

1:30 p.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll officially declare the meeting open. I'd like to indicate at the outset that unfortunately panel member Pat Black will not be with us either today or tomorrow. Pat's husband, Peter, is scheduled for major surgery tomorrow. So, God willing, Pat will return and be with us later in the week.

I'd like to say at the outset how pleased we are to have with us Mr. Ken Albrecht, the president of the Rural & Improvement Districts Association of Alberta. This is a portion in the committee process where we will be listening to civic leaders and former commission members to gain their input and advice before we proceed with the actual drawing of lines.

So unless there are some comments, Stock, that either you or Mike would like to make, again a welcome to you, Ken, and I'll turn it over to you.

MR. ALBRECHT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I come here today and take this opportunity to express some concerns I have about particularly the very sparsely populated portions of Alberta. The Rural & Improvement Districts Association represents the improvement district councils of the province who have a very unique relationship with Municipal Affairs for the operation and supply of municipal services to about 65 percent of the land area of the province of Alberta. Having said that, there are only about 85,000 people who live in that vast area, so we have some very different concerns than you would have in a metropolitan area or an urban area. We live with time and distance. We live in those parts of the world by choice. Some of those people are there for ethnic reasons, some are there for religious reasons, some are there because of resource-based industries, but they're all there by choice. We live a different lifestyle, I think, than a lot of people living in urban centres would understand.

I would like to be able to bring to the committee the understanding that I think needs to be put into the very difficult decisions that you have to make. I personally in my association don't believe that people should be put into pigeonholes or lined up in terms of numbers for representation. We live in this unique region where time and distance are major factors, and if we have to be put into pigeonholes where we fit into a structure because of so many numbers of people having to be in one geographic area to be represented by somebody, we're going to have areas so vast that I don't know how you're going to get around. So I think there has to be some flexibility in your decisions in terms of the numbers of people. We have the unique mixes, as I indicated somewhere: indigenous people, some Metis peoples, religious organizations, some there for language only. So when you put this mix together, I don't know how you fit us into the pigeonhole that I heard about when I appeared before the commission – last February, I think, was the first one.

Now, Mike is as fully cognizant of that part of the world; he represents that part of the world. I saw some lines drawn that to me just didn't make any sense. Your colleague Pearl was going to represent the people in Chipewyan lakes and Fort Chipewyan and beyond. Goodness gracious, it would take you two days in an automobile if you could drive to get there. You know, there are no airline services, no nothing. That doesn't make any sense.

The people that we represent have a strong sense of community. They have a very strong stewardship for the region. They are a very independent bunch of people, probably more so than a lot of the

people in other parts of Alberta, particularly the urban centres. They get that way because of the challenges of life that they have to live with by choice. They see things a little differently. They don't see being put into a pigeonhole as being particularly advantageous. Number one, it's our belief that if an MLA has 5,000 constituents and he's not doing a good job of representing them, he's not going to be there, or if he had a hundred thousand people, he's not going to be there. If he's doing a good job, it doesn't matter how many people he's got, within reason of course.

So we would ask that in your decision you take some of these things into consideration. Take into consideration the approachability in terms of the geographic area of where an MLA might live: I think that's important. The people in the north, in the improvement districts, are prepared to travel because they do that on a daily basis. It's nothing to get in and out and be able to travel two hours someplace. That's part and parcel of what you do. There are local jurisdictions in that way.

The lines I saw drawn on this report scared me. As I indicated, they had High Prairie and Fort Chip in the same constituency. That doesn't make any sense. The rationale for that was, "Well, that's the way we had to put the lines together to get the numbers to fit." What are we about? Are we about representing people or representing numbers? What's our job? If it's to represent people and we're doing a good job, if you've 20,000 or 40,000, what the hell's the difference? In my belief if you're doing a good job, that's fine, and if you're doing a poor job, the people will take care of that for you. I don't see this business of numbers being that all-important, particularly in those widely separated and sparsely populated rural areas. We have in those areas some significant assessments, and we take pretty good care of ourselves out there. Mike, you were part of that system for a long time. You know what we do and how we do it out there. We've become very independent and very self-sufficient in most areas.

So I would ask that when you're drawing these lines, take some of those things into consideration. I know that these people were given a mandate, and they chose to change some boundaries around that didn't make a whole lot of sense. You don't have to go very far away to see some boundaries that didn't make any sense. For instance, in the Whitecourt constituency the community of Entwistle and the community of Evansburg are across the river from one another and have been a working entity for 80 or 90 years. Suddenly we're going to take a provincial constituency and split them up. We're talking about changing communities and everything, and that doesn't make any sense. Some of the existing boundaries shouldn't ever be changed, and there are some that you could change, but not in that manner. I think a sense of community and a sense of trading area, travel patterns have to be taken into consideration when you're drawing these boundaries. I think they're more important than making sure that everybody fits into this pigeonhole because you have 14,777 people in each one. I'm not sure that having an equal number of people in every constituency is really going to achieve anything other than confuse a hell of a lot of people.

