and read the transcript of what was said or listen to the audio recording. I've been surprised at the number of people who've actually done that, so there are people out there listening. Just be aware of that as we go forward.

With that in mind, I'd invite Doris Splane to come forward to the microphone and have a seat.

Mrs. Splane: Good morning, members of the commission. Thank you for the opportunity to provide further feedback as you work towards a recommendation that will shape our province for the future. On behalf of Athabasca county council please accept the following thoughts on the proposed changes as you draft your final recommendations.

With the consolidation of four constituencies, we face one of the biggest changes of all the proposed electoral boundaries. One of the greatest concerns with the proposed division is its size and the effect it will have on the ability of the public to connect with their MLA due to significant distances between communities. Due to inconsistent and inferior telecommunications in rural areas modern methods of communication are not reliable in this proposed riding. We have experienced this with our federal representation, and we want to point out that the proposed riding is of a similar size and scale to the federal riding. We would hate to see our working relationship with our MLA and the provincial government be destined to the same fate.

When rural areas are grouped with larger urban areas, it is our experience that the urban issues tend to take priority. We feel that combining our small, rural population with Fort McMurray-Conklin and its population would put us at a distinct disadvantage. Athabasca county, inclusive of the town of Athabasca, the village of Boyle, and our eight summer villages, has a total population of 12,459. We feel that grouping areas with communities of similar size is important to the long-term success of the new electoral boundaries not only from the representation point of view but from the perspective of the rural voter, whose representation has been continually eroded. Voter apathy and lack of participation at the polls can be attributed to the perception that their vote doesn't matter provincially.

We feel the inclusion of trading areas is an important consideration as the commission concludes its work. Municipalities are increasingly working together to solve growth challenges and partnering to create regional economic growth. Our MLA is an important part of helping to create this success. Established trading patterns show a stronger connection with the Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock area and those immediately south of Athabasca county, including Smoky Lake and Thorhild counties. Our proximity to the capital region also means that people in these communities travel to Edmonton and St. Albert more readily than heading north or east. Trade patterns as well as health care referrals, education, and cultural events all draw us to the capital region.

If one speaks about the economic implications of changes to the electoral boundaries, there are stark differences between the Athabasca, Fort McMurray, and Lac La Biche regions. The only thing in common with Fort McMurray is highway 63. Our commonalities with Lac La Biche are also highway 63 and our joint senior housing project. While Lac La Biche's top industries are oil and gas, construction, transportation, and warehousing, Athabasca is primarily an agricultural area with some associated oil field manufacturing and forestry.

As municipalities look for partnerships with each other to apply for infrastructure grants and look toward the overall needs of industry, having commonalities between them will help this vision to become a reality for the future. We don't believe that what is proposed will serve us well. Article 14 of the act is specifically relevant to us. The proposed boundary will deny effective representation for our area.

In determining the area to be included in and in fixing the boundaries of the proposed electoral divisions, the Commission, subject to section 15, may take into consideration any factors it considers appropriate, but shall take into consideration

- (a) the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,
- (b) sparsity and density of population,
- (c) common community interests and community organizations . . .
- (g) geographical features.

Effective representation will not happen if decisions are made in strict adherence to the variance. In our discussions we noted that if inclusive populations within the rural municipalities of Athabasca, Barrhead, Smoky Lake, Thorhild, and Westlock were combined, the totals would come to within 92 per cent of the adjusted average population as targeted by the commission.

The Chair: Okay. Could you repeat that more slowly?

Mrs. Splane: Oh, sure. The last paragraph?

The Chair: Uh-huh.

Mrs. Splane: In our discussions we noted that if the inclusive populations within the rural municipalities of Athabasca, Barrhead, Smoky Lake, Thorhild, and Westlock were combined, the totals would come to within 92 per cent of the adjusted average population as targeted by the commission.

I also have copies that were there for you to follow.

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs. Splane: I understand that the commission has a difficult job in redrawing the electoral boundaries, and it is not one to be taken lightly. I'm here speaking on behalf of rural people who want to continue to have their voices heard. We're heading towards an electoral system where people living in urban centres will guide the future of this province, but I ask you to consider what the results of this move would be without a fair rural voice. On paper these boundaries are for electoral purposes only, but in reality they influence the rural people's lives more than just on election day.

Thank you.

The Chair: I'll ask the first question. Last week we heard from a former mayor of Athabasca who came expressing some of the same views that you've expressed here today, but she made the specific request, a different request, that being that Athabasca be added to the new St. Albert-Redwater constituency. She was of the view that the town of Athabasca had only 3,000 people, and she thought that that could be done without raising St. Albert-Redwater to illegal limits. When I hear your numbers today, they seem considerably larger, so perhaps you could give me your view as to the population of the town of Athabasca.

Mrs. Splane: Okay. I'm with the county. The county has just short of about 8,000, 7,800. The town would be close to 3,000 people as well, but we also have eight summer villages within our county, and we have the village of Boyle.

The Chair: Summer villages don't count unless the people live there permanently. People are only counted at one residence, so what we are calling the shadow population – workers at Fort McMurray, soldiers, summer village residents – may not count unless they live there permanently.

Do you count the 3,000 people in the town in your 7,800 in the county, or is that over and above?

11:15

Mrs. Splane: That's over and above.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Splane: As far as the summer villages it is a growing population. I noticed it was one of the things there. We are getting more and more permanent residents. A lot of them are retirees from McMurray, a few from the city. The McMurray people have left family behind, so they find the Athabasca area kind of central between them and Edmonton.

The Chair: What do you think about the mayor's idea of adding simply the town of Athabasca plus its surrounding areas to St. Albert-Redwater? If we added the full 12,000 people that you're talking about, St. Albert-Redwater might be above the 25 per cent above. But what about just adding the town? I know that would cut up the town from the county. I'm just throwing out ideas here because you're the second person who's spoken directly about Westlock, and I want to just examine the earlier speaker's ideas in the context of your views.

Mrs. Splane: We have a good relationship with the town. But I wasn't aware that they were looking at doing something separate, on their own. I think it would really confuse the people because where that boundary is, they are totally within the county boundaries.

The Chair: Right.

Ms Munn: Excuse me.

The Chair: Sorry. A follow-up, and then I'll let Ms Munn speak.

Also, under your proposed new riding of Athabasca, Barrhead, Smoky Lake, Thorhild, and Westlock what do we do with Morinville? This has been a recurring question because Morinville is huge and too big to readily be added to the other Franco-Canadian communities in the area without going over, and you would throw them under the bus as well. Where do you see Morinville going on your . . .

Mrs. Splane: There was no intention that way.

The Chair: No. I'm just joking.

Mrs. Splane: As far as commonalities and community I think you did just address it with the francophone. St. Albert, Legal: that whole region tends to be a similar type of population. I know there is a rural component in the Morinville area, but as I said, kind of the spokes on the wheel all lead towards Edmonton. I see them, perhaps, with that more urban style. They are a bit of a bedroom community, from what my experience is, of the capital region. But no intention to throw them under the bus. Just looking at what we could bring in numbers and the commonalities of the agricultural component and that sort of thing.

What the mayor had proposed . . .

The Chair: Former mayor.

Mrs. Splane: Yeah. I don't know what the direction was there. I haven't had a discussion with her.

The Chair: Of course. All right.

Ms Munn?

Ms Munn: Yes. If choices had to be made with respect to Athabasca county, would it be preferable, from your point of view, that the county remain largely intact, with one MLA, or would it be acceptable for part of the county to be in one constituency and part of the county to be in another?

Mrs. Splane: If it came down to that, I think we could live with that, but we do prefer to be together. I mean, I guess we'd have double representation then.

Ms Munn: Right. In terms of Athabasca and Boyle I understand that it might be preferable to keep them together. Would it be manageable if Athabasca and Boyle had different constituencies?

Mrs. Splane: MLAs? Oh. I hadn't thought of that. I guess, when we were looking at potential, we were looking at what was there in the past. Of course, our MLA represents our area and the Smoky Lake-Thorhild area, so keeping the county intact – I'm not sure I'm speaking on behalf of Boyle. I happen to live on that end of the county. I'm not sure where you would put them because I think they would have the same opinion as I have about being with Fort McMurray-Conklin – there's a vast no-man's-land in between there that seems like a natural boundary – that we keep everything in the south end intact, and then the north end will be more of a constituency of its own. But I don't have the numbers. I'm sorry. I have kind of looked at my area, not beyond.

Ms Munn: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: I've just sort of one request for feedback because you're in the general area. When we were further north last week, we had a submission that Buffalo Lake and Kikino would like to be in the same constituency as Lac La Biche, which would take them away from the rest of Smoky Lake. Do you have any sense of how many people would be in those two communities?

The second question is: do you think that makes sense, for them to be with Lac La Biche?

Mrs. Splane: Okay. Is Kikino not federal? It's a reserve. I'm not sure.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah. We still have that population there that votes provincially as well.

Mrs. Splane: Oh. Okay. Because I know Buffalo Lake is a settlement. People in both those communities, particularly Buffalo Lake, I think, go to both Lac La Biche and Boyle. I know a lot of people in the settlement have mailboxes and stuff in Boyle, that sort of thing, and some have in Smoky, but they're kind of in the middle there, and they go in different directions.

As far as numbers I have no idea at all what their numbers are. Kikino would be more Lac La Biche or Smoky Lake.

Ms Livingstone: Okay. Yeah. I'm taking all the feedback I can get on everything.

Mrs. Splane: Anything. If I know it, I'll let you know.

Ms Livingstone: Thanks.

The Chair: Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: Yeah. Thank you for your presentation today. I have two questions. The first one is: with our proposal for the new Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche I think we covered most of the county, Athabasca county, within one, didn't we?

Mrs. Splane: Yes.

Mr. McLeod: Okay.

Mrs. Splane: The county tends to be spread out. We have almost 2,500 kilometres of roads. When the ID came to us back in '95, we took in Wandering River, which is quite extensively to the north on highway 63. Yes. We did.

Mr. McLeod: The other question I have. Your definition of rural to urban, because you had a tendency – if I was hearing you right, you were thinking that even Athabasca, to you, is urban, the town. How would you describe the urban and rural split, then? Define it for me, please.

Mrs. Splane: Okay. I brought my husband with me down here last night, and we were looking over Red Deer. To me, Red Deer is a very rural city, even having the Westerner here on the weekend. I believe that's where the people are congregating. It happens to be the urban centre, but it's where the rural people come for their services. Athabasca is definitely the service centre for all of the rurals in the area. We do host or have Athabasca University there, which is a key component of the area, and a lot of people from Boyle work at the university. Until recently, when we lost our planer plant in Boyle, the men from Athabasca went to Boyle to work while the women from Boyle went to Athabasca to work. There are some real ties in those two communities.

Mr. McLeod: Okay. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Splane: You're welcome.

The Chair: Mrs. Day?

Mrs. Day: No. Thank you so much for the time and your thoughtfulness, coming today, and your submission. I really appreciate what you had to say. Thank you.

The Chair: So do I. I mean, it was very helpful because this is one of our trouble areas, for sure. The fact that Fort McMurray is another challenge area adds to the complexity . . .

Mrs. Splane: Oh, no doubt. Yes.

The Chair: . . . so it's helpful to hear from somebody who actually lives there.

Mrs. Splane: Well, thank you. I'm sorry that I had to come all the way here just to present, but I wanted to make sure that we got in, and unfortunately we got bumped a couple of times previously.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Mrs. Splane: Thank you for listening. Thank you.

The Chair: Our next presenter is Scott Cyr.

I didn't say this for Mrs. Splane, but if everyone could let us know the constituency in which they live when they start their remarks, that would be very helpful.

Mr. Cyr: May I approach, Chair?

The Chair: Oh, sure.

11:25

Mr. Cyr: Good morning. My name is Scott Cyr. I'm from the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency, and I am here to give an oral presentation to the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission. I am the local MLA for the area. First off, I'd like to thank the members of the commission for dedicating their efforts in this matter. Specifically, the members of the commission I'd like to identify are

Madam Justice Bielby, Bruce McLeod, Jean Munn, Laurie Livingstone, and Gwen Day. I'd like to thank you for your service.

I have four points I'd like to address. These are covered more thoroughly in the report to the commission that I've just handed you, but I will attempt to highlight them quickly in my presentation today.

The first point is about the communities served in Bonnyville-Cold Lake. The interim map shows that they are looking to add an additional 25 communities, which can be visibly seen on the map, along with two reserves. This will mean a total of 40 separate communities, two settlements, and five reserves within my constituency. Considering that each area is usually comprised of a mayor, council, chief, reeves, and community leaders and elders, this would mean almost tripling the number of communities within my riding. Increasing the size of this constituency will make it extremely hard for an elected representative such as myself to properly represent the people within the constituency.

The second point surrounds shadow population. In the report entitled *Shadow Populations in Northern Alberta*, which was prepared by the Northern Alberta Development Council, the author looks at the prevalence of shadow populations and highlights how current federal census data does not accurately reflect the true population of the region. According to the report the percentage of the population for Cold Lake region is approximately 29.5 per cent higher. While I recognize that the committee is making a decision on the federal data, I would not be doing my region a huge service by failing to state that the shadow population is a real problem. It is a substantial part of my community. I believe that this drastic increase will result in people having an MLA who is serving a significantly larger population than purported.

The third point is about the population being represented by the community. On page 36 of the interim report it states that the majority believes that the variance above 7 per cent of the population "can be supported as this is an area where future population growth is likely to fall well below the provincial average." This is an issue that I would like to address. In the constituency of Bonnyville-Cold Lake there are several major projects that are currently in the process of being started. I would specifically like to mention a few of the companies for these announced projects: Cenovus, Husky energy, Imperial Oil, Osum, and CNRL. There are more details within the report. Additionally, in the Electoral Boundaries Commission's population figures for Bonnyville-Cold Lake the population has increased about 10 per cent from 2009 to 2016. The commission's own statistics show that the region has not been declining and, in fact, has been increasing. This is echoed by the completed report by Stantec for a regional waterline. According to this report, dated April 7, 2017, the water consumption demands will rise due to our increasing populations.

The fourth surrounds common community interests. An artificial barrier is dividing St. Paul from the communities it services. The current boundaries will artificially divide the areas from St. Paul, where they would otherwise naturally share common community interests and organizations. It's also my belief that this would lead to voter confusion as to which MLA the constituents should be contacting for provincial concerns. The indigenous communities and 13 other surrounding community centres west of highway 881, which are purported to be added to the Bonnyville-Cold Lake constituency, also are serviced by St. Paul's hospital, commercial services, social services, and schools. As this is the largest population they are near, these communities have little to no influence on either Bonnyville or Cold Lake.

In summary, to the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission I'd like to conclude by stating as a whole that there are serious concerns with the near tripling of the communities served, failing to

recognize shadow populations, the drastic increase in population variance, and removing indigenous and rural communities from the St. Paul hub, which currently serves that population. My suggestion is simple. Move the communities west of highway 881, which is a natural boundary, into the boundary that the town of St. Paul resides in.

I recognize that as it is drawn, this boundary would further increase the population variance. But these communities should never have been removed in the first place.

Thank you for your time. I am looking forward to answering any questions you may have.

The Chair: Ms Livingstone.

Ms Livingstone: Just two questions so I understand what you're asking. A large part of your submission was that there are too many communities in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake proposed riding, but I also heard you say that you also want St. Paul added to it. Am I understanding that correctly?