So, Mr. Chairman, those are some opening remarks. I'd be certainly willing to try to answer any questions you or your colleagues may have in terms of that very vast area that's out there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you.

Questions? Stock first.

1:40

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I guess one of the things that we hear and that people are concerned about is reasonableness. We're confronting two ends of a spectrum here. Some people would suggest representation should be strictly one person, one vote: the

exact same number of people in every constituency. They suggest that, even though the Supreme Court has ruled that out as being unreasonable and not Canadian history. Other people, on the other hand, would suggest: throw out all guidelines and don't worry at all about percentages of differences. You've seen the report, you've made presentations. The federal rulings and provincial appeal court rulings seem to uphold the reasonableness of up to a 25 percent variation, given some things you've already mentioned: trading areas, community interests. The people that you're representing, do you see them seeing at least that much variation or that much of a guideline – 25 percent – or are they going to react even again to that? Where do you see them on that long spectrum? If we go with it and then the Legislature approves of along the lines of 25 percent, as the Supreme Court seems to indicate can be palatable in some cases, are we going to get a reaction from the folks that you're representing saying that's too tight?

MR. ALBRECHT: I think in some areas you're going find that that might be too tight in some of the more remote communities. Okay? Let's take Fort Chipewyan for instance. Summertime, the only communication in and out of there is by either air or boat, and their closest community is Fort McMurray. In Fort McMurray you can come to road. You've got to come down to Grassland or Plamondon area before you can go anywhere. Before you go to Athabasca or before you can go to Lac La Biche, you have to come that far. If you fly out from McMurray, you've got to come to Edmonton. So does it make any sense? What I'm getting at is that the report talked about putting Fort Chipewyan in with High Prairie. I mean, to me that doesn't make any sense. If your MLA lived in Fort Chip, representing the people in High Prairie – that kind of thing doesn't make any sense. You may have to look in some of these remote communities at a variance greater than 25 percent. You may have to, because if you don't, those people will feel that they are not adequately represented. They'll feel like they've been shunted because they happen to live out there by choice or whatever, but they're going to feel that they haven't been well served.

So I can't tell you where this magic number is. You know, is 25 the magic number? I don't know. Certainly if you could work towards that you'd have some guideline, but there may be a couple of places . . . The other one is Fort Vermilion – La Crête, High Level, Zama Lake, that part of the world – a very big portion of real estate, not a lot of people. When you start moving people from Zama or Fort Vermilion – right now they're represented out of Peace River, and they've been very fortunate to have someone who cared a great deal for that part of the world and did an excellent job of it. Whether that will happen again or not, I don't know.

People's belief today in northern Alberta – a lot of that has to do with the effectiveness of the representation that's there today. If they had similar representation into the future, they probably wouldn't kick too much about their region, but if their representation wasn't of that nature, they may take a different view. So you have to put that into context too, keeping out of the political scope here. We're trying to be objective with these things.

So there may be some regions that 25 percent won't work. The rest of the province: I think that's probably an unattainable number. Everybody has to give a little, and success is through negotiation. Taking into account the fact that you have to maintain traditional trading areas, that's how things are done, and if you start splitting up trading areas and splitting up communities, suddenly you create something that you don't really want to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Stock?

MR. DAY: Okay. That's somewhat helpful here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mike?

MR. CARDINAL: Yes. Ken, thank you again for your presentation, and thank you for your comments as far as my past involvement with regional councils. You're aware that I spent close to six years as chairman and councillor of ID 17 and town council in Slave Lake, and in addition to that I spent about 15 years in a relocation program with the province which involved relocation of native families and other lower income families to growth centres across the north. So generally I have a good feeling of how some of the migration patterns work.

One of the questions I have for you, Ken, is in relation to migration and shopping patterns. You indicated in your presentation that they are very important, and I agree with you that they are very important. In a lot of cases it means not following municipal boundaries in order to establish constituencies. I assume that if a person had a choice, migration and shopping patterns should be considered first over municipal boundaries when you design constituencies. I assume they'd be more important than the municipal boundary itself.