Mr. Cyr: No. I'm looking to have the communities west of the 881. If you look, there's a little map.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah. I'm following on my map.

Mr. Cyr: On that map that yellow section needs to be moved into wherever the town of St. Paul is because that is where they're actually serviced.

Ms Livingstone: Okay. Do you have a sense of what the population numbers would be with that change?

Mr. Cyr: Well, we were trying to find the population numbers from there, and it looks like it's going to be anywhere from 2,000 to 4,000. If that's the case – and let's say that it's on the high end – then that will actually bring my constituency from 50,000 down to the 46,000. That'll put us right onto the provincial average.

Ms Livingstone: The other point I had was just one of clarification. You had said something about your constituency growing in size. Now, like many others, the absolute number of people in your constituency grew between the last boundary commission and this one, but the Bonnyville-Cold Lake riding was 15 per cent below the provincial average following the last commission, and it was 19 per cent below the provincial average at the beginning of this commission. Like many other ridings, while it's growing, it is not growing at a rate that matches the rate at which the province as a whole is growing.

Mr. Cyr: May I answer?

Ms Livingstone: Yeah. I just wanted to clarify that with you because those are the actual numbers.

Mr. Cyr: I do understand where you're going with that. The problem here is the shadow population. We were heavily impacted when the downturn happened. The problem we had before was that we had almost a zero per cent vacancy rate. Now we're sitting at almost a 25 per cent vacancy rate. Now, the problem we had was that permanent residents couldn't move into my constituency because of the fact that we had so much shadow population.

Now, with the shadow population that has moved out of my constituency, we have permanent residents moving into it because we have available housing. We also are anticipating that with the start of the several plants that are mentioned within the report, we are actually going to see our communities boom again. The

projected dates for most of these projects are looking like they're going to be 2019. You're going to see a large balloon of permanent residents get into my constituency once this has happened. We've got to remember, too, that these projects are long-term projects, not one month or six months but many, many years. Unfortunately, when you see the 2016 census, it doesn't take in the fact that we had a lot of my shadow population move out because of all the plants more or less completing at the same time.

Ms Livingstone: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Ms Munn?

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

The Chair: Mrs. Day? Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: Just one question. I understand the rationale or your thoughts about shadow population. Yes, there is a usage of services, but census Canada does not take those into consideration, so we can't even speculate. We've heard about Fort McMurray and the shadow population. We can't speculate what those numbers are. How do we deal with that, then?

Mr. Cyr: I did quote a northern development advisory committee report that had been done showing that Cold Lake is sitting at an almost 30 per cent shadow population above what the federal census is showing. So you're seeing a massive balloon that is not accounted for in my constituency. That's the problem here. Because we're right on top of the heavy oil deposit, we have a significant inflow and outflow of shadow population. Now, it's unlikely that we would ever see all of our plants suddenly stop investment in that area, but it's happened. We are looking at oil prices more stabilized. We are starting to see that there's more interest. I am looking to see that. It's exciting to see that these oil companies are announcing projects moving forward. We just need to see shovels in the ground. Cenovus actually does have shovels in the ground now for one of its plant expansions, so we are seeing some actual plants starting there.

11:35

Mr. McLeod: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much. Thanks for coming along and for your interest in the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you.

Ms Munn: Mr. Cyr, do you have another copy of your submission? This one just has title pages.

Mr. Cyr: Well, how about I give you this one?

Ms Munn: That would be great.

The Chair: Our next registered presenter is Pat Alexander.

Mr. Alexander: Good morning. My name is Pat Alexander, reeve of Clearwater county, and we have Curt Maki also as the deputy reeve of Clearwater county. He'll start off this morning.

The Chair: If I could just interrupt, what constituency is Clearwater county located in?

Mr. Alexander: Drayton Valley-Rocky Mountain House, the new one, but it's Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre in the old one.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Maki: Good morning. On behalf of Clearwater county council thank you again for providing us the opportunity to comment on the provincial electoral boundaries review. It is council's perspective that the commission needs to revisit the amendments forming the Drayton Valley-Rocky Mountain House riding and return the riding to its original boundaries or, alternatively, reduce the boundaries slightly to bring the riding closer to par with the rest of the province.

To account for effective representation, common community interests, and geography, the proposed boundaries need to be reduced. Council understands the challenges associated with boundary adjustments and, as well, that voter parity is an important consideration. However, we feel the proposed changes, with an increased population of 14,404, are unacceptable. Having such a significant shift in riding size and allowing for a variance of that scope unnecessarily makes our west-central region the single largest riding in the province, 17 per cent over the average.

Council also took exception to the report indicating that stagnant population growth in the west-central region was justification for creating the largest riding. The commission may have exceeded their mandate in this regard.

As our time is limited, we will summarize council's most recent discussions on the proposed boundaries.

Mr. Alexander: Thank you. Just to pick up a little bit on the stagnant part of the population, I think that if west-central has a bit of a stagnant growth at this point, having us go to 17 per cent over at this point in the hopes that the rest of the province will catch up to us is premature. I think that we would think that it would be addressable at that time, and that could be 10 or 15 years down the road. We're working fairly hard to create a sustainable community, and that includes working on trying to create growth in west-central Alberta.

I think that the report shows that it's only recognizing the numbers and not the geographical area of the constituency. Our constituency is significant in size, the one we have currently. The new proposed one becomes very, very large, and for one person to manage that on a daily basis or even on a weekly basis becomes very difficult. For example, on Canada Day our MLA visited six communities, which meant he had to have a driver, and he was on the road the whole day throughout the constituency.

It's different than urban in the sense that in urban areas you can have 50,000 in an urban population, and they can cover from one side to the other in a matter of half an hour. Out here it might take you three and a half hours to get from one end of this constituency to the other. I think it's just too taxing on an individual MLA to cover that amount of area. For example, the school graduations: we have six or eight graduations currently, all within a week at the end of the month, and there's an expectation in the community that they attend these graduations and speak on behalf of the province. It's just impossible for them to do it even currently, without adding another major centre and several small centres to that. We have, you know, five towns and one village and three First Nations that are all part of our existing one. Again, very taxing on an individual.

The Chair: I'd like to fly an idea by you that we heard several times last week, and that is to take Drayton Valley out of your constituency and put it into our new Devon-Parkland, which would require changes to Devon-Parkland, but those changes aren't of concern. That would take off part of the northern new constituency and join it to Devon-Parkland, and that would drop you to about a 2 per cent over variance. I imagine that you're not fighting too hard about that idea.

Mr. Alexander: No. I think that's an acceptable idea. We have that in the report, if you dropped it down to, you know, the Brazeau county line and then went east to Wetaskiwin-Camrose, and then Lacombe-Ponoka would be part of that. In discussion with our MLA he felt he could, you know, cover that area. As he comes back from Edmonton, he could come into that area at times. It does increase the area's size, but we also understand the difficult time you have of trying to create these new boundaries. That certainly, I think, is acceptable, in our view.

The Chair: Just secondly, do you have any other suggested variations on your constituency that would take out 8,000 people?

Mr. Alexander: No. But I do want to mention that in the south – that would be more in the south-southwest area – there's a place around Bergen that is kind of left out a bit. They would be brought into this constituency because access to that community would be a lot easier.

The Chair: Are you okay with that, too?

Mr. Alexander: Oh, yeah. I believe that community would be supportive of that, very supportive.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.
Mr. McLeod, any questions?

Mr. McLeod: Nothing. Thanks.
Thank you for coming.

The Chair: Mrs. Day?

Mrs. Day: Well, I guess I'm just thinking about the Bergen area south of Sundre. They would say that they're more connected with Sundre. Does your current MLA have a couple of offices in your riding?

Mr. Alexander: Yes. He has one in Sundre, and he has one in Rocky Mountain House.

Mrs. Day: So there is access to him fairly close there.

Ms Livingstone: And Rimbey. He's got an office in Rimbey, too.

Mr. Alexander: Yeah. Rimbey is also part of it. He goes east of Rimbey with this new boundary right down to the east side of Gull Lake.

Mrs. Day: Okay. I just want to go back over it. Drop it down to the Brazeau county line and then go east, and you lost me there.

Mr. Alexander: Yeah. Well, you would then go up to the boundary of, potentially, Wetaskiwin-Camrose and Lacombe-Ponoka on that east side. It would be approximately highway 13, but it's maybe a little bit south of that to keep the county boundary the same.

I think council is very appreciative that our community, like, Clearwater county, was kept within one constituency with the village of Caroline and town of Rocky Mountain House as we have a lot of regional services that we do together, and having us in the same constituency does make it a lot easier. Thank you for that.

The Chair: Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: I don't think I have any questions. Thanks.

The Chair: Ms Munn?

Ms Munn: I don't have any questions. Thanks.

The Chair: Thanks so much for coming along.

Mr. Alexander: Okay. Well, thank you very much for allowing us to do a presentation.

The Chair: Our pleasure. Thank you.
The next speaker, Richard Poole.

11:45

Mr. Poole: Good morning. I'm Richard Poole. I'm with the town of Blackfalds, and I'm in the Lacombe-Ponoka constituency.

First of all, we'd like to thank the commission for their hard work over the past almost a year now, and we recognize that you have a lot of challenges in front of you. We'd like to thank you, first of all, for keeping the constituency of Lacombe-Ponoka as it is. It was an important part of Mayor Stol's presentation when she presented last.

The reason I'm here today is to question your recommendation on naming. Blackfalds has experienced considerable and consistent growth over the past decade. From 2011 to 2016, while Lacombe grew 1,000, Blackfalds grew 3,000. Since Mayor Stol last talked, our census shows our community has grown by over 400 people, or 4 per cent, which is the goal that she promised that Blackfalds would meet, and we are around the 9,900 mark. We are the fastest growing community in Alberta.

There is no guarantee that our riding boundary will be altered in the next five, 10, or even 20 years, and when we reviewed your report, we didn't notice that any community of our size has not been named in the constituency. Given the uncertainty of when change may take place, it's not fair that Blackfalds should have to wait to be identified by name until this riding's physical boundary changes.

Currently our voting public closely associates with Red Deer due to that they have their own constituency. Blackfalds is a natural southern boundary, but the current name, Lacombe-Ponoka, does not reflect this. Between 25 and 35 per cent of our population of the constituency is in this area and associates with Blackfalds. For our citizens, both new to central Alberta and those who are struggling due to the continually changing federal boundary, we need to have changes that will reduce or take down every barrier to voting. Knowing your riding is a large part of this challenge.

Our request, based on the above reasons, is that you realize that the change to a Blackfalds-Lacombe-Ponoka constituency is not an exception to the recommendations that you made but a correction. As we all know, clarity will always serve the voters well, and that is the major goal of any constituency review.

The Chair: Is Blackfalds further west than Ponoka?

Mr. Poole: We are at the southern end of the Lacombe-Ponoka riding.

The Chair: Okay. Lacombe must be north of you. Is it east or west of you?

Mr. Poole: Ponoka, Lacombe, and Blackfalds are pretty well in a direct, straight line.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. McLeod: Following highway 2, right?

Mr. Poole: Following highway 2 or 2A.

The Chair: Okay. Nothing really is in the east? Not nothing, but no town of significance is in the eastern part?

Mr. Poole: No.

The Chair: Thank you.
Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: I guess I'm curious. Given that we generally don't change the names of constituencies unless we change their boundaries, don't you think that changing the name of the constituency when we haven't changed the boundaries would create confusion for the voters?

Mr. Poole: No. I think it would provide clarity. As I mentioned, between 25 and 35 per cent of the constituency voters are in Blackfalds. Because right now they relate to Red Deer, there's confusion as to, basically, what riding they're in. By creating this name, which most probably should have been done in 2003, when the constituency was made, we will provide clarity.

Ms Livingstone: Sorry. You think there is currently confusion that voters in Blackfalds think they vote in Red Deer?

Mr. Poole: Yeah. They associate with Red Deer, and they become less likely to vote because of that.

Ms Livingstone: Is that just your opinion, or is there data on that? Have you brought us anything?

Mr. Poole: I don't have hard data, but we do know that from anecdotal comments made in our community. I don't know how we could find hard data on that.

Ms Livingstone: No. I was just curious if there was something beyond anecdotal.

Mr. Poole: Thank you.

Ms Livingstone: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms Munn?

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

The Chair: Mrs. Day?

Mrs. Day: Just one. Our general leaning has been towards having two names, so would you suggest that we drop the "Ponoka" out of there and say Lacombe-Blackfalds or Ponoka-Blackfalds? Just curious if you would think that ...

Mr. Poole: When we looked at it, we noticed that there were several constituencies that did have three names in them, about seven of them.

Mrs. Day: That currently have, yeah.

Mr. Poole: That currently have. I think it's important to have the entire constituency represented. If any of them, it would be Lacombe taken out, but I'm not asking for you to do that.

Mrs. Day: Okay.

Mr. Poole: Ponoka and Blackfalds are the natural boundaries of that constituency.

Mrs. Day: The north and the south?

Mr. Poole: Yes.

Mrs. Day: Okay. Good. Thank you for your time.

The Chair: I note that Ponoka is not a city, nor are you. Lacombe has a population of about 3,000 people larger than you, accepting your population figures. Why would you argue that Lacombe should be taken out rather than Ponoka?

Mr. Poole: I didn't say that.

The Chair: Oh. Sorry.

Mr. Poole: I was asked a question, and I said that if any of them would be taken out, it would be Lacombe, but I'm not suggesting that.

The Chair: Okay. So why, then, if any of them were taken out, would Lacombe be the best candidate?

Mr. Poole: I'm not requesting that Lacombe be taken out. They would be the best candidate because they're in between; they are the centre of our constituency.

The Chair: Thank you.
Did I ask you, Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: No, you didn't.

The Chair: Your turn.

Mr. McLeod: My turn?
Thank you, Mr. Poole. You gave us some numbers in regard to census. What's the source of the census, please?

Mr. Poole: Our 2017 census.

Mr. McLeod: Your 2017 census. And what's the population of Blackfalds currently from that?

Mr. Poole: The official figures haven't been given out. We know that they've increased by about 4 per cent, so we are at 9,900, and that's give or take 20 to 50.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you for doing your presentation today.

The Chair: All right. Thank you so much.

Mr. Poole: I'd like to thank the commission for their hard work.

The Chair: All right. The next registered speaker is John Whaley.

Mr. Whaley: I do have a presentation and binders for you all.

The Chair: Please. Yeah.

Mr. Whaley: I think there are eight there, so there are spare ones if anybody else needs one.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Whaley: If you look on the right-hand side, there are two maps, so if you can take the proposed boundary ones off those, please, which is the one with lots of colours on it.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Whaley: Yes. My name is John Whaley. I'm the mayor of Leduc county, and certainly our ridings are Leduc-Beaumont and Drayton Valley-Devon at the present time. This is a verbal presentation. I've got some notes here. You've already received a copy of the letter that we sent on June 29, I believe.

If you look at this proposed map, when we had two ridings before and now we have seven, potentially, across our county, it doesn't make a lot of sense in practicality terms. It doesn't make any sense for the people who are voting in some of those small areas, and I say that because we need to make democracy transparent, open, easy for people to get out to vote. And there will be so many questions: "Where do I vote? Where do I vote?" I can see that it's not easy for the people living in those areas. I'll speak more on that a little later.

Certainly, from a practicality point of view for Leduc county, working with, potentially, seven different MLAs to get projects done, to get support – and certainly a lot of them would come from the urban area because it's such a small piece in Leduc county – it wouldn't make a lot of sense from a practical point of view.

11:55

The next point I do have to make is that, well, everybody has seen in the news media that Leduc county and the city of Edmonton have reached an agreement on annexation, which I'm pretty confident the government will not change. I hope that it stays in place. That shows something totally different from what your proposal is. The land asked from the city of Edmonton is by half what they originally put in for. I would like to see those things recognized and put forward.

The Chair: I'm sorry. I've missed that last point. You say that there is an annexation agreement in place between the city of Edmonton and Leduc county?

Mr. Whaley: Yes. That is what has been going on for the last four years. We've been working on this, and we've reached an agreement that's acceptable to all. The government still has to rubber-stamp this in due course. I'm hoping for a rubber-stamping. They have been known to change things in the past, but certainly when two municipalities like this have come to an amicable agreement, I hope that that will not be changed because it makes sense for us all. I'd like to see any proposed changes recognized in the new proposal.

As I say, seven municipalities. The east end of our county will go south there.

The Chair: I'm going to interrupt because I'm not following that, but I want to. Right now Leduc-Beaumont isn't the issue because we've recommended that Leduc-Beaumont shrink in size a little bit because of the annexation, the lands to be annexed. Leduc-Beaumont is the same size, essentially, in our recommendations on a go-forward basis as it would be now, so we're not making any recommendations.

So your concern is with the rest of Leduc county to the west?

Mr. Whaley: No. On the east side. You've split all these boundaries up.

The Chair: Okay. I'm talking about right now, not our proposal but at the moment.

Mr. Whaley: Okay. Yeah.

The Chair: Right now how many constituencies in part or in whole?

Mr. Whaley: Two.

The Chair: Which are they?

Mr. Whaley: That's Drayton Valley-Devon and Leduc-Beaumont. I mean, that's really what we're talking about now.

The Chair: So your problem hasn't arisen because of any changes we've recommended in Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Whaley: I'm not following you.

The Chair: We haven't essentially recommended any changes in Leduc-Beaumont, so we can't have made it worse because of that. The problem you are describing has to have occurred outside of the constituency of Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Whaley: Right. Yes. Okay.

The Chair: So we're going to the left across highway 2 into what is now currently called Drayton Valley-Devon and that we're proposing be recast as Devon-Parkland.

Mr. Whaley: That I'm okay with.

The Chair: Okay. So what other changes have we made that touch on Leduc county? Just if you could explain to me in words. I mean, I'm not disagreeing; I just don't understand.

Mr. Whaley: Where there were two constituencies before, now there are seven.

The Chair: Okay. Let's go through that. We know Leduc-Beaumont, and we know Devon-Parkland. What are the other ones that you say our changes would add that aren't there now?

Mr. Whaley: Okay. Those are the pieces coming out of Edmonton – right? – with small slivers coming down on each piece there.

The Chair: Put your finger on what you're referring to, please.

Mr. Whaley: Those ones there.

The Chair: Okay. That's Edmonton-South.

Mr. Whaley: Whatever you call them now, yes.

The Chair: Okay. That looks like Manitoba? All right. What else have we got?

Mr. Whaley: Okay. You've got two pieces on the west side of highway 2 there running down, two little narrow strips, right? Certainly, the blue one takes in that airport piece. Then you've got where Leduc-Beaumont or whatever it is wraps around the bottom there.

The Chair: That's Leduc-Beaumont wrapping around the bottom?

Mr. Whaley: I'm assuming that's what it is, yes.

The Chair: Well, it's your map.

Mr. Whaley: Then you've got that little square piece. Is that the Ellerslie piece or whatever you call it now?

The Chair: Yeah. That's Ellerslie.

Mr. Whaley: Okay. Then you go out to the east, and you've got this little piece of the county here, which is a little, narrow piece which runs down there, obviously to connect going south.

The Chair: Which is part of Battle River-Wainwright now?

Mr. Whaley: Yeah.

The Chair: Okay. That's been a third part already. It's currently part of your county, so you've identified a third constituency that your county currently touches, Battle River-Wainwright.

Mr. Whaley: Yeah.

The Chair: All right. So we're at four.

What's this big part out here with Thorsby? Do you know?

Mr. Whaley: That's the Drayton Valley one.

The Chair: Okay. You have at the moment Drayton Valley and Leduc-Beaumont. You don't want to grow. Let's talk about those in turn. If the annexation is successful – and we have provided for that; that's why you see these two encroaches into Leduc county – will Leduc county then lose that land to the city of Edmonton? It won't be part of Leduc county anymore.

Mr. Whaley: On the second map, if you look at this one with the blue on it, there are two little hatched areas in the top middle there. Those are the two little pieces that the city of Edmonton is proposing to annex from us. That's all.

The Chair: Right. Then will they come out of the county of Leduc once they're annexed? They'll be part of the city of Edmonton, surely.

Mr. Whaley: Yes.

The Chair: So two of those five constituencies will disappear as part of the county as soon as the annexation is complete?

Mr. Whaley: No. You've taken more in your proposal than we've agreed to on the annexation. You've taken twice as much.

The Chair: Okay. Just hang on for a sec. I want to get that down.

Mr. Whaley: Actually, you've taken the airport, and west of the airport you've taken, as is in the proposal.

The Chair: Is that because we expanded Drayton Valley-Devon in Devon-Parkland?

Mr. Whaley: No. You just expanded them out of the city of Edmonton coming down, whatever you call them now. You call them Edmonton-South and Edmonton-South West.

Mr. McLeod: May I?

The Chair: Yeah. Go for it.

Mr. Whaley: Sorry. There's some confusion here, I can tell.

The Chair: There is indeed.

Mr. McLeod: Because we're looking at it maybe differently. You're saying that the annexation doesn't go as far south, which would include the airport.

Mr. Whaley: Yeah. That's right.

Mr. McLeod: It doesn't go that far. It only goes up to . . .

Mr. Whaley: Highway 19.

Mr. McLeod: Highway 19, which is the Nisku highway, isn't it?

Mr. Whaley: Yes. That's right.

Mr. McLeod: But it does come down to highway 19. Is the annexation north of that?

Mr. Whaley: North of that.

Mr. McLeod: North of that is Edmonton. Okay. There's probably where we were going wrong, because we were under the impression that it would come down a lot further, John.

The Chair: We were told that it came down right to the northern border of the airport.

Mr. Whaley: That was the original proposal way back when. This is not the agreement that's been struck as of just a month ago.

The Chair: Have you, with all respect, read that agreement yourself, personally?

Mr. Whaley: Which agreement?

The Chair: The agreement that was reached a month ago that ends the boundary up at highway 19.

Mr. Whaley: I've been personally involved with this for four years, and I signed off on it, yes, so I'm on the hook for that.

The Chair: Excellent. It's been surprisingly hard to get information on some late-breaking things, so thank you for that.

Mr. Whaley: Sorry about that. The whole world seemed to know about that, so I'm sorry about that. We can send you a copy of that if that's what you wish.

The Chair: Would you do that?

Mr. Whaley: Yes.

The Chair: That would be very helpful. That's important because that affects our proposal for Edmonton-South as well as everything else.

Now, in regard to the part of the annexation that touches on the northern boundary of the town of Beaumont, do you have anything to say about that?

Mr. Whaley: That part is now what they call Edmonton-Ellerslie, that little square piece approximately. I suggest that when the town of Beaumont is here – and they're going to make a presentation a little bit later here – I'm fully in support of their presentation.

I'll just talk on your proposal here at the moment. There are a couple of solutions on the table as well, which I would like you to consider.

The Chair: Okay. We need to understand the problem, though, before we can understand the solution.

We heard from a candidate for mayor of Beaumont who says that we've picked up six quarter sections that we shouldn't have picked up in our map of the expansion of Edmonton-Ellerslie that aren't covered by the annexation. Just to give a heads-up to whomever is here who's interested in this, that's something we'd like to know about.

12:05

Okay. I'm still struggling to understand how we have gone from two electoral districts to seven, or to five if you don't count the parts that are going to be moving into the city of Edmonton, when we haven't changed the size of the Leduc-Beaumont electoral district.

Could you walk me through how you now encroach on Stettler-Wainwright when you didn't do that before?

Mr. Whaley: In the east end of the county we have New Sarepta.

Mr. McLeod: If I can, John, just one question: in your folder that's your county currently, right?

Mr. Whaley: Yes, it is.

Mr. McLeod: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Ms Livingstone has reminded me that we did move the eastern boundary of Leduc-Beaumont to the west to try to reduce some of its exceptionally high population, so in that respect we've shrunk that boundary. In doing that, did we somehow bring in part of Stettler-Wainwright? Stettler-Wainwright moved in.

Mr. Whaley: Maybe I can take a different tack here just a little bit. We are one of the counties around Edmonton. We're in the Capital Region Board, which is a type of regional high-level governance on a lot of things that we have to work jointly on here with all the urban communities within us. There are 24 communities here. I suggest that once you start splitting us up and putting us in different ridings, where the MLAs will know nothing about what's going on in the capital region, it will become immensely difficult for us to try and work with them on a continuous basis.

Certainly, we need to keep the communities together. We are one community. We want to keep this community feeling. The way it works now with this capital region is that we are connected within this region. If you start taking us down to Stettler and Wainwright and those sorts of areas, there is no connection with an MLA that potentially will come from those areas, and for that guy or girl to actually look after us and be part of it would be immensely difficult. From a practical point of view for us, having to deal with that would not be easy. That's at the municipal level. Then for the people themselves, they'll feel disconnected, and that isn't good for democracy.

Building on what Pat Alexander said before, distance can become a problem for this. It is a problem. It's big enough now, and we're trying to say that it isn't truly just a numbers game here. There are other things you have to consider. That's part of your mandate, I believe, as well in terms of how communities work and play together and where their trading areas are and where they come from. We just need to get people out to vote on a continuous basis, and we need to make it easier for them. That's part of what this is about, I believe.

I'll just draw it for you a little bit. In our county we have seven divisions. The west end of our county is a large geographic area which is sparsely populated, and that's because of Genesee taking up a lot of land, various reasons. It's purely farming land. In the east end of our county, where you've chopped it up in your proposal, there is a lot of country residential there. There are a lot more urban centres in that area that are fast growing. When you start putting those people in different areas from where they trade and play and work together, it becomes very difficult.

So I'm asking you, basically, to keep this in this capital region as one unit if you can. Certainly, the town of Beaumont will be coming forward with some resolutions as well, and I wholeheartedly support what they're going to come forward with as well. I think you're going hear that from a number of people.

This blue map here is a proposal and is one way of addressing it. If you want to draw a line down the middle somewhere, if you want to keep the two, the city of Leduc and the town of Beaumont, separated in different areas, we suggest and also we'll take another

proposal, that you can join those two together. The town of Beaumont: you'll see their proposal. In the county we're quite happy with that also; in fact, we'll be more than happy with it. If that was an option, we'd prefer that.

The Chair: What would the population be of your proposed Leduc-Beaumont constituency?

Mr. Whaley: I haven't worked those numbers out. Well, I'm looking at it purely from a practical point of view for the people involved here, and I'm leaving it to you guys to work out the numbers. There are other people in these rooms who have worked out that detail. I'm not into that.

The Chair: You understand that we can only go to a maximum of 25 per cent over or under the provincial average, and to even get to that, we have to be able to give good reasons. Now, certainly, the reason of fracturing your county is very worthy of consideration, but there are other counterweighing factors as well. Without having worked out the numbers, it's hard for us to just at a glance right now fully assess the impact of your proposal.

Mr. Whaley: I'll just make the point again that numbers aren't everything; 25 per cent is a guideline.

The Chair: It's a law.

Mr. Whaley: It's a law.

The Chair: I'm all about the law.

Mr. Whaley: Yeah. I think you have to get away from that and start looking at the bigger picture if we truly want everybody to live and work and play together here as one piece. I get it that the urban centres are growing. I have no issue with that. But you've got to make it practical for the rural areas that are left here. I mean, I make that point quite strongly here: find a way. You've been tasked as a commission to do that, and I'm asking you to look at that as a reality, to please do that. You'll see this across this province quite a bit. I know I've heard from a lot of rural areas saying the same thing. I sit on an AAMDC board as well, so I hear it from a lot of other counties across this province that they're not happy because it's being chopped up, the different trading areas where people play and work. I'm just asking you to take another look at some areas here if you wouldn't mind.

The Chair: We will. Thank you.

Any further questions or comments?

Thanks very much. I'm looking forward to the town of Beaumont's proposal.

Mr. Whaley: Sure. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Wes Taylor, please, is the next registered speaker.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you. It's Wes Taylor, MLA, Battle River-Wainwright. What I'm here to do is talk about that in a democracy people require and are entitled to direct access to their elected representatives. Access, however, is only part of the interaction. A representative must not only listen but hear what the petitioner says. Now, I urge this commission to hear this petitioner.

I believe that the commission is making a fundamental error. The error, using voter parity as a primary principle to drive the change, is wrong. Effective representation is a principle to which the commission should adhere. I evince the comment by Justice

McLachlin made in 1991 with the Saskatchewan reference case: “It is my conclusion that the purpose of the right to vote enshrined in s. 3 of the Charter is not equality of voting power per se, but the right to ‘effective representation.’” The 1991 Supreme Court ruling effectively ended the notion that voter parity or population has primacy.

The law flowing from that case guides all provincial commissions and is in the Alberta electoral boundaries act. At part 2 of the act are the redistribution rules. The simplicity of the redistribution rules gives me the confidence to challenge the commission’s interpretation and application. The commission’s task is directed as follows. Section 13: establish a provincial average. Section 14: take the factors that are contained therein into consideration in making its recommendations. Section 15(1): the population of a proposed electoral constituency should not vary more than 25 percent from the provincial average.

12:15

I believe that the commission has not followed this rubric. Instead, they have adopted the term “process.” The commission’s process frames the question, turning the exercise into a numbers game. I see insufficient evidence of section 14, of the countervailing factors being applied in the spirit that they were created. By contrast, the commission has invoked a provision in section 14 which says that they “may take into consideration any factors it considers appropriate.” The commission decided that future population growth was appropriate. I disagree. The commission’s task is one of righting the ship at a given point in time, this point in time. However, they elevate its importance. An entire section of the commentary is dedicated to this preferred factor. It contains the menace that more rural ridings would have been chopped had the commission not shown restraint.

I want to make these observations. The commission admits to not having the benefit of specific growth projections, yet they opined freely on the topic. By contrast, in the 2009-2010 final report the Capital Region Board’s specific growth projections of Edmonton were quoted. They were wrong by two years and 31,000 people. The lesson here is that making decisions without a firm evidence base is a definition of hubris. At Vermilion I witnessed the commission members, unfairly in my opinion, press individuals to provide to the commission’s contrived population problem. My answer is this. The commission should be aware that there are three identified areas in the process – Edmonton, Calgary, rural Alberta – that have respectively total populations that would be plus 5.1 per cent, plus 6.1 per cent, and minus 5.9 per cent of the provincial average.