MR. ALBRECHT: Yes. I could cite examples of some counties very close to Edmonton where because of the urban sprawl people have migrated out and now live in some of the counties surrounding Edmonton, and the counties closer to the city of Edmonton have a totally different concept of life than the agrarian society that's farther out. It's creating I wouldn't say dissension but some concern in municipal bodies that these two different entities are coming together in a confrontation because their outlook and their expectations from municipal service are totally different. I don't think it's necessary to follow municipal boundaries in establishing the provincial electoral boundaries. I don't think that's important. What I do think is much more important is to keep as a unit that trading area that understands one another as opposed to the municipal boundaries.

I live in the Whitecourt constituency, and I can tell you that there are several municipal jurisdictions, three improvement districts all involved in this. If I may use the Whitecourt constituency again, that constituency in its present boundaries is quite compatible because it's an agrarian base and an industrial base – some pulp and paper and some oil and gas – and they all fit together. Edson is almost in it, but Edson is a different community again. They fit very well with Hinton, Jasper, and Grande Cache. They're out of the agrarian society. They're into an industrial forestry management sync, so it's totally different. If you went to draw that on municipal lines, it would look totally different and may not work very well.

So the trading patterns and traditional travel patterns, units that seem to work together. I suspect that down in your part of the world there's a section of the county that gets along very well and another portion totally different, depending on what they do for a living, whether irrigating or whether they're drylanders or whatever: different philosophies. Then you get close to a city where you bring the urban philosophy into the rural area. The county of Parkland and the county of Lac Ste. Anne are experiencing those things right now. The east end of the county of Parkland is populated with a whole lot of acreage people, and they bring a different perspective. There was even a suggestion one time a few years ago that farm tractors should be shut down at 5 o'clock because the city people had come home. Do you see what I'm getting at in terms of philosophies and beliefs?

So I think when you're establishing these boundaries, it's a horrendous chore for you that you have to take into account these trading areas and the communication patterns. Like, to put Fort Chip

and High Prairie together: to me, it just boggled my mind when I saw it, because there's nothing there. Maybe the numbers don't fit real good using Fort McMurray as an example, because we're looking at 35,000 people in the city of Fort McMurray, I believe, and the rural population from Fort Chip in the north and Anzac and Chard and Conklin south to Philomena is not very many people, but they have to be served as well, and they'll have a different agenda. To put them into High Prairie just doesn't make any sense.

I don't know if that's helped.

1:50

MR. CARDINAL: Yeah, it has.

Ken, I have one additional question, and you mentioned this also in your presentation. You indicated that you do not use numbers – and you stressed that a number of times – to determine representation. I know you know the rule. Improvement districts which you represent have a lot of the native communities like Wabasca and different areas like that – Conklin, Janvier – and a lot of reserves and the Metis settlements, and of course poor and nonnative hamlets and villages, too, within that area. Would you see some of those areas using a greater variance – towards, say, the 50 percent variance – for a period of time until the economic and social status of those communities changed to closer, you know, to a provincial standard as a transitional process when designing constituency boundaries for the province?

MR. ALBRECHT: I think you have to look at greater than 25 percent. That was Mr. Day's comment: would there be something greater than 25? I think that for those types of communities you have to give some serious consideration to that.

You mentioned the economics. The major developments in Alberta in the last several years have all occurred in those more remote regions. You know, Daishowa came in north of Peace River. Al-Pac is going to draw fibre from a large region out there and is going to offer some opportunity and offer some jobs. There's going to be people moving in there, and eventually it will grow and build. That's what I was getting at, Mike, when I said I think you have to take into consideration some greater variance for certain regions like that.

Edmonton is not halfway north in the province of Alberta. It's still in southern Alberta. So we've got a whole lot of area in the north where you don't have a lot of people. Improvement districts have about 85,000 people plus the incorporated municipalities within: High Level, Manning – you know, those kinds of communities. So there's a significant number of people. It's my belief that unless we give – and I don't want to use the term “special consideration,” because those people don't ask for anything else but to be on an equal footing with anybody else. But I guess if changing the variance gives them special treatment, that might be what you have to call it, Mr. Chairman.

It's important that these people not be put in a situation such that the potential for their representative is to live beyond a region they can't get to, you know, or he to them. I think that has to be taken in. You look at the Peace River constituency. Goodness, it would take the representative living in Peace River five hours' driving to go to the northern extremities of that. You can probably walk around most constituencies in this community we're sitting in in four or five hours; you know, through the whole thing. You're not going to meet everybody in it, but at least you can be in it. Maybe two hours. It depends how fast you are. If you walk like me, it would probably take all day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions, Mike?