The range is well within the 15(1) limits. Therefore, the real challenge for the commission is to acknowledge the mandatory section 14 factors and redistribute these populations sensibly throughout each discrete area. Whilst I appreciate the exercise may be tricky, I have heard MLAs and members of the public, at least from rural Alberta, tell the commission that wide but legal and legitimate variance from the average is not an issue for them. What they wanted is common sense applied to the exercise, recognizing existing county boundaries. That would be a good start. The variance allowed by section 15(1) enables a commission to do this and stay within both the spirit and letter of the law.

I urge the commission to listen to the advice and adjust its proposals accordingly. If not, you run the risk of verifying the statement made by MLA Jessica Littlewood at Vermilion. She said about the current proposals that this “plays into a narrative that the government . . . [doesn’t] . . . care about rural Alberta.” Perhaps the commission attempted to pre-empt the criticism, declaring on page 16 of the interim report that “Alberta is no longer rural.” However,

I say this to the commission majority. A vast number of Albertans do not accept that statement, nor do they accept these proposals.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks very much, Mr. Taylor. I would like to take a moment to clarify the law that governs us because you’ve given us an interpretation, but you’ve given us a very selective interpretation of the law.

Mr. Taylor: Okay.

The Chair: It’s true absolutely that our overarching goal is effective representation and making recommendations that assist Albertans to be effectively represented by their MLAs. The right is the right of the Albertan, not the right of the MLA, to effective representation. That’s what Justice McLachlin, now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, said in 1991.

However, that’s not the only law that governs us. There have been lots of litigation on electoral boundaries in different parts of Canada since 1991. The litigation that’s in other provinces doesn’t bind us – sometimes it’s interesting; sometimes the commentary is helpful – but what does bind us is the law in Alberta. That’s the decisions made by the Alberta Court of Appeal, long before I was a member of it, in 1991 and 1994.

The Alberta Court of Appeal went on to interpret what Justice McLachlin said about what’s necessary for effective representation, and they said that the statutory provision permitting a deviation of up to 25 per cent from average population in an electoral division “does not . . . mandate the use of that or any deviation in a case where it is not needed.” So we’re to go to parity unless it’s needed to go beyond parity. It goes on to say that interference with voter parity is warranted only to permit an impossibly large constituency or to permit undue mixing of different communities. Voter parity means that each vote cast should have the same weight as every other vote cast in the province in that election. The court went on to state that “no argument for effective representation of one group legitimizes under-representation of another group.”

Our task here was to take every constituency, look at voter parity, and say: are there reasons relevant to this constituency that justify it being over or under? I’m confident that none of our recommendations result in a constituency that’s right at par, nor do we make any recommendation that any two constituencies be the same so that they can have equal populations. Rather, we’ve attempted to look at each one and give reasons for each one being over or under. That’s what we do. It’s not a simplistic: “There are people who don’t want it this way. There are many people who don’t like it. Therefore, you shouldn’t do it.” We’re not able to do that. We have to apply these tests as they’re set out by the law.

That said, there’s lots of room, and there’s lots of discretion. We’ve attempted to apply that discretion, and we have applied that discretion. The reason for these public hearings is to get feedback on specific ideas that we have. I mean, you can attack the law all you want. It’s fun, and it’s a hobby. But, you know, we’re still bound by it.

Mr. Taylor: Frankly, I’ve got to ask the question, then, because you talk about voter parity and you talk about population. Those are two different – equal, effective representation and voter parity: I’m not sure what you’re using for the term “voter parity.” But if you look at Battle River-Wainwright and you look at Edmonton-South and you’re talking about voters themselves – okay? – in Edmonton-South they had voters at 51 per cent. If we’re going to have parity across all the different ridings, perhaps we should look at what that population is. In Battle River-Wainwright we have a voter turnout potential of 67 per cent. They’re not the same. The number of

people that can show up to vote – when you’re talking about parity, I’m really confused by what you’re trying to say.

The Chair: Parity means the people who are entitled to vote, whether they vote or not.

Mr. Taylor: Okay. Yeah. With voter parity, then, we don’t need to grow our population to that number to have the population. You’re talking population here, on one hand, that you want to have all the populations the same. However, rural Alberta does not vote at the same rate as the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. We vote at a higher rate. There is a higher population of potential voters in the rural ridings. Consequently, the populations do not need to be as high as what you have in the cities. There’s something that’s going wrong, I believe, in this, and that needs to be brought out and understood.

The Chair: That’s actually a good argument.

Ms Livingstone: I guess my only question is – you’ve come here with lots of arguments against the legislation. I will note that you’re an MLA, so you have another forum where legislation can actually be changed, which isn’t this one. Have you brought any solutions? This is a very challenging exercise. Have you gone through the exercise of trying to draw a map of Alberta to create ridings using federal census data, which is what we’re required to use?

Mr. Taylor: In all due respect, you’ve had 10 months to be able to do that, and I would’ve hoped that you used all the considerations that I was talking about, how many potential voters are in each riding.

Ms Livingstone: What you’re saying . . .

Mr. Taylor: No, I have not.

Ms Livingstone: Sorry; I’m going to interrupt you, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Taylor: No, I have not had the opportunity to go to each riding. That is not what I’m here for, to try to determine and do that job for you, which the commission should be doing.

Ms Livingstone: Okay. Let me summarize. You brought no solutions, and you’re now making the suggestion that we use voter lists or eligible voters . . .

Mr. Taylor: I did.

Ms Livingstone: . . . instead of the population data that the legislation requires us to use.

Mr. Taylor: That is correct.

Ms Livingstone: That would be a legislative change, sir.

12:25

Mr. Taylor: No, it’s not when part of your mandate is voter parity. How many voters are in each riding? You know that fact. You know those numbers. Those numbers I could easily access. I found those. Those should have been a part of the consideration of what you were doing. Therefore, when we’re talking about this size and this scope, for me or any other rural MLA to be able to effectively do his or her representation, we don’t need to be stuck on this. We need to have this population being the same. Your metrics are flawed. What you’re trying to do is flawed, where you’re starting from. If you look at all the different ones, the number of municipalities and other local authorities, for example, is part of section 14. It says that

it “shall take into consideration” these factors. Mine increases considerably, increases 33 per cent . . .

The Chair: Okay. Just if I can interrupt.

Mr. Taylor: . . . by the municipalities.

The Chair: Okay. If I can interrupt now.

Mr. Taylor: Okay.

The Chair: Do you have a table of how many municipalities you have in your riding to represent versus the municipalities and organizations in other ridings, to say you have more?

Mr. Taylor: I would say that I probably have one of the most, one of the largest.

The Chair: No, but do you have something to show us comparing them?

Mr. Taylor: Versus the other ones? I, frankly, haven’t been looking at the other ones. Okay. I have six at this current time. I have the MD of Wainwright and Provost; Flagstaff, Beaver, Camrose, Wetaskiwin in my riding. Then I’ll be adding on Paintearth, Stettler, and Leduc, the additional counties that will be included into that. So that’s a 33 per cent increase in those municipalities. I’ll have six school divisions. Within that, when you have six school divisions – and I’ve heard this argument before, too. Members in the city ridings: how many graduations did they have to go to? How many will I be going to? Often the answer is zero, one. For what we’re expected to do as rural MLAs, effective representation is being brought down.

And we’re talking about towns. You asked the questions about municipalities. I go from 23 to 28.

The Chair: Okay. But you don’t have a list comparing the number in your constituency to the number in other constituencies in Alberta?

Mr. Taylor: I would suggest that you have that, and I will submit what I have, and you can look, you know, at the other ones and see how many will be in those ones as well.

The Chair: Right. Thank you.
Okay. Go ahead.

Ms Munn: I’d like to make a comment or ask you a question. Do you think that within the Alberta context it would be appropriate to create blended constituencies with parts of metro Edmonton or metro Calgary with the rural areas surrounding it? Do you think that those kinds of blended constituencies would be a good idea, or do you think that those metro municipalities should be contained?

Mr. Taylor: I don’t think that’s a good idea, but that’s not exactly what I’m here to argue. I think there’s a simplistic solution, that if we use the existing counties, and if you take the whole of the county, for example, the county of Beaver – I’ve got a part of it.

Ms Munn: I understand that. You see, we have to look at the whole province. By the time we contain metro Edmonton and metro Calgary, we’ve got a certain space left over, and we’ve got numbers that we have to deal with. So if we’re not going to blend them and we’re not going to get more constituencies . . .

Mr. Taylor: Okay. So my argument, then, is this, and I mentioned that in my speech. If you take all the population of Calgary and you

divide it by the ridings that you propose to have, you will have a population of plus 6.14. That's over, if you blend it, if you went to the work of actually blending it. If you went to Edmonton you have a population of 5.17. That would be a plus 5.17.

If you take rural Alberta, anything outside of Edmonton and Calgary, you'll have a population of minus 5.91. Now, if you've taken out these special areas, the ones like Peace-Notley, for example, that actually drops to 1.49. So I think the challenge is not so much as to how to take and remove ridings in the rural area, but it's how to redistribute those ridings in that rural area and how to redistribute those ridings that are in the cities. That, I believe, is the challenge that you need to be trying to achieve, because we do have the sparsity of population. We have geographical features. We have roadways that are natural to it. We have density and the number of municipalities and local authorities that is far greater than what you would have in the cities. That is all 14.

The Chair: Ms Munn, do you have any other questions?

Ms Munn: I don't have any other questions.

The Chair: Ms Livingstone, any others?

Ms Livingstone: No.

The Chair: Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: No. Thank you.

Mrs. Day: I just want to thank you for your presentation and the information that you brought forth today. I'm curious – as Justice Bielby mentioned, with plus or minus 25 per cent we can't go to those extremes unless we have good, justified reasons. Then she mentioned impossible, large constituencies and disparate communities.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Mrs. Day: With what you were saying earlier about a number of graduations, et cetera, I heard that, and we've heard that all over the province. But what else would you add to that if we needed reasons to allow your community, your area, your region, to be up to the plus or minus 25 variance?

Mr. Taylor: Again, the local governance. If you're in the city of Edmonton, they have 19 MLAs currently. They have one city council that they have to go to. If one person goes once per month, they don't even have to show up once every two years to have to go to that, to be able to represent, to have that same representation. Right now I have nine municipalities and different MDs and counties and 25 other municipalities, being towns and cities – well, not cities; there are no cities in my riding, but towns and other different villages – and that takes a lot more trying to co-ordinate those people when they often have it on the same day. So each week or each other week you're trying to plan something to try to meet with that local governance.

That doesn't include all the different things that happen. I have a military base in my riding, so I work with the military. We have a large francophone component in Wainwright because of the military base. There is a lot of complexity that goes into it that Edmonton and Calgary – you're trying to say that we don't want to mix these communities because it's too confusing and it's too difficult. However, when you come out to rural Alberta, I am completely mixed. You look at Hardisty, and it's got the nexus of all these pipelines that happen there. You go to Wainwright; again, it's a military base. You go to Daysland, and it's all agriculture.

You go to Forestburg, and it's mining. It's not simple, straightforward like you're trying to achieve in Edmonton. Because of that and because we have such complexities, we have to be that much more prepared for and plan for each day.

It's nice that you're able to make it simplistic for the ones in the cities, but that doesn't say that we don't have those problems plus more problems. To increase our riding sizes, I think, is a failure on behalf of the commission. I fall at minus 17. I don't see what the problem is. That falls within the variance of the plus, minus 25. But, again, if you take a look at how many voters, the potential voters, I have 67 per cent of potential voters. I now start to walk in towards what they actually have in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary and some of these areas.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Taylor, for your enthusiastic and vigorous support of your views.

Mr. Taylor: I thought I would give a different view to this because I've heard different arguments.

The Chair: Thanks very much.

Mr. Taylor: I hope that has given you a little bit of thought.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Our next registered presenter is Lee Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: May I approach the dais?

The Chair: Hi. Yes, please.

Mr. Cooper: There's one for each.

The Chair: Thanks so much.

12:35

Mr. Cooper: Still good morning? Not quite sure. My name is Lee Cooper, and I live in Wainwright. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the interim report. In full disclosure I'm a constituency assistant to MLA Wes Taylor. However, I appear here as a private citizen.

On finishing the commission's interim report, I was reminded of this quote by Dr. Johnson: sir, your manuscript is good and original, but what is good is not original, and what is original is not good. The good in this report is the conventional explanations of the formal aspects of the commission's mandate, both legal and administrative. The report also has many informative and useful references to case law. By contrast, the original element in the report is the commission's partial interpretation and marginalizing of these aspects.

There are two conceptually differing approaches to setting electoral boundaries. The first is the pluralistic approach. Pluralism considers voter parity impossible, a view endorsed by then Justice, now Chief Justice McLachlin in the Saskatchewan reference. Pluralism seeks to deliver effective representation. In pursuit of this, pluralism involves the consideration of countervailing factors intended by design to ensure that those living outside of large population centres are not disadvantaged. Section 14 of the redistribution rules, found at part 2 of the act, contains the countervailing factors for consideration. Section 15(1) explicitly supports the pluralistic approach by providing for a wide variance of plus or minus 25 from the provincial average. Justice McLachlin stated in the Saskatchewan reference that there is considerable acceptance in Canada for a variance of plus or minus 25 per cent.

By contrast, the commission's original thinking, evident from what they term their process, is the opposite of pluralism. It is the egalitarian approach. Egalitarianism is a numbers-driven exercise where the anodyne, though disingenuously employed, cry of "One person, one vote" drives the idealistic to pursue the utopia of voter parity. I use "utopia" as Sir Thomas More intended, the verbal pun. Egalitarianism has theoretical merits and impressive supporters. A recent case before the Supreme Court of the United States, *Evenwel versus Abbott*, 2016, upheld egalitarianism.

However, egalitarianism was clearly rejected by the Canadian Supreme Court in the 1991 Saskatchewan reference case, yet for all intents and purposes the commission has adopted egalitarianism at the core of its process. The commission performs verbal acrobatics in the report to divert attention from its numbers game. On reflection, even the good in the report is part kabuki. Whether this caprice can or will be challenged at a later date remains to be seen. However, while it's one thing to fail a set test, it's entirely another to fail your own selected test.

On that basis, I'm content to argue the numbers. I offer this calculation, which differs slightly yet crucially from the commission's methodology, a methodology which produced an apparent fait accompli of removing three rural ridings, and I refer you to the table that I distributed. I've taken the individual total population for each of the three discrete areas involved: Edmonton, Calgary, and rural Alberta. I divide those totals individually by their existing number of ridings, not the number of ridings we'd like to give them. I subtract from the resulting number the provincial average figure, and then I calculate the residual figure as a percentage of the provincial average. The results are – and I know you've heard these numbers already – Calgary ridings, 6.1 above the average; Edmonton ridings, 5.1 above the average; rural Alberta ridings, 5.9 below the average.

However, a fairer comparison should be made excluding areas which do or could attract 15(2) status, and this would produce a figure a mere 1.4 below the average for regular rural Alberta. That's the top left-hand of the boxes. Therefore, providing that redistribution rule 15(1) is observed, there is no justification for the commission's core recommendations, which simply seek to rob rural Peter to pay urban Paul.

In summary, providing effective representation, the task at hand, can be achieved by the redistribution of the existing populations within the three discrete geographical entities. I will end with this portentous quote by William Jennings Bryan from his 1896 cross of gold speech. "The great cities rest upon our broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."

Thank you for your attention.

The Chair: My first question is: for the numbers that you've used for the total populations of Calgary, Edmonton, and rural Alberta on your handout, what was the source of that information?

Mr. Cooper: Your interim report. And those numbers come to the 4,062,000. I can't remember the last three digits. If you add those three figures together, they will come to 4,062,000 and some.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McLeod, any questions?

Mr. McLeod: Just a quick question. When designing constituencies, besides just population you have to take other things into consideration. You saw the slide presentation prior to us starting, where we talked about natural boundaries and stuff like that. So if we wanted to – I'm just going to take Calgary because

Calgary was, on behalf of the commission, a pain in the lower extremities. Even adding one constituency in there was really very difficult. We tried not to, but we had to cross Deerfoot Trail, cross rivers, do other things. If we took the suggestion that you have for Calgary here and just divided those up, I believe you may just as well forget the natural boundaries within Calgary, and we would be splitting up communities like Marlborough or whatever. Do you agree with that statement, or have you got another solution for us?

Mr. Cooper: I wouldn't gainsay your initial statement that it's difficult. I think I did mention in here that it was a tricky exercise, and nobody has had any doubts about that, and you've been complimented on your hard work. The critical thing here, though, is that you're living within a paradigm currently that has been created, and you're not prepared to break out of it. For some of the things that you want to take into consideration, you do, and others you don't. So you're now questioning me about boundaries as though it's the most important thing in the world. Perhaps I can turn the question around and say to you: how many boundaries has the change to Battle River-Wainwright, with which I'm intimately involved, affected? Can you tell me that number?

Mr. McLeod: Not offhand.

Mr. Cooper: You've been working on it for 10 months, and that's not my job, so I don't really have the same answer for you. There's a little bit of imbalance of power here.

The Chair: No city, town, or village boundaries. Zero.

Mr. Cooper: No . . .

The Chair: City, town, or village boundaries have we compromised.

Mr. Cooper: City, town, or village boundaries. So you don't consider it compromising the town boundary by putting it in a new riding and having its county split in half?

The Chair: The act does direct us not to divide municipal boundaries, which are defined as city, town, or village.

Mr. Cooper: In that case, could I ask you: how would you define the difficulty of Calgary and its boundaries? What are those? Is that a street? Is it a bridge? Is it a public park?

The Chair: Probably because we are trying to put 26 and a half constituencies worth of people into 26 constituencies so that we wouldn't have to take anything else out of the rest of Alberta.

Mr. Cooper: Nobody is arguing with you that it's a hard task.

The Chair: Okay. But I'm just telling you.

Mr. Cooper: Yeah. Right. But that's not an excuse for doing what you're doing to rural Alberta.

The Chair: Differences of opinion, clearly.

Mr. Cooper: Exactly. That's what it is, and I'm entitled to mine.

The Chair: It is.

Mrs. Day, any questions or comments?

Mrs. Day: Yes. I would like to thank you, first of all, for all this thought and energy you've put into your work and for being here today. I caught the words "verbal acrobatics." Are you referring in that to what your MLA just mentioned about the difference between

voters and population, which he kind of covered off really quickly? Is that what you are talking about in there?

Mr. Cooper: Unsurprisingly, I've anticipated a couple of questions here, so I've actually got kind of an answer, one that I could read off, really. I was interested, actually, in when Justice Bielby said earlier that voter parity equals people entitled to vote. You agreed that was a good argument. I think it is a very good argument that you considered that somebody like Edmonton-South has 51 per cent registered voters in its population whereas most of the rural ridings are close to 67 and 70.

The Chair: A small point. There is no Edmonton-South yet, so you must be thinking of some other Edmonton constituency. That's our new constituency that we're recommending.

Mr. Cooper: Right. I'm discussing the current one of Edmonton-South, the 80,000, which you're cutting in half.

The Chair: We don't have an Edmonton-South.

Mr. Cooper: Sorry. If you'll allow me to answer the question that's been asked first, please.

The Chair: In any event, your point is that there is higher voter turnout in your area.

Mr. Cooper: Yes.

The Chair: But, of course, the answer to that is that if people felt they were being effectively represented in the city, they might respond more at the polls.

12:45

Mrs. Day: Are you talking of voter turnout?

Mr. Cooper: No. I'm talking about physically registered by Elections Alberta on a register, 67 per cent of the population of Alberta.

The Chair: Those registers are notoriously – they had me on all the time I was disentitled to vote because I was a judge. We were disenfranchised when we were appointed back in the day when I was appointed.

Mr. Cooper: Well, in England people in the House of Lords are not entitled to vote. Neither are lunatics, and some people draw a comparison.

The Chair: Right. And married women at one point, but, you know, their names would still show up on the voter list. I was assuming you were relying on the numbers of people who actually voted in the last election.

Mr. Cooper: No.

The Chair: I see.

Mr. Cooper: I'm looking at the register from Elections Alberta and using their numbers. The verbal acrobatics that I refer to: one of those is voter parity. That's being thrust at the audience to justify the populations. It's a kind of verbal *trompe l'oeil*, as we've already just agreed, because the population and the voters are two different things. I submitted my written submission, and I covered this off in there, where I wrote that I was shocked by a specious comparison that you made between Lesser Slave Lake and Calgary-South East. This is a good example. You said:

Populations now range from 28,858 in Lesser Slave Lake to [92,000] in Calgary-South East. An election held based on those constituencies would result in a vote cast . . .

A vote cast. Although we start talking about populations, that's a vote cast.

. . . in Lesser Slave Lake having 3.5 the effect of one cast in Calgary-South East.

This comparison is both false and wrong. Patently the entire population of any riding is not the electorate. The electoral lists on the Elections Alberta website – although you tell me it's wrong, so we'd better not trust any information from now on – tell us that Lesser Slave Lake has 19,303 registered voters, 67 per cent of the population, while Calgary South-East has 46,555.

The Chair: I don't think you have to register to vote. I think they come up with that information on their own. There's no requirement. It's not like the States.

Mr. Cooper: Okay. So we'll move on because they're clearly untrustworthy.

The resultant comparison is now 19,334 versus 46,995. This means that the effect is not 3.51 but 2.441. Continuing to use these voter percentage numbers is a true metric of voter parity, and substituting the commission's current proposal for Calgary-South East, which reduces it to 40,309, would result in that riding having 20,557 voters, 51 per cent. This means that Calgary-South East now has only 1,250 more voters than Lesser Slave Lake.

Now, it's also important to note that in that example given, Lesser Slave Lake is a riding which attracts section 15(2) special consideration. You've taken the biggest one and you've taken the smallest one to try and drive home your point.

The Chair: We have strayed from answering Mrs. Day's question.

Mr. Cooper: No, we haven't. It was verbal . . .

The Chair: Excuse me, sir.

Do you have any other questions?

Mrs. Day: Okay. Well, I'm trying to keep up with you. I am wondering about why your segmenting of Alberta the way you did would be a better way for us to do our work than what we've done, rural Alberta, Calgary . . .

Mr. Cooper: To be fair, I kind of don't want to segment it the way that it's done. I think that that's probably a mistake. In the previous commission's report Allyson Jeffs put forward the suggestion that it was very divisive to break it down like this and that it shouldn't be broken down like this. In other words, when you take it like this, the reason why I've got that top box about taking out Peace River and Fort McMurray, et cetera, is: why do you lump in those special areas with the rest of rural Alberta? I think I know why. It's because it produces a number so that you can then say: ah, you're below the average. However, as I demonstrate here, if you take those out, you end up with a number that's very close to the average, and then you would not be able to reduce those ridings.

The Chair: Thank you. Again we're straying from the answer to the question. The answer is: no, you wouldn't use this.

Anything else? Mrs. Day?

Mrs. Day: Is the answer, "No, we wouldn't use this" or "This is a better way"? You've proposed this, so you must think that this is a better way despite the rural, urban wording.

Mr. Cooper: Yes. If you keep talking about rural and urban, it is divisive in its own way. You should take each individual riding on its merits, not lump Calgary or Edmonton together as a group in order to effectively use it as a stick to beat rural Alberta. The numbers prove that because it doesn't work.

The Chair: Anything else?
Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: Oh, no.

The Chair: Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: No.

Ms Munn: I have something to say. To quote another person whose name I can't remember: there are lies, and there are damned lies, and there are statistics. First of all, with respect the number of voters, we weren't allowed to look at that. We weren't allowed to look at voters, voter patterns. The number of voters in any particular area changes every single day when somebody turns 18, so it's not a reliable statistic. We are bound by law to use the latest federal census data. We can't just say that we're going to use something else.

Now, with respect to the way you've divided up your chart, you've given us three constituencies to worry about: Calgary, Edmonton, and rural Alberta. We actually had 87 constituencies to worry about, and when you have almost 3,000 people in 25 ridings, we're talking about 75,000 people over. We're not talking about just the variance of 6.14 per cent. What's more, we could look at three constituents or we can look at 87 constituents, and by that time your logic becomes so skewed that by the time we're looking at 4 million constituents, we see the deviation grow greater and greater.

The way we did it, as Albertans almost universally told us to do, was to contain Edmonton, contain Calgary, and look at the rest of Alberta. The rest of Alberta is not just rural. We have some very large cities that we had to deal with: Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, five urban centres that didn't fit neatly into one constituency. While somebody might say, "Red Deer looks rural to me," it sure looks pretty city to me, as does Airdrie.

So we didn't have three constituencies to look at: Calgary, Edmonton, and the rest of Alberta. We had 87 barely, and then we had to deal with the fact that in the top north half of Alberta, the whole geographic north half of Alberta, although it doesn't constitute half the population, it only ends up having seven seats, and that's with two big cities. We thought that was low. I think that is low, but we can't rob from my vote in the city of Calgary. I don't want and urban peoples don't want and each individual doesn't want their vote to weigh less.

So in accordance with the Alberta Court of Appeal voter parity is the rule unless you can show that an area is impossibly large geographically or unless it involves an undue mixing of communities. We had to start with that. If there are Albertans or MLAs who think the law should be changed, then change the law. We have an MLA and you as a constituency assistant here today saying...

Mr. Cooper: As a private citizen.

Ms Munn: And as a private citizen saying: we should look at the number of voters and look at how that figures into the mix. Well, then it needs to be on the list, and the act needs to be amended.

That's all I have.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you for turning that around.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

Mr. Cooper: I can't answer any of those eight points that were just made?

The Chair: No. I think we've now been in an education session. I expect you'll disagree with some of them, but I think we have your points very clearly, Mr. Cooper. Thanks for your presentation. We've gone considerably over time, and we're holding people up.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you for your attention.

The Chair: Kevin Smook, and then we'll take a five-minute break.
12:55

Mr. Smook: Good afternoon. Thank you for your hard work to date and what we anticipate will be more hard work in the future.

I am the reeve of Beaver county, and I live in the Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville constituency, but our county currently has three other constituencies: Battle River-Wainwright, Vermilion-Lloydminster, and Leduc-Beaumont. Leduc-Beaumont is a little sliver of the corner, but everybody counts, so we include it as well. We have a population of 5,905 people but a regional population of just under 10,000 in the Beaver county region, and while I don't represent the entire population, we do work closely together on many regional boards and commissions. Our fire and emergency services commission, known as Beaver Emergency Services Commission, was the first regional fire and emergency commission established in the province. Others are watching us to determine if this is the proper direction to go. There is no way we could have established that commission without common goals, desired outcomes, and exceptional regional collaboration.

We also work together on our highway 14 regional water commission, our Beaver Municipal Solutions regional landfill, and the Beaver Foundation, managing and in some cases owning seniors' facilities in the region. Add to this the fact that we've established other shared services agreements such as recreation, the library, FCSS, agricultural societies, and you'll see how important regional collaboration is to us. It's a desired direction from the province, and we are leaders in that regard. Our region is made up of the county plus two towns and two villages: the towns of Tofield and Viking, the villages of Ryley and Holden, plus our hamlets, Bruce and Kinsella.

We have a serious concern with the proposed boundaries that came out of the initial round of the electoral boundary consultations. The proposal slices out the largest urban centre in our region, the town of Tofield, along with a significant rural base southwest of Tofield in Beaver county. It divides the county and places those areas within the new Stettler-Wainwright district and moves the balance into the Vermilion-Lloydminster district. This fractures our county and threatens the very regional collaborations that we have worked so hard to establish.

We're currently represented, as I mentioned, by four MLAs from three different provincial parties. That's of no consequence to this discussion, I'm sure. You have a chance, though, at this time to improve this scenario by keeping the Beaver county region together within one constituency, and the ones that make most sense would be Vermilion-Lloydminster or Stettler-Wainwright. That seems to make the most sense to us. This move would further our regional relationship with the province and will allow us to advance our region's sustainability and vitality. We support this move, as does the town of Tofield. They've written a letter, and we've agreed. The two municipalities think that would be a good thing.

The other thing I would like to address quickly is what's clearly putting rural Alberta at a disadvantage, and we've heard about it from previous speakers. Rural Alberta drives our economy through agriculture, resources such as oil and gas, forestry, and tourism, to name some. While the population of the urban centres is growing at a faster rate than the rural areas, that should not jeopardize the effective representation of rural Albertans. In the larger urban centres a citizen who wants to meet with their MLA to discuss their concerns can take a few hours out of their schedule and either drive, catch a bus, take a cab to their local constituency office. The same cannot be said for most rural Albertans. They may need to take an entire day off, and they are unlikely to be able to find a bus or a cab out in rural Alberta, so they are relying on their own vehicle or family and friends to transport them to a meeting with their MLA.

The adjusting of electoral boundaries should be about more than just numbers. It should be about the right of effective representation and access to their MLA and the reasonable expectation that their MLA can address the needs of the communities that they represent. Effective representation: I know apples and oranges is probably what this will look like, but in Edmonton, they seem to be effectively represented by 12 municipal councillors, yet there are 19 MLAs. In the city of Calgary they seem to be effectively represented by 15 councillors, but currently there are 25 MLAs. I love Edmonton, and I love Calgary. I love them both, go there often, spend lots of money there. I've got no problem with the urbans. I'm from rural Alberta. I just wish we could all work together.

That's my presentation. Thank you for listening.

The Chair: Thank you. Well delivered.
Comments? Ms Livingstone.

Ms Livingstone: Just one question. Did I hear correctly that as it stands, not in our proposal but currently, Beaver county has four different MLAs that cover this area?

Mr. Smook: Correct.

Ms Livingstone: And our proposal has gotten it down to three?

Mr. Smook: No. You've gotten it down to two.

Ms Livingstone: To two. Okay.

Mr. Smook: Yes. The trouble, if I may respond, though, is that the largest urban centre with whom we participate on a lot of projects is coming out into a separate constituency. Most of the balance of the county would be separated that way. That concerns both communities.

Ms Livingstone: I understand. Yeah. I was just trying to get a sense of what we've done well and what we've done poorly. Thank you.

The Chair: Ms Munn.

Ms Munn: I don't have any questions.

The Chair: Mrs. Day.

Mrs. Day: You had thrown out a couple of options. That was Vermilion-Lloydminster or Stettler-Wainwright. Any particular leaning with communities of interest or regional agreements or anything? You know, if we could make some changes, which would be preferred?