MR. CARDINAL: No, that's it for now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ken, I wanted to make a comment. It goes back to the whole question of the variances and just restating for the record and your information or refreshing your memory, because I'm sure you're aware of it after going through our report and the report of the boundaries commission. The whole question of variances came about because of the implementation of the Charter of Rights and some question which arose in the province of British Columbia in a subsequent decision by Madam Justice McLachlin. That was really the reason the Legislature decided to appoint the first electoral boundaries all-party committee to review the background and develop and recommend principles we could review as an Assembly and then adopt those the majority of the Assembly members wished to adopt and carry on.

After looking at the situation in not only British Columbia but also Saskatchewan and Manitoba and speaking with people deeply involved in electoral boundaries and the process, we did adopt the principle of the plus/minus 25 percent for the majority of ridings, but we also indicated that there should be a possibility that up to 5 percent of the ridings – and in our case that relates to up to four constituencies – could have a variance of as much as minus 50 percent from the norm. Both of those principles along with 11 other key principles were tested in Alberta's highest court and unanimously upheld. So the courts have indicated that having some constituencies with a variance of up to minus 50 percent is acceptable.

We've always believed that whenever there's a variance, whether it's 2 percent or 48 percent, reasons need to be given. Do you have any advice for this committee – and I ask this question in light of the comments you've made about the north and the sparsity of population and the importance of time and distance – on how any of the lines should be developed and where we might consider using special-consideration constituencies?

MR. ALBRECHT: In terms of using special constituencies in the northeast part of the province and the northwest, I don't see an east-west line drawn because there are no road links, no communication links. We've developed a north-south and the people in Fort Chip are looking for an all-weather road into that, but they do have a system of communications for getting in and out, by aircraft, and in the winter they have a winter road. On the west side of the province you have the highway that runs up to the territories, so you have a communication link. So I see things being drawn on those lines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you do see the constituencies north-south rather than east-west, and that's because of transportation communications.

MR. ALBRECHT: Oh, absolutely, because of the communication and transportation. There we get down to a sense of community and a travel pattern, a purchasing pattern, a shopping pattern, all those things, because they fall into one another. So that would be one thing.

I don't believe you should be sticking to municipal lines in cases. It may be advantageous in certain areas where you're going to make a transition to follow a municipal boundary because that would keep it relatively clear in everybody's mind – “Well, I live in county or improvement district such and such, and I belong to this provincial constituency based on that line” – but municipal constituency boundaries in many, many cases don't dictate traffic patterns, and I think you'd find that where you live and certainly where Mike lives. Mr. Day, I don't know if you'd find that in your part of the world, but you might. One end of a municipal district might flow into another

one, and that's probably a better system. So those are two or three things I would like to suggest, keeping traditional lines as much as possible.

You talked about having to have a rationale for things. I believe Albertans are very rational people. If you make a decision that's both reasonable and defensible, they'll back you. That's my view.

The people in improvement districts are not very sophisticated. They are very hard workers by and large. They live in those parts of the world by choice and just want to have an equal, level playing field as much as possible. They are learning to become more self-sufficient as the province develops. Major industries have moved into those parts of the world and that's giving them some financial ability to accept more responsibility for their own destiny, and they're becoming more aware of who they are and where they are and why they're there. So all they ask is to be treated fairly, and this becomes part and part of that if there is a way you can accommodate these people without some really undue line drawing. The classic one was the Fort Chip people in High Prairie. It had nothing to do with the individuals; it's just the way it was drawn up.

2:00

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Ken.
Stock?

MR. DAY: Well, Ken, you mentioned two words there, reasonable and defensible. As we've already indicated, the guidelines that initially were drawn up by the committee are defensible because they were sent to court at the committee's request and have been upheld. It's the reasonable part that seems to be the struggle in people's minds. That's the dilemma we're facing. The irony is that both people in this spectrum that I mentioned at the start want the same thing; they want to be assured of good representation.

MR. ALBRECHT: Yes.

MR. DAY: So on one end they're saying "It's one person, one vote" and on the other saying "Take a look at where we live and how difficult it is to get around," et cetera. You say you're representing these 85,000 or their concerns. What do you think? I know you can't absolutely say, but as far as you can tell – one of the suggestions we've been given is: increase the size of the Legislature to help these two ends come together, help spread things around. But on the other hand people are saying we've got too much government and they're worried about the deficit and things like that. These people that are in the improvement district areas: do you have any kind of sense? Is there a consensus? Would they be willing to say, "We'd rather have a little less representation and not increase the size of the Legislature"? Or have they been saying: "Yeah; it doesn't matter if you increase it a little bit to grant us the representation"? Can you respond to that? Maybe you just don't have enough of a sense of it. But the feeling about too much government, the feeling about deficit: would that be a saw-off factor in this?