Mr. Smook: Well, our natural – I wouldn't call it a boundary, but our commonality is highway 14. It comes out of Edmonton, Sherwood Park, and all the way down to Wainwright. Beaver

county straddles highway 14. From that perspective we would have lots in common when you go down highway 14 and past our county into Irma and Wainwright and that way. There are positives there. I guess the angle we were coming from is that the way it looked from the proposal so we didn't entirely blow up the world, most of our county would be going into the Vermilion-Lloydminster riding, and Tofield and part of Beaver county would go to Stettler. We thought: well, we would really like to stick together. It just makes so much sense. We're doing good things. We're working with the province on regional issues. From that perspective that's kind of what I came to and was thinking about and our county was thinking about. Either/or, though, to be in one would be beneficial for many reasons.

The Chair: Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Yeah. I've got two questions for you. The first one you just talked about, the regionalizations and the projects that are going on with your county and in the municipalities. Whether or not you had four MLAs or two MLAs or one or whatever at the end of the day, would that regionalization and those commitments from your jurisdiction change?

Mr. Smook: Not necessarily, sir, but I see the challenge. There would be more challenges in trying to assemble more MLAs to help us bring and advance our concerns in regard to the issues we may have with regionalization. Dealing with one MLA and herding the cats are a whole lot easier than more.

Mr. McLeod: As a mayor I understand that.

Mr. Smook: I'm sure you would.

Mr. McLeod: Herding cats is a difficult thing.

Here's the other question, then. Currently you have four MLAs. The proposal is that you're going to two. I've asked this question across the province, and I'm going to continue to ask it. Do you see it as a benefit or not a benefit if you have more than one MLA to deal with?

Mr. Smook: I suppose that's a multilevel answer. Or not multilevel. I suppose you could answer it in many ways. I think the best way to answer that is that we'll work with who we have to work with because that's what we have to do. So if we have more than one MLA, then, I mean, we're there to represent our people on a municipal level, and it doesn't much matter whose team they're on, so to speak. We're working with them no matter what. It's just easier to work with one, I believe, because you're meeting with them and building that relationship whereas if you have an issue, then, you know, I've got to get all these numbers on my cellphone so that I can keep in touch with all our MLAs. It's a lot more difficult.

1:05

Mr. McLeod: Thank you.

The Chair: Any other concerns or questions?

Mrs. Day: I just wanted to make a comment about the MLA situation. Even in the urban ridings it's like they want one, and they want their own, if that makes sense, so that person can represent them best and their specific areas. It's a common thread that I see in urban ridings asking as well as in rural ridings. It's been a very interesting dilemma. You think: well, you have four; you've just, you know, quadrupled your voice in government. But it's not quite that simple, is it?

Mr. Smook: No, it isn't.

Mrs. Day: Yeah. Thank you, though.

The Chair: Thanks so much for coming along.

Mr. Smook: Okay. Thank you very much for listening. I appreciate it.

The Chair: All right. We'll take a five-minute break.
Kathy Barnhart is up next when we come back.

[The hearing adjourned from 1:06 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.]

The Chair: All right. We'll get started again.
Ms Barnhart.

Ms Barnhart: Thank you very much. Good morning. I mean, good afternoon. It's already been afternoon. My name is Kathy Barnhart, and I'm the deputy mayor of the town of Beaumont. I'm in the Leduc-Beaumont constituency. I'm also here with our chief administrative officer, Mike Schwritz, who's sitting behind me, and our director of planning and engineering, Eleanor Mohammed.

On behalf of Beaumont I want to thank the commission for the opportunity to listen and for us to present what Beaumont needs during this provincial electoral boundary review. Beaumont has reviewed the interim report and has identified a number of items where the commission could benefit from additional information on our local context. We're also proposing some amendments to the report and the electoral division boundaries that impact our municipality.

As confirmed by the 2016 federal census, Beaumont is the fastest growing municipality in the capital region, and it's the fifth-fastest growing community in Canada. The town conducted a municipal census in 2017, and the data has revealed that Beaumont's current population is 18,320. This new population figure represents an increase of 3.6 per cent from 2016 and an astounding 53 per cent since 2007. As new electoral divisions are being evaluated and determined by the commission, we believe that it's important to consider this extraordinary population growth now and what's proposed in the future. A graph of our growth is provided for you in the package that we've provided you with.

Beaumont thought that the interim report was well drafted with the exception of one troubling section on page 22, which referred to the city of Edmonton's proposed annexation as a foregone conclusion. This assumption was also used in determining the proposed boundaries that impact Beaumont.

After a lengthy annexation process, in November of 2016 the province issued Order in Council 302/2016, which approved Beaumont's annexation request for 21 quarter sections of land from Leduc county.

The Chair: That's Beaumont's annexation.

Ms Barnhart: Beaumont was successful.

The Chair: You were successful in annexing . . .

Ms Barnhart: Part of Leduc county.

The Chair: How much?

Ms Barnhart: Twenty-one quarter sections . . .

The Chair: Twenty-one quarter sections. This is new.

Ms Barnhart: . . . to the north, to the south, and to the west.

The Chair: Okay. This is good to know.

Ms Barnhart: The jurisdiction of these lands was transferred to Beaumont effective January 1, 2017. Attachment A in our submission package provides you with a map of the existing municipal boundaries.

In February of 2017 the city of Edmonton filed a notice of intent to annex nine quarter sections of Beaumont's newly acquired lands, nine of the 21 that we just received. These lands are located north of township road 510, on the north side of our town. The city of Edmonton has yet to file a formal annexation application for these lands, and it is unknown whether the city or when the city will be in a position to do so.

Given that the province has just approved Beaumont's application to annex these lands less than a year ago, Beaumont does not support annexation of these lands to the city of Edmonton. Apart from prejudicing any future municipal government board hearings in relation to the city of Edmonton's notice of intent and the potential submission of its annexation application, the electoral division boundary has been located based on an expressed desire of the city of Edmonton versus Beaumont's actual municipal boundary.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission Act states that the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission shall take into consideration existing municipal boundaries, community interests, and the desirability of understandable and clear boundaries. In Beaumont's successful 2017 annexation we have worked extensively with our new residents to make them feel welcome and valued members of our community. With a new electoral division boundary dividing our community, it counters all of the town's efforts to date and could create confusion.

Our residents have different collective needs from those in Edmonton and would appreciate a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta who is accountable to all of Beaumont, not just a portion of it. From a municipal administration perspective, it is more efficient and effective for an urban municipality of 18,320 to work with one Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta versus two.

In order to address Beaumont's issues with the interim report and the proposed electoral division boundaries, we would like the commission to consider some viable options that could resolve our community's concerns.

The Chair: I wonder if I might interrupt just so I better understand the nine quarters we're talking about. I'm looking at page 5 of your presentation, which contains a map called amend proposal Leduc-Beaumont, division No. 67. Can you point out to me where on this map these nine quarter sections are located?

Ms Mohammed: It's just the top portion here.

The Chair: The top portion above . . .

Ms Mohammed: If you look at – oh, I can't remember what page it is now – No. 67, the district or division that you're proposing . . .

The Chair: Right. I've got it. Okay. Thank you.

Ms Mohammed: Thank you.

Ms Barnhart: We're good?

The Chair: Uh-huh.

Ms Barnhart: Okay. We are proposing a couple of solutions. Option 1 is our preferred option, but we are also willing to support

option 2, which incorporates the spirit of Leduc county's proposal for two electoral divisions. Option 1 proposes amending the proposed Leduc-Beaumont, division No. 67. On page 168 of the interim report there is a map for the Leduc-Beaumont division. For the reasons stated earlier in my presentation, this division should be updated to include all of Beaumont's lands. The new boundary of division No. 67 in relation to Beaumont would follow the northerly edge of Beaumont's jurisdictional boundary. Please see attachment B – it looks like that – in our submission package to see the new proposed boundary.

Also on the map in attachment B: in relation to Leduc county lands and their boundary with the city of Edmonton, the boundaries should also be updated to reflect the city of Edmonton's and Leduc county's annexation agreement, that has been agreed to, a different agreement.

Option 2 supports the majority of the Leduc county proposal, with the stipulation that the entirety of Beaumont and the city of Leduc be included in the proposed division. It is important to Beaumont . . .

The Chair: In what proposed division? In the new Leduc-Beaumont?

Ms Barnhart: In the Leduc-Beaumont.

Attachment C: if we cannot have the first option, we would like to propose that the two urban areas, Leduc and Beaumont, be in the same division.

The Chair: That would continue to be Leduc-Beaumont?

Ms Barnhart: Yes.

It is important to Beaumont to have another urban municipality included in our electoral division. The city of Leduc and the town of Beaumont have many urban needs in common, including transportation, access to health and education services, recreation services, professional services, et cetera. Both of our municipalities also provide an important service hub to Leduc county and surrounding rural lands. Attachment C in our submission package is the one that I just pointed out to you.

I'd also like to draw the commission's attention to a letter from our mayor, the mayor of Beaumont, who could not be here today, the response to the interim report and the call for feedback on the electoral boundaries review. I will not be presenting the contents of that letter for you as you've received it already. It is supplementary official correspondence from our municipality, and it's included in your package today in attachment D.

In conclusion, the interim report is a great document, and with some amendments to the content and the electoral division boundaries we feel that Beaumont's concerns can be addressed. Beaumont is looking forward to the final amended report in October.

Once again I'd like to thank you very much for the hard work that I know you're doing. It seems mind-boggling to me. I appreciate all the time and effort you've put into it.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. I wonder if you could for me walk through your first solution again. I didn't quite follow it.

Ms Barnhart: Would you mind if I asked Eleanor to do that? She's the technical expert, and I think she probably would do a better job of that than I would.

Ms Mohammed: Thank you. I think that the easiest way to do this is if you open up to page 168 in the report and then have attachment

B beside it. It might make it a little easier to compare the two. What we've done is to redraw the boundaries to include all of Beaumont's current municipal boundary within the division. Something else that we did as well was to update the boundary to highway 19 to accommodate the agreement between Leduc county and Edmonton. That's really where they've agreed that annexation can occur.

1:25

The Chair: Okay. All right.

Other questions? Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: Just one. This is again just making sure I've got my map marked up correctly. Except for those nine quarter sections that we had marked because of Edmonton's proposed annexation, have we otherwise correctly captured the 21 sections that you guys annexed?

Ms Mohammed: Yes. It appears our boundaries are correct.

Ms Livingstone: Okay.

Ms Mohammed: It's just that the division for the electoral boundary cut Beaumont.

Ms Livingstone: Okay. Yeah. I just wanted to make sure that we otherwise had the lines correct there.

Ms Mohammed: Thank you.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah. Thank you for coming today because in round 1 all we had was what Edmonton sent us, so that's how we ended up . . .

The Chair: Don't trust those guys.

Ms Livingstone: So it's very nice to have complete and updated information. Very helpful. Thank you.

Ms Mohammed: Sure.

The Chair: That was, in fairness, you know, last January. Okay. All right. Ms Munn?

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

The Chair: Mrs. Day?
Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: No, not really. But thank you very much for this detailed report. It's really going to help. Thank you very much.

Ms Barnhart: Thank you very much.

Ms Mohammed: Can I just ask if you require any clarification on the Leduc county map that we could offer?

The Chair: That would be very helpful if you have any.

Ms Mohammed: Okay. What we've done here is that we understand the county's request to split into two electoral divisions versus – I think we could see five from Beaumont's perspective. In the spirit of that, what we had done was that we took the Leduc county map that was provided to you earlier, and then we made a Beaumont version of it. The first thing that was very important to Beaumont was that, you know, regardless of where you put us, all of Beaumont was together, so it wasn't divided. In this map you can see that Beaumont is all there.

If you look to the west – make sure I've got my directions; yes, the west – of Beaumont, you can see that it's light blue there. Now, the reason why we made that light blue is because there is the East Vistas urban development. That's Leduc county's urban development there. They are projecting a population of about 22,000, you know, about 30 years out or so. So where Leduc county is really going to grow – that's where they're going to grow and focus. We wanted to be cognizant of the targets that you're hoping to hit with population. That's why we drew the line down at Airport Road and put them in with the west side.

For the east side, the Leduc-Beaumont, in looking at the population numbers of Leduc as well as Beaumont and that area of Leduc county, we still think that we can fall within that plus 25 per cent in the area. Unfortunately, what we didn't have when we were making this map: we actually didn't have the total population of Leduc county that's on that side. But then in looking at the numbers in the target, in the maximum, based on the population of Leduc, the city of Leduc, and Beaumont, we can still accommodate within that 25 per cent max 9,000 people. We know that there aren't 9,000 people currently in the county, so there's room to grow there.

The numbers that we used as well are slightly different from the census numbers. We used the municipal census from Leduc, the city of Leduc, and Beaumont, so those are slightly higher than the numbers that you're dealing with for census.

Then from there we just felt that a natural boundary would be highway 2 as an easy way to divide east versus west.

The Chair: Any questions on that?

Mr. McLeod: You're using highway 2 while they used 224, wasn't it?

Ms Mohammed: Initially the county's proposal used range road 244.

Mr. McLeod: Two forty-four.

Ms Mohammed: Yeah. That's right on the boundary of Beaumont. Also, on their map they had Beaumont's northern lands as part of Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Mr. McLeod: Yes. Okay.

Ms Mohammed: So we just made those adjustments specifically taking into consideration the impact of the East Vistas and how that's going to grow. I think that by taking them out of Leduc-Beaumont, it better balances us for future population growth in Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you.

The Chair: Aside from this proposal – I'll most certainly consider it carefully. I must confess that I was troubled myself about the interim proposal for Leduc-Beaumont because it was 10 per cent above provincial average, and you are the fastest growing area in the capital region. But it seemed that you were locked in by other areas which were above provincial average because they had maybe the opposite problem and because of adjustments made.

Do you have any other ideas for how we might move population out of the Leduc-Beaumont constituency as it currently exists that come to mind? Or do you think that even though you're 10 per cent over, it's a coherent whole to represent?

Ms Mohammed: I could take my Beaumont hat off for a minute. I do live in Leduc. You could split Leduc in half. I know that won't make me popular, and I'm fearful of anyone from Leduc in the

room, but that's another thing to consider. If Leduc is anything like Beaumont, I'm pretty sure that they won't want to be split in half.

It's a very tricky area to deal with because the bulk of the growth is in Leduc, and it is in Beaumont, and as soon as you put them together, we get quite high. But maybe during this round, this iteration, we keep them together, and then when we come back eight to 10 years from now, that's maybe when the consideration of Beaumont being on its own or Leduc on its own – but for this iteration, it would be safe to move forward with them together.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

Any further thoughts at all?

Ms Livingstone: No.

Very helpful. Thank you.

Ms Mohammed: Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Very helpful, and thank you for the maps. We are always grateful to receive maps. I always say that a picture speaks a thousand words, right?

All right. Our next registered speaker is Elaine Spencer.

Ms Spencer: I'm supposed to come forward?

The Chair: Sure.

Ms Spencer: Good afternoon. My name is Elaine Spencer, and I'm a constituent of the Red Deer-South area. Thank you very much for allowing me to appear before the commission today. It's been a very interesting process, watching the submissions and listening to the commission's work. As a registered social worker for over 30 years I benefited from learning about social work with communities in my undergraduate education. For the past 10 years I've had the privilege of teaching community social work to eager students at Red Deer College.

I thank the commission for their forward thinking on not just the importance of geography or geographical communities but communities of affiliation or communities of attribute.

I support the commission's interim report on Red Deer and the reunification of Deer Park by putting the communities of Deer Park Village and Deer Park northeast back together. It's a bit unfortunate about Davenport, but we understand, the population in Red Deer-South already being 13 per cent above the norm.