MR. ALBRECHT: I think if people are receiving what they believe to be adequate service, they're not going to be so concerned about the cost if they're getting the service. Okay? I'll give you a classic example, education. I think the major problem today: we have so much dissension in the education field. People feel they're not getting a bang for their buck. Okay? If people are receiving – and I'm going about this maybe the wrong way and from the wrong side – the service they're asking, they're prepared to pay a little more for it. If they're not getting the service, it wouldn't matter how thin you cut it, they still wouldn't be happy. People in the northern part of the

world are very frugal and likely would be prepared to accept a little bit less as long as they knew that when they did come forward they could be hurt. But I don't believe they're prepared to accept some of the recommendations that were in here in terms of – you know, beating to death the Fort Chip, High Prairie situation.

MR. DAY: How long a drive would Fort Chip to High Prairie be?

MR. ALBRECHT: Well, first you'd have to fly to Fort McMurray. Then you'd have to drive to Wandering River and Grassland and through Athabasca and up through Slave Lake to Smith. So Fort McMurray to High Prairie, Mike, is probably six or seven hours, plus a flight . . .

MR. CARDINAL: You drive across the Athabasca-Lac La Biche constituency practically to get to High Prairie and Slave Lake.

MR. DAY: So you're saying you'd have a hard time making an evening meeting after supper if you had to get from . . .

MR. ALBRECHT: If you left before breakfast, you might get there for dinner. That's maybe not a good example because it may be an extreme, but it gets the point across. In those areas, if you do have the court's blessing to make some greater adjustments, I think that will facilitate you a great deal. I think in most parts of the present system, particularly the northwest part of the province, probably the representation as it is is fairly accurate. Now, maybe the numbers don't fit, but are we here to represent numbers or represent people?

We go through this same thing in the improvement districts in terms of establishing a ward or an electoral division in an improvement district. There are areas that may have only 200 or 300 or 400 electors, and there is no way in the world you can bring them up to a mean. It's just impossible. The people you'd have to include in that electoral division wouldn't even know who in hell they're talking to. Many of them have never been to the other region. It gets back to traffic patterns and shopping and traffic flows and those things. A classic example is the Coal Branch. There are about 300 electors in Robb and Cadomin and you have to drive 60 or 70 miles to include more people. That doesn't make any sense. You can move one block in the city of Edmonton and include a whole hockey sock full of people. It's not that simple out there.

MR. CARDINAL: Just a final question, Ken. I think in my mind this is quite important for me to establish. You mentioned earlier and stressed a number of times: do not use numbers to determine representation. Under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, of course, under Democratic Rights

Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.

It does not say anywhere that it has to be one person, one vote, because as you go on, Part 3, under Equalization and Regional Disparities, indicates that

the government of Canada and the provincial governments, are committed to

- (a) promoting equal opportunities for the well-being of Canadians;
- (b) furthering economic development to reduce disparity in opportunities; and
- (c) providing essential public service of reasonable quality to all Canadians.

I think this is what you're trying to get at. You mentioned that if you use this guideline – and you looked at some of our areas in rural Alberta, especially areas you represent and maybe in the extreme south – we should go beyond the 25 percent variance below the

average, maybe towards the 50 percent. Now, when you look at that and look at some of the urban ridings for an example, could you see us going above the average on that, because the extreme opposite would apply in a case like Edmonton or Calgary?

MR. ALBRECHT: Yeah, I can see that. You may have to do that. I guess if we were all perfect, we'd be five-ten and weigh 165 pounds and wear a size 42 jacket. That's perfect, but we're not that way. It's different. We're dealing with people, and if we can represent people and not numbers and not a pigeonhole, then we'll accomplish what we're out here to do. This business of assuming that because you have lesser votes in one part of the province, you have more power: I guess I have a little difficulty with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Any further questions or comments? Ken, any wrap-up comments you'd like to make?

2:10

MR. ALBRECHT: Well, I wish you very, very well in your endeavours. You've got a major undertaking. It won't be without some pitfalls, I'm sure, but I have every confidence in your ability to come to grips with this. If I can be of further assistance, all you have to do is ask. That's what our role is with the rural improvement districts. That's what we attempt to do: represent those people who are, as I said a little earlier, starting to grow.

You know, we're getting away from the old homestead philosophy and coming on and becoming a greater part of this province. The economic development that has taken place up there has given us some of the tools we've lacked for a very long time to be equal partners, and all we want to do is be equal partners. But we do have to recognize that there is time and distance. We have to deal with time and distance as best we can, and we do that. We are prepared to travel much farther at our own expense to participate in this democratic process. That's what it's all about, and we'll do that.

Thank you very much, gentlemen. It's been an extreme pleasure to be here, and I wish you very, very well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

We'll have a short break.

[The committee adjourned from 2:12 p.m. to 2:38 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's get back to the agenda, please. The budget transfer. Bob, would you explain the background of this first?

MR. PRITCHARD: Sure. There was a budget set up for the Electoral Boundaries Commission for this fiscal year, and the funds left in there can be or may be transferred for the use of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. So we require a motion to make a request to transfer those unallocated funds from the commission budget to the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries.

MR. DAY: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion on the motion? All in favour? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Next item, Bob.

MR. PRITCHARD: The next item is that during the course of inviting members of the previous commission to meet with the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries, I invited Jean

McBean, who was a member. Jean wrote to us and said that she received a request to attend before the committee.

After giving this matter some consideration, I can see nothing that I could usefully add that was not set forth in my part of the final report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

I wish you the best of luck in your deliberations.

Yours truly,

Jean McBean, Q.C.

As well, we've invited the other members of the former commission: Judge Liden, who is on vacation but is considering the request; Pat Ledgerwood, who will be attending; Tom Biggs, who will be attending; and Shirley Cripps, who will be attending to give some additional advice and comments to the select special committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Might we deal at this point with other invitations which have been extended?

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes. Would you like me to read the letter that we wrote to the Members of the Legislative Assembly?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's deal first with the mayors and . . .

MR. PRITCHARD: Okay; I'm sorry. We've also invited Mayor Jan Reimer to attend. She's accepted and will be meeting with us later in the month. We've invited Mayor Al Duerr to attend. They're looking for a date and considering the invitation. We've invited Gordon Miller from MDs and Cs. He's coming. I have another one. Gary Browning from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association will be meeting with us as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Now you can go on with the letter.

MR. PRITCHARD: In addition, we wrote a letter to all Members of the Legislative Assembly. I'll read the letter into the record. From Bob Bogle, chairman, to all Members of the Legislative Assembly: Re: Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries.

As you are aware, in accordance with Motion 24, government caucus has appointed myself as Chairman of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries with Stockwell Day as Vice-Chairman and Pat Black and Mike Cardinal as Members. The Official Opposition and the Liberal Opposition have declined membership.

While the work of the committee progresses any interested member is invited to meet with the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries to present views on their respective electoral division.

To arrange an appointment please contact Bob Pritchard, Senior Administrator, 1001 Legislature Annex, telephone 422-7071.

Thank you.

Bob Bogle.

We've had some calls from MLAs who will be interested in meeting with the committee. We have a written response from Hon. John Gogo, who is not able to attend to meet with the committee but appreciated the offer and gives his best wishes to the committee in their work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Anything else on item 4? Okay. Moving on, then, to item 5, the report on Tomislav . . .

MR. PRITCHARD: Tomislav Milinusic is the computer person who is working with Bill Gano to enhance the system that we have to help us with the calculations when the electoral divisions are drawn. His work is progressing as we hoped. He intends on having the system updated so it will work a little faster than it did before, and this should be done sometime between August 24 and August 31.

This ties in with item 7, Report Regarding Stats Canada. We required the data from Stats Canada for Tomislav to build it into the

system, the 1991 census data and also the enumerations areas that were the basis of the last census. That data should be available, we're hoping and they're hoping, in the first week of September. As soon as we get it, we'll be giving it to Tomislav. It'll then be worked into the computer system. Ted Edwards, who works here, will be learning how to run it, and then we'll be able to use it to do our calculations, hopefully without doing them manually, as the boundaries are drawn. It will save a lot of time.

MR. DAY: How sophisticated is that program going to be? I mean, can we take the map, draw a line, hit the button, and it shows us how many people are there?

MR. PRITCHARD: That's kind of what we're hoping for. It's not quite that quick. The present way of doing it takes two or three days to do each riding, and part of the streamlining that he's working on now is trying to get that down to about an hour or an hour and a half. So that will certainly be a big help to us.

MR. DAY: If we get the '91 data the first week in September, how long does he anticipate to feed that in?

MR. PRITCHARD: It will take him two or three days to get that data in. There are two parts to it. One, he's enhancing the system for whatever data is in it. Secondly, he's putting the new data into the program.

MR. DAY: Do you feel pretty well assured, Bob, from what you've heard on the federal side that that will be out early in September?

MR. PRITCHARD: I have some concerns because occasionally the dates seem to shift. Sometimes it seems like it's difficult, and sometimes they say they're on time. I'm pretty confident that they'll have enough for us that at least we'll be able to get started. They also now have a system where they will do a double check for us on our calculations down the road, towards the end, so that will be helpful as well. It will be a double check for the work that we do. I think they'll be on time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?
Okay. Item 6, Ordering Stats Canada.

MR. PRITCHARD: Basically that's tied in with 7. Yes, I think things are going ahead there as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.
Next is Submission.

MR. PRITCHARD: I just want to note an unsolicited submission from a lady who's been quite involved with the work all along. She attended the Electoral Boundaries Commission. On her own initiative she's sent us a submission. Her name is Lucille Partington. She's from Sexsmith, Alberta. I'll distribute copies of that submission to the members of the committee to add to their files. I'd just like to make note that that's been received and is part of our records.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, 8, Report from Members on Highlights, Points of Discussion, Areas of Concern from Committee Business and Documentation Review. Let's just take a few moments and review some of the observations we may have based on reading we've done to date, reading from our previous committee work and from the commission. Any comments any of the committee

members would like to make and read into the record things we need to be cognizant of when looking at boundaries and considering any changes?

2:48

MR. DAY: Just going over some of the documentation to date, when people are coming, be it a mayor or whoever it might be or like Ken today, are they requesting either reports of the special committee or reports from the actual commission prior to their coming? The reason I'm asking that is: are people coming not being aware of what some of the implications are, let's say? You know, as I've gone over and reviewed some of the issues, even the court issues, I think to myself that some of this stuff is so clear. I wonder if our presenters are even aware of it. So are they sent that, or do they request anything?

MR. PRITCHARD: No. I've probably assumed that most of them received it from the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. I know they've just recently all got copies of the Electoral Boundaries Commission work. In making the invitations, I haven't offered it to them nor have I been asked for anything additional. If you'd like, I can send copies of it.

MR. DAY: Is there a way, either just by letter or phone call, when the people say that they're coming that we could just ask them, "Have you got, number one, a copy of the special committee report, number two, a copy of . . ." Even just those two items alone might be helpful.

MR. PRITCHARD: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mike, any observation you'd like to read into the record?

MR. CARDINAL: Just a couple, Bob. Having been involved in the initial select committee, where we had around 40 meetings with the public throughout Alberta, I found the presentations that were made after the commission were not too much different from the original submissions made when we developed the legislation. I found, going through the process, that most presenters wanted fair representation, that both urban and rural members were asking for the same thing: design a system that will set out fair representation for all Albertans. Basically, going through the packets of information we have, I found that tends to stand out. You know, the way the legislation was laid out, of course, you would have a number of ridings that would use the 50 percent variance and a number would use the 25. Again, going through most of *Hansard*, when the commission did their presentation after the interim report was completed, every *Hansard* indicated that they had decided to use a target 10 percent variance on a number of ridings. That stood out right across the hearings. I thought that was interesting, because to me the legislation was laid out different than what the commission had decided to do. To me that stood out, because every meeting started off with outlining that they had chosen to use a 10 percent variance as a target, and the legislation was different from that. That was a bit crossed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On that point?

MR. DAY: No, it's okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I just wanted to make an observation. I was reading some of the briefs presented during our meeting up in Barrhead, and it drove home the point how important it is that we

not get fixed on municipal or natural boundaries. While I think they're both very important, there can be special reasons why a community will want to be part of a constituency. In the Barrhead hearings there were a number of briefs given by people from Swan Hills, and while Swan Hills is part of ID 17 and it would be very easy to draw a line including all of the southern part of ID 17 in the Slave Lake constituency, Swan Hills' ties are with Barrhead much more so than with Slave Lake. In fact, it appears that many people have mothers and fathers and other loved ones in the Barrhead area, so that that's more of a retirement community for working families who live in Swan Hills.

So I think it's going to be very incumbent upon us when looking at changes where we are going outside a municipality to go back and search through *Hansard*, see if there were briefs given on that particular matter and if it was done by a mayor or a reeve. If not, and if we want to double-check something, we may be calling back to the head of local government to get their input on a matter like that. It's just a reminder that we can't always follow the standard approach that may seem to be most practical. There are going to be some exceptions. I was looking at part of special area 2 – it's the special area that Hanna is located in – and there's a long, narrow arm of that special area that extends out to the Saskatchewan border. It's on the south side of the river. Let's see, that's got to be the . . .

MR. DAY: Which river are you talking about?

MR. PRITCHARD: The Red Deer River?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is the Red Deer River. While that's part of special area 2, it's currently part of the Bow Valley constituency. There is a reason for that. So we need to find out, because there aren't that many people who live in that area, why it's part of the Bow Valley constituency rather than staying in with the rest of special area 2. I need to spend more time on the *Hansard* documentation for the commission.

MR. DAY: In trying to do a line-by-line analysis of the commission report – you know they had a formidable task, but I do feel the guidelines were laid out for them to work with. In spite of the fact that it is five minority reports, there are common points in each one of those. So part of what I'm doing is trying to zero in on the points in common in the various reports, but it struck me the other day that I don't want to be doing that if that's a project, Bob, that you or your staff are undertaking; I don't want to spin the wheels on that. If not, I'll just keep doing that.

MR. PRITCHARD: No, it isn't something we've done, but I might be able to help you with it because from the administration point of view we worked with all five of them as they did their reports. No, we've never gone through and picked out similarities, but I might be able to help you with it.

MR. DAY: Just further to that, Mr. Chairman. If you look in the *Hansard* at people coming and making presentations to the commission, you also notice that some of the requests would be very clear, very specific, and then in any of the minority reports, it's not addressed. Is there a process for us getting back to members of the commission to say: "I was just wondering. Constituent A from this constituency specifically requested this. You didn't address it at all. Were there some reasons you could share with us that might help us with that?" Have we got a process of asking those questions back to the former commission members, or is their work done and therefore we can't avail ourselves of that experience?

MR. PRITCHARD: Well, I think we could go back to them with questions. You know, working with all of them, I'm sure they'd all be pleased to give an answer if they can. I think if there was a lot of time involved, like if they had to come in for days or something, they might . . .

MR. DAY: No, I was thinking of more specific things.

MR. PRITCHARD: But writing to them or phoning them and asking them a question, I think they'd be very happy to answer.

MR. DAY: Yeah, because there are some key cases where you'd see in the *Hansard* that there's a very specific request. It seemed logical, and then you check through the minority reports, it doesn't seem to show up anywhere, and you just wonder, you know: is there a good reason for not addressing it that just escapes us?

MR. PRITCHARD: Well, from working with them for over a year, I think they'd all be happy to contribute. So if there were questions like that, I'm sure they'd be pleased to answer.

MR. DAY: Okay.

2:58

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anything else at this stage? Can we move on, then, to the last item: Community Business, Review of Documentation.

MR. PRITCHARD: Basically, if there's some area you want to have a look at, you want us to get any research out? Stock mentioned a couple of things. Anything that you want to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't we take about a two-hour break, and we can go back and see if there's anything else we want to come back to.

MR. PRITCHARD: Sure. We could even maybe look at, for example, some of the reports, or look for some similarities or differences or any other items that you want us to get material out of our research.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that too long? What's your next commitment this afternoon?

MR. DAY: I have to be back in Red Deer. I'd like to be back by 6 at the latest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Well, we'll take an hour break. We'll reconvene in an hour.

[The committee adjourned from 2:59 p.m. to 4:05 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll reconvene.
Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: Okay. I'd like to make a motion, and that's in regards to a review of documentation.

The Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries members require the opportunity to read and study the substantial documents of research data, written submissions and presentations to the Electoral Boundaries Commission 1991-92 and the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries 1989-90.

Motion 2 set out that 80 hours – up to a maximum of 8 hours per day – be designated between July 30 and September 1, 1992, as dates for members to carry out this aspect of committee business. The dates

for this committee business that are now concluded include: Saturday, August 1; Sunday, August 2; Saturday, August 8; Sunday, August 9; Saturday, August 15; and Sunday, August 16.

Following a general discussion and review of highlights from these committee business sessions, it is further moved that the following dates be set aside for further committee business of review of documentation: Wednesday, August 19; Thursday, August 20; Saturday, August 22; Sunday, August 23; Wednesday, August 26; Thursday, August 27; Friday, August 28; Saturday, August 29; Sunday, August 30.

Members shall keep track of the dates and hours they attend to this committee business for accounting purposes. These sessions shall be considered as in camera, and to conserve costs, the places of attendance to this committee business will be at the discretion of individual members.

A motion shall be made following Sunday, August 30, 1992, to close this aspect of committee business.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion? Are you ready for the question? All in favour? Carried unanimously.

Okay. Any other points members wish to raise following the break we had where we were considering other business? If not, are you ready for a motion to adjourn?

MR. DAY: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All in favour? Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 4:08 p.m.]