I also want to commend the commission on allowing a population variance between north and south Red Deer. I know the population is very important. As I noted, there are other considerations that need to be taken to mind as well.

I commend the commission in looking at projected growth. With reference to the map that you see, which is the 2016 Red Deer municipal development plan, you'll note that there are three neighbourhoods in the Red Deer municipal development plan that are all in Red Deer-North. They are the neighbourhoods to have the most projected growth, and that's Hillcrest, Emerald Ridge, and Beaumont.

I'd also like to thank you for using the natural municipal boundaries of the city as your guide to Red Deer ridings, and I look forward to seeing the final report.

1:35

The Chair: Thanks very much. Just looking at this map, handily coloured, is there a colour that we're to look at to see those areas of most projected growth, Hillcrest, Emerald Ridge, and Beaumont? Okay. Got it. They're part of the yellow. All right. Thanks so much.

Any questions? Ms Munn?

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

The Chair: Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: No questions. I just wanted to say thank you as well. Sometimes silence is interpreted as acceptance, but it's actually helpful to have information from people who agree with what we're doing as well. So thank you for that. It helps us to not make a different mistake later.

Ms Spencer: Well, thank you so much. Certainly, in teaching the community organizing class, we try to model community organizing and community engagement.

The Chair: Just if I can say, I thought that this was a good example of a community coming forward and giving a good reason for being above variance. They could express not wanting to keep their community, Deer Park, in two – and we thought about that later on – and then it was express and direct and easy to understand. You know, just on a go-forward basis it's a good example for applying that consideration in the law.

Ms Spencer: From my perspective, obviously, one of the fundamental principles of organizing is that a community with the exact same name, when possible, be kept together.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: No. Thank you.

The Chair: Mrs. Day?

Mrs. Day: No. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thanks for coming, and thank you for your map.

Ms Spencer: You can thank Mr. Roth for making the copies for me.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.
All right. Our next registered speaker, Erin Babcock.

Ms Babcock: Good afternoon, and thank you for having me this afternoon. My name is Erin Babcock. I'm the MLA for Stony Plain.

I've read through the commission's report, and I'd like to share some feedback on the proposed changes to the region that I represent and a little beyond. This region of the province, as I understand it, has been a little bit of, as you said earlier, a pain in the posterior, so I can understand that this has been a challenge. It creates significant changes in our area. It's necessitated by our population growth which has occurred in the last decade. I can't argue the need for changes to be made, but I hope I can offer some insight into the impact of the proposed changes to our region. These are shown on the maps that were submitted for this area by my caucus earlier.

The city of Spruce Grove, according to the Canada 2016 census, has a population of 34,066 people whereas the town of Stony Plain has a population of 17,189 people. Together these two intertwined communities enjoy a population of 51,255 people, which makes a proposal of combining these communities within the mandate of the commission. These communities also share a public school board, a Catholic school board, and a number of charter schools in which the student population comes back and forth from both communities.

As stated in your report:

This Commission has found that the goal of preventing unjustified variances from provincial average while respecting common community interests, including county boundaries, occasionally resulted in constituency design that crossed major geographical markers or yielded an irregular shape. Where the Commission's interim recommendations result in the creation of an electoral division with an irregular shape, that recommendation invariably results from the desire to avoid dividing up a neighbourhood or county, although sometimes population density [of course] makes [that] unavoidable.

The proposed constituency of Devon-Parkland crosses major geographical markers such as the North Saskatchewan River and cuts across three out of the four counties it would encompass, being Leduc, Wetaskiwin, and Brazeau county. Due to the geographical location of the proposed constituency there is not a lot of commonality between the communities contained therein. Residents of Parkland county service in Stony Plain, Spruce Grove, or Edmonton but rarely south of the river. Residents of the west end of Leduc county service in Devon, Drayton Valley, Leduc city, or Edmonton but rarely north of the river. Residents of Brazeau county service in Drayton Valley, Devon, or Edmonton, and residents of Wetaskiwin county service in Wetaskiwin, Red Deer, and Edmonton.

Adding to the major geographical markers are, of course, the commerce routes. All the areas encompassed in the potential constituency of Devon-Parkland have their own routes, highways and such, which connect the residents to the centre in which they are most likely to service. These routes are more likely to be used to get to a major corridor such as highway 2 and then up through secondary highways within the proposed constituency. This in of itself is not sufficient reason to propose an adjustment, but it should be a consideration. If residents of these very disparate areas do not in the course of their daily lives travel to these other areas, it immediately cuts down on the accessibility of their elected official because of the unusual travel involved for the resident. As our job is to serve the citizens of Alberta, this would markedly take away from that core responsibility.

Section 14(g) of the act directs the commission to consider "geographical features, including existing road systems," in devising its recommendations for electoral division boundaries. Stony Plain has a long history tied to the communities in Parkland county along the railway and highway corridor. This tradition continues, with trade and services gravitating towards Stony Plain, Spruce Grove, and Edmonton itself. Under this proposal, though, Stony Plain is grouped in with communities along highway 43 which it has less relationship with. Parkland county, likewise, has much less in common with neighbours south of the river in Leduc county or with Devon, with only a few places to cross the North Saskatchewan in the proposed seat.

There is also a rich indigenous heritage in the area, as the commission has noted. But under the proposed boundaries the four major First Nations in the area are divided between three different seats. One submitter noted that better efforts be made to include neighbouring reserves within the same constituency, as would be the case in a constituency of Wabamun-Lac Ste. Anne, which would include Enoch Cree Nation, Paul First Nation, Alexander First Nation, and Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation.

The Chair: Could you just stop for a sec?

Ms Babcock: Of course.

The Chair: This is of particular interest, perhaps, because last week we heard some effective presentations about Drayton Valley-Rocky Mountain House, moving Drayton Valley back into Devon-

Parkland and then taking Wabamun out of Devon-Parkland as a result. If you could go slowly and outline for me your vision for Wabamun-Lac Ste. Anne.

Ms Babcock: Wabamun-Lac Ste. Anne would be Lac Ste. Anne county and Parkland county, with the natural division of the North Saskatchewan River to the south and the natural division of the Pembina to the west. It would become a doughnut riding. They are allowed within your mandate, and it has been something that has been shown in the past with Medicine Hat. It would be a riding that would encompass all of the land surrounding Spruce Grove and Stony Plain themselves outside of the corporate limits.

The Chair: So all of the lands surrounding a combined Stony Plain . . .

Ms Babcock: Yes.

The Chair: The last time I was in Stony Plain, I could see Spruce Grove from there.

Ms Babcock: You sure can.

The Chair: Is there any real land between them anymore?

Ms Babcock: Not really. There are, I think, 5 kilometres and Boundary Road. My daughter as a teenager literally bikes from one to the other. The two communities are definitely intertwined.

The commission has recommended that the suggestion to include neighbouring nations be implemented except to the extent that it would result in a noncontiguous electoral division.

The Chair: Okay. Sorry. Could you go through the four First Nation reserves that you say would fall within this?

Ms Babcock: Within the Wabamun-Lac Ste. Anne riding there would be Alexis, Alexander, Enoch, and Paul. They would all fall within that division.

The Chair: Thank you. Have you spoken to any of these bands in your job as MLA or otherwise to determine, either in this specific suggestion or generally, what they think about the process?

Ms Babcock: Absolutely, I have. There's definitely been that discussion. The nations' being able to be within a contiguous electoral boundary would be helpful for them and being able to deal with the government in a more effective, nation-to-nation type relationship.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Ms Babcock: The two urban areas of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, the First Nations, our two counties, and the highway 16 and 43 corridors all follow the same general lines, radiating away from Edmonton. From my perspective in the constituency office, increased population would not mean a negative impact on the ability to effectively represent my constituents. Being able to serve them effectively, though, does require that the boundaries provide us some cohesion in the communities located in the seat and their shared and unique interests.

In the report is the statement, "Urban or rural, the Commission was reminded that trading areas are often a good indicator of common community interests." Due to the unique nature and cross-economic factors between Spruce Grove and Stony Plain and according to the website for the Spruce Grove & District Chamber of Commerce – they represent the tri region in the heart of Alberta: Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and Parkland county – the Spruce

Grove Chamber of Commerce is the voice of businesses within the region. The town of Stony Plain website states:

"Businesses . . . are eligible to purchase a Tri-Municipal licence, which allows them to conduct their business within the City of Spruce Grove and Parkland county (without having to purchase a non-resident licence to operate within those communities)."

These are obviously, then, communities of great interest.

1:45

On occasion – this is where we'll talk about the doughnut – the commission recommends that doughnut-shaped constituencies be created or continued solely to honour municipal boundaries and respect common communities of interest. In this case a doughnut constituency of Wabamun-Lac Ste. Anne would enable all rural residents of common interests to continue being served in the region and the strong centres of the area, being Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, to be represented in a single constituency, which would enable more cohesive representation.

In the report some submitters noted the importance of county boundaries in the context of joint projects undertaken by municipalities within a county as a consideration for the number of counties an MLA is required to represent. In our region, which is known as the trimunicipal region – and they've won an award from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association for collaboration within the region – there are dozens of joint projects between our close-knit communities, projects like the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre and the joint RCMP station. Right now the facility is in Stony Plain, and the ground has been broken for the new station, with both communities to be financed, which will be built in Spruce Grove and will service Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. The report states, "The Commission has respected [these] submissions where possible." In the town of Stony Plain there is the heritage pavilion in Heritage Park, which all three municipalities contributed to and is a gem in our region.

It is not only municipal government projects that ensure these communities are bound together, though. NeighbourLink Parkland of Spruce Grove is an example of a community organization that serves those in need in the entire region, and even our sports teams often encompass both communities. The Posse, our local lacrosse club, is based within both communities. These communities are stronger because of the ties that hold them together through commerce, community organizations, shared history, trade routes, and effective co-operation in the region, all of which have been built by the people within these communities together.

Thank you so much for your time, and I appreciate any questions that you have.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'm going to turn to Mr. McLeod and ask if he has any questions.

Mr. McLeod: No. I'm good. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mrs. Day?

Mrs. Day: Yes. Thank you very much for being here and the thought that you put into your presentation today. Very well done. I did note that some places say that a river is a barrier; some places say that the river is not a barrier because it's got lots of access across it. I just wanted to clarify what you're saying, that there is a difference between the north and the south of the river that goes through your . . .

Ms Babcock: Absolutely. Very much so. It's just due to, of course, years and years of it being a barrier. The communities on each side of the river have serviced to the east and the north on the north side

of the river and to the east and to the south on the south side of the river. There are actually – sorry; I’m just thinking – three crossings, within the proposed seat of Devon-Parkland, of the North Saskatchewan, but, you know, there is a little bit of commerce going from the north side to the Genesee coal plant, but other than that they’re very separate communities.

Mrs. Day: Okay. My second question would be around the name of Lac Ste. Anne. There were a couple of submissions at least that mentioned that it should be not Ste. Anne but Lac Ste. Anne in the name.

Ms Babcock: Lac Ste. Anne. Yeah. That’s the proper name of the county.

Mrs. Day: Okay.

The Chair: Ms Munn?

Ms Munn: I don’t have any questions.

The Chair: Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: I’m the data nerd.

Ms Babcock: Perfect.

Ms Livingstone: I was just going to confirm that the population numbers you used for Spruce Grove and Stony Plain: were those the federal census or municipal?

Ms Babcock: Yes. Canada 2016 census numbers.

Ms Livingstone: Thank you. You may be the very first person to actually use the federal census numbers. Thank you.

Ms Babcock: It’s in your report that that’s what we had to use.

The Chair: Thank you for reading so closely.
I have a question.

Ms Babcock: Yes.

The Chair: I’m concerned about the land east and northeast of the town of Stony Plain. We were looking at this last week in relation to St. Albert and St. Albert-Redwater. Right now in our proposal Spruce Grove includes some land outside of the city to the north and to the east. Under your proposal that would become part of the new Wabamun-Lac Ste. Anne constituency or – what would you do with that bit?

Ms Babcock: There was a bit there that would go to the Wabamun-Lac Ste. Anne constituency, of course, because it would be actually a true doughnut constituency. Then there is a little jut out to the east there that would include the last of the four major indigenous communities. Then the rest of that would go up to the proposed Redwater-Morinville. There’s a little . . .

The Chair: So under your proposal, though, is the entirety of our proposed Spruce Grove and Stony Plain dealt with, or do we have a little remainder that has to be put into St. Albert-Redwater somehow?

Ms Babcock: No.

The Chair: So you’re just reconfiguring these two constituencies in a different way?

Ms Babcock: Absolutely.

The Chair: That’s much easier to deal with. Just an editorial comment.

Ms Babcock: Yes. It’s mostly because within the region, of course, there is our agricultural sector, our coal sector, our forestry sector, which is quite small, but the other sectors are very, very large, and they need to be represented effectively. Having the Stony Plain-Spruce Grove riding to itself allows somebody to have that urban representation as well as to have a rural representation coming into the city and being right on the edge of the city there. People service in those three areas.

The Chair: Thank you so much for coming. It’s been very helpful.

Ms Babcock: Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Our next registered speaker is Elizabeth Hagell.

Ms Hagell: Good afternoon.

The Chair: Hello.

Ms Hagell: I’m Elizabeth Hagell, and I’m from Red Deer-South. I want to thank the commission for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon. It’s been very interesting this morning to hear all the different presentations and realize that Red Deer-South and Red Deer-North are actually fairly straightforward given a lot of the complexity. I had no idea, so it’s been very informative for me.

Actually, as my colleague Elaine Spencer had noted, we support the interim report from the commission in terms of integrating the Deer Park community more successfully. Again, unfortunately, Davenport couldn’t be included, but I think perhaps the next go-around of electoral boundaries would be an opportunity for that to happen.

Again, thinking about development in Red Deer, there has been historically quite a bit in the south, but that’s sort of finished now, so the newer developments are all happening in Red Deer-North. I think that by the time the next election or the subsequent election are around, there’ll be that difference. The 13 per cent will be diminished quite a bit.

I think the other, probably final comment: I just really appreciate that you have kept the electoral boundaries within municipal boundaries. Despite earlier comments, Red Deer is actually an urban riding. It’s changing a lot. I moved here in 1989. There was a population of 50,000, and it was quite rural at that time, but as I sit here this afternoon, in 2017, it’s becoming very urban. We have Red Deer College seeking university status, and hopefully that will happen. We have a lot of new development drawing in a lot of younger, urban-type folks, so our population is changing. I think that keeping it as an urban riding is really important to representing those interests effectively.

That’s really all I have to say, and I thank you for the opportunity and wish you well with your work in the next months.

The Chair: Thank you.
Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: No. Nothing for me.

The Chair: Ms Munn?

Ms Munn: No.

The Chair: Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: No. Thank you.

Thanks for coming.

The Chair: The resident judge told me with some pride that your Winners store serves the entire province from Saskatchewan to B.C. That was just his take on the cosmopolitan nature of Red Deer.

Ms Hagell: Yes, indeed. That's a true sign of suburbanism.

The Chair: The next speaker: Neil Korotash.

Mr. Korotash: I have maps here for you.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you.

Mr. Korotash: You're welcome.

Thank you. Thank you very much for the opportunity to present today. My name is Neil Korotash, and I live in St. Albert. I'd also like to say a special thank you to Mr. Roth. I had my wires crossed last week, showed up at the Coast Plaza on Friday, and there was nobody there. They told me that happened on Wednesday. Aaron has been – I wasn't sure I'd make it here on time – texting me and letting me know whether you were still here or not, so I was pleased to be able to make it in time.

1:55

I had previously made a submission in the first round of submissions asking that you consider separating St. Albert and Spruce Grove. I think the previous speaker made a lot good points about why Spruce Grove and Stony Plain need to be together as a constituency. There is very little in common, despite being suburbs, between St. Albert and Spruce Grove.

However, I believe that what you've proposed with St. Albert-Redwater is maybe even a little bit less desirable, and I'll tell you why. I live in St. Albert. I teach an agriculture class in Morinville, so I've got a number of farm friends that are east of Morinville, out towards the Redwater area. Since this report has come out, they've questioned: what do we have in common with St. Albert? Some of my St. Albert friends have said: well, what do we have in common with Redwater? The Morinville folks are saying: well, jeez, we'd like to be – you know, we have probably more in common with St. Albert than we do with Barrhead and with Westlock. So that's what I'm going to be presenting this afternoon.

I'd like to see St. Albert combined with Morinville in a constituency. I'll explain that in a little bit. I also spent some time on the St. Albert city council when we were represented by two MLAs at the time, Mary O'Neill and Doug Horner, and I felt like the portion of the community represented by Doug Horner was a bit underrepresented. It would be underrepresented because I think that the natural inkling was to defer all of the St. Albert issues to the MLA that represented the majority of the community so that that MLA could spend more time outside in the rural and in the Spruce Grove community. So as city councillors we were constantly meeting with one MLA when we really should have had two MLAs representing the community and representing similar interests. I do believe that when you do have those fragmented or those blended areas, especially when the city is represented by another MLA, there tends to be a little bit of underrepresentation for those in the blended riding in the urban area.

I think that it makes a little bit more sense to combine Morinville with St. Albert when you think about what the province is responsible for and some of the issues they're responsible for. Health care we share. Our ambulances backfill for each other. We share the same hospital, the Sturgeon, and St. Albert primary care network is shared between Morinville and St. Albert. Education: we

share school division boundaries. Greater St. Albert Catholic schools, who I work for, has schools in Morinville and in St. Albert. We share a transportation corridor, a commercial corridor, highway 2 between St. Albert and Morinville. When you consider annexation, something the province has responsibility for as well, St. Albert is annexing to the north and to the east of highway 2, and Morinville is looking to the south and to the east as well, into that area of Sturgeon county.

Our media are blended between the two communities as well. The *St. Albert Gazette* serves both St. Albert and Morinville areas. As you've indicated in your report, there's a strong cultural heritage between the two. We have several people, several residents that either work in St. Albert and live in Morinville or vice versa and commute back and forth between the two communities every day. We've partnered on recreation facilities in the past, and the list goes on and on. I think there are far many more natural ties between St. Albert and Morinville than there are between St. Albert and Redwater or between Morinville and Barrhead and Westlock.

Because I have listened to some of the hearings already – and kudos to the audiovisual guys. The audio is very clear and is very well done online. The solution that I have proposed is to amend the St. Albert-Redwater constituency – you've got the map in front of you – to take everything south of township road 570 and east of highway 2, because I know that the commission likes to use those natural boundaries, the highway boundaries as well. Based on my math, what I was able to gather from all the neighbourhoods in the St. Albert region and in Morinville and Bon Accord and Gibbons, that gets you pretty close to the desired outcome for the population.

The Chair: What is your outcome?

Mr. Korotash: I knew you were going to ask me that, and I didn't write it down. I have it on my computer, but it was 40 – I had a tough time with the rural areas in Sturgeon county. I wasn't sure what the rural populations were, but the St. Albert urban population – Morinville, Bon Accord, Gibbons, and those urban populations – was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 43,000 or 44,000, I think, if I recall correctly. The reason I had the dotted line there is because, like I said, I had a hard time figuring out the rural population of Sturgeon county. So if what I had proposed there for St. Albert-Morinville ended up being a little bit larger, recognizing that there's a lot of growth happening in northeast St. Albert as well as in Morinville, Bon Accord and Gibbons may be able to be moved into Barrhead-Westlock, what I would propose as the Barrhead-Westlock-Redwater constituency. Essentially, what it would mean is a St. Albert-Morinville constituency and then having one that goes across the top, which would be Barrhead-Westlock-Redwater.

The Chair: I remember your submission from the first time. We looked at it seriously, but we couldn't do it because the numbers in Morinville were simply too high to add them to St. Albert. Now you're proposing to add them to what I call the remnant of St. Albert, putting that remnant in a different position, proposing it be due north as opposed to the northeast, as we've suggested. But I'm still focused on what happens to Barrhead-Westlock that way because offering them Bon Accord and Gibbons isn't going to make up for the loss of Morinville. Morinville is simply too large.

Mr. Korotash: Morinville is 10,000 people, and Redwater and the rural areas – I just looked at the numbers that were in the report for what St. Albert and Morinville had. So if you swap Morinville for Redwater and the balance of the constituency that was in – like, the balance of the constituency that was in St. Albert-Redwater was very, very close to the same. The St. Albert population that you have to the east of Bellerose Drive and east of St. Albert Trail is about 19,000

people, and Morinville is about 10,000 people, so that's 29,000. Then you've got Cardiff and a few other hamlets in there.

The Chair: So you go as far out as Redwater and combine Redwater with Barrhead and Westlock?

Mr. Korotash: That's right, right across the top there. Barrhead, Westlock, Redwater: they have similar interests, more so than St. Albert and Morinville would, certainly geographically not out of the realm of possibility. There are a lot of other constituencies that are larger than what would be proposed there as well.

The Chair: What do you think about the suggestion – you won't know this, but we've had it made to us – that Athabasca be taken out of Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche and added to St. Albert-Redwater? That would add between 3,000 and 10,000 people depending on whether we take just the town of Athabasca or its entire county. Any observations on the community of interest between Barrhead, Westlock, and Athabasca?

Mr. Korotash: Well, I'm not envious of your role here because there's a domino effect. As soon as you change one, it changes three or four others.

I specifically looked at St. Albert, St. Albert-Redwater, and Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock and, I think, made some adjustments to those three. I'm not sure, if you took the population from Athabasca into the Redwater community, what that does to the numbers. But I think that putting Athabasca in a riding with St. Albert and Redwater just, I suppose – I'm not sure what the connection is between St. Albert and Redwater and St. Albert and Athabasca. I think it would be more difficult for an MLA to represent the wide variety of interests in that constituency as opposed to a St. Albert-Morinville one.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you for your map and your ability to answer the question: what would we do with the leftover bits?

Ms Munn?

Ms Munn: I don't have any questions.

The Chair: Ms Livingstone?

Ms Livingstone: No questions from me. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. McLeod?

Mr. McLeod: No. Thank you.

The Chair: Mrs. Day?

Mrs. Day: It's good. No.

The Chair: Thanks so much.

Mr. Korotash: Thank you very much.

The Chair: All right. Is there anyone else here who is a registered speaker who I haven't called on yet?

Okay. Anybody else who would like to speak?

All right. Well, thank you so much. This is our last . . . oh, sorry. Come forward. Yes. Please.

Unidentified Speaker: A shy wave, but a wave nonetheless.

The Chair: All right. I missed that completely. Sorry.

Mr. Borody: I only have one copy because I wasn't going to do anything.

The Chair: Thank you. Sure.

Mr. Borody: I sent a written submission. I looked at the boundaries of the city of Edmonton and how they would relate to . . .

The Chair: Go to the mike so *Hansard* can catch your words. Give us your name, please, first.

Mr. Borody: Ian Borody.

The Chair: Where do you live, Ian?

Mr. Borody: I live in Lacombe.

I was very interested in the commission itself and the work that you guys are doing. I looked into the numbers in the census, and I know how hard it is to get the average and to get people to like the ridings that you are making. I know that that's very hard, and I appreciate the work that you are doing.

I went and looked into Calgary, but I liked your solutions for Calgary, and I didn't see many complaints with that and the same with rural Alberta.

2:05

I looked into Edmonton, however. I have a brother who lives on the north side of Edmonton in the old Edmonton-Calder riding, and he would be in the new Edmonton-West Henday riding. He didn't like that riding because it's him with Lewis Estates, and he feels that there are no economic, social, or geographical connections between the two of them. So instead of just saying that you should probably fix this, I decided to say: look at some solutions to that problem. I went in and I changed Edmonton-Calder, and then I ended up changing a lot of the northern ridings, which then had a domino effect and changed a bunch of the southern ridings, so I ended up changing just about every riding to account for that change because I didn't want to give you a solution that didn't have all the results in it.

The Chair: Your proposed solution shown on this map gets us how far from – I know this isn't the only issue, but we do calculate how far from parity. What's the range?

Mr. Borody: In the paragraphs before I did talk about the population average in each constituency because I calculated that as well. It's pretty close. There are some ridings on the suburbs – like, Edmonton-Ellerslie I have, and Edmonton-Heritage Valley, I called it. They are a lot lower to make up for new growth. I think they're both minus 8 per cent. Then I have ridings such as Edmonton-Strathcona, where there's not too, too much growth. I have it plus, I think, 9 per cent to account for that difference. I tried to make it as little as possible, but there is some difference overall.

Mr. McLeod: What numbers did you use?

Mr. Borody: I used the 2016 federal census. I made sure to use those.

Mr. McLeod: Very good.

Mr. Borody: Thank you.

I should have brought more copies of my thing. I'm sorry about that. There's only one.

The Chair: All right. This all seems driven by placing the four neighbourhoods from the former Edmonton-Calder constituency that are north of the Yellowhead into Edmonton-West Henday. We heard a lot about that as well when we were in Edmonton.

Mr. Borody: Right.

The Chair: Do you know, have you calculated the population of those four neighbourhoods?

Mr. Borody: It was a while ago. I'm not a hundred per cent certain, but I think it's around 7,000. Don't trust me on that, though. It's been a while. I figured, though, that it made more sense to come up with a solution instead of just saying the problem that was there.

Ms Livingstone: It's very much appreciated.

Mr. Borody: Thank you.

The Chair: Yes. We should have had you first and then videoed you as a model for all the presenters.

So in your journey around the city of Edmonton and doing these calculations, have you any other observations about why your ideas would work best, taking into account the criterion of trying to keep neighbourhoods together, that you've heard us talking about, over and above Edmonton-Calder?

Mr. Borody: Right. Well, I know I have an aunt and uncle who live currently in Edmonton-Riverview, and they did express that they are okay with Edmonton-Riverview, but they did express that if they could be closer to Edmonton-Strathcona, they would prefer that. I didn't count that because Edmonton-Riverview, with the changes I made, ended up just moving across the river to be fully on that side of the river, and Edmonton-Strathcona gained some of the people in their neighbourhood of McKernan. I know that they preferred that.

I know that on the map that I have given, there are some neighbourhoods being divided that I didn't like doing but I ended up doing overall. There's Avonmore, south of Bonnie Doon, that I ended up dividing, which I didn't prefer, so maybe if there's a way around that, you guys can look into that. I didn't look into it too deeply because I didn't find any solutions that I personally liked. There's also . . .

The Chair: Have you got 20 constituencies here?

Mr. Borody: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Borody: I made sure not to increase or decrease.

The Chair: Okay. That would be cheating. Tempting, though.

Mr. Borody: Yeah. It's not like Calgary, where there's that extra half a constituency problem.

The Chair: Okay. So you had a problem around Avonmore, you were saying?

Mr. Borody: Yes. I divided it down 83rd Street, so the west end is in Edmonton-Strathcona, and the east end is in Edmonton-East. But that was one of the few problems I had overall.

Otherwise, I made sure to account for new growth. In the south end, in Edmonton-Heritage Valley, between Edmonton-Heritage Valley and Edmonton-South West I accounted for the realignment of 141st Street to make sure that in future years that's not a problem because it will probably be a problem, potentially. I also accounted for the realignment of 23rd Avenue in Mill Woods. Edmonton-East is already pretty high in population, so that way the new neighbourhood of Aster that's going to be developed would be in Edmonton-Ellerslie, which is below the average, to keep the growth

in that bracket. The road isn't there yet, but it's going to be in I don't know how many years, maybe five, 10.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.

Ms Munn, any questions?

Ms Munn: I don't have any questions. Thank you. I look forward to looking at that more closely.

Ms Livingstone: I have one question if you don't mind answering. Are you in high school?

Mr. Borody: Yeah. I'm 15, going to turn 16. I'm going into grade 11. This was a summer project. I've been interested in it since October, when you guys said that you were going to start working on this. When the census came out, I started to look at all the data, and I made a map of Edmonton. Edmonton is what I ended up submitting because I liked the way I did it. I did a map of Calgary, but I ended up using 27 constituencies, so I didn't submit that because I know the problem with the whole 26 and a half. Then I tried to do rural Alberta, but it just ended up being too much, and it was around exam time, so I didn't finish rural Alberta.

Ms Livingstone: Totally fair. We know exactly how hard this project is.

Mr. Borody: Yeah.

Ms Livingstone: That's fantastic. Yeah. I'm just going to make a note in *Hansard*. Someone needs to call you for the next Electoral Boundaries Commission. I think you would be an excellent candidate for this work.

Mr. Borody: Thank you.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Ditto. Look forward to the next commission yourself, okay?

Mr. Borody: Oh, thank you.

Mrs. Day: Let's see: 15, in eight more years – yeah, it just would be perfect. I just want to thank you, too, and commend you. I think you have a twin in Calgary because we had a young man, maybe not quite as young as you, come and give us a solution for the math in Calgary as well. I feel your pain because I started working on my own, trying to fix an area of rural Alberta, the rest of Alberta I like to call it, and I ended up spending – I don't know – eight days going around because I couldn't solve one area without doing another. It ended up, the dominoes and the fixing – I couldn't stop. It was like, you know, working where you can't stop. You have to keep going.

Mr. Borody: Yeah. This one moves, and then – yeah, that's just what happened with Edmonton.

Mrs. Day: I get it. Yeah.

Mr. Borody: Like, the only one that I ended up keeping was Edmonton-Whitemud, because it was just domino after domino, moving people over.

Mrs. Day: Well, hats off to you, young man. I think we should all give you a hug.

Mr. McLeod: Go ahead.

Mr. Borody: I did send the whole Edmonton map. There is a written submission of it, too, that I mailed in.

The Chair: I had the same comparison to the Calgary fellow, who was very thorough as well, but he didn't give us any reasons why his was better than ours whereas you've given us a little paragraph showing us that for each riding.

Mr. Borody: Yeah. I've described mainly the boundaries of each riding, and I could say that it's a fairly decent report that I created about Edmonton.

Mrs. Day: I hope you get some credits for this.

The Chair: Yeah. I hope it turns into some credits for you in high school. We could send a note.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah. If you need a reference letter and this is a project, just let us know.

Mr. Borody: I'll see. I just did it in spare time mainly, away from school.

Ms Livingstone: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much. That's terrific.

Mr. Borody: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Anybody else here who'd like to come forward?

That's it? All right. Well, thank you very much, everybody who has come, participated, for excellent presentations and good ideas.

Now the ball is in our court as we start our deliberations on each of our initial recommendations and see where we go from there.

Thanks very much.

[The hearing adjourned at 2:13 p.m.]

