

2:35 p.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll officially call the meeting to order. [Inaudible] for the remainder of this week. He is on a personal holiday at this time. Pat Black had originally intended to be with us, but as I indicated last week, Pat's husband, Peter, underwent major surgery last week, and Pat was called back to Calgary today from an earlier meeting. So we will proceed today.

Bob, I think we do have some business to deal with before we have presenters.

MR. PRITCHARD: Yeah, we have four submissions that we received, so I could read those into the record.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MR. PRITCHARD: The first submission we received is from Marian Wolitski, who's the chairman of improvement district No. 17 east. Would you like me to read the whole thing in?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, please.

MR. PRITCHARD:

Re: Provincial Electoral Boundaries.

On behalf of the Advisory Council for Improvement District No. 17 East (North), I would like to address our concern regarding the proposed electoral boundary adjustment for our area.

At their regular meeting of August 10, 1992, the Advisory Council for Improvement District No. 17 East (North) passed a motion requesting that the proposed electoral boundary adjustment include the hamlet of Wabasca/Desmarais, Sandy Lake, Calling Lake, and the community of Chipewyan Lake in the Athabasca/Lac La Biche riding.

Thank you for your consideration to our request. If you have any questions . . . please contact the undersigned at 891-3536.

Yours truly,

Marian Wolitski

Chairman

We have a second submission from Josephine Gladue, chairman of the Pelican Hills Community Association, dated March 26, 1992.

Re: Electoral Boundaries.

At our regular meeting held March 11, 1992, a resolution was passed to have our community included in the Athabasca/Lac La Biche electoral boundaries.

We would appreciate your assistance in submitting this request to the appropriate departments for approval.

A copy of the minutes is enclosed for your information.

Thank you for your assistance.

Actually, the minutes are missing, so I'll have to obtain those.

The third submission is dated August 12, 1992.

Dear Sir:

We have reviewed a proposed map redrawing the boundaries for the Northern Alberta constituencies and incorporating a sixth riding for the area. In general, our executive is in favour of this proposal with the minor exception of where our western boundary coming south cuts east at the 88th parallel, we would continue this line straight down to just south of Grimshaw. We feel this would save some travel time for the Dunvegan MLA as he/she would not have to travel up the Mackenzie Highway.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Yours truly,

Larry Hymniuk, Secretary

Progressive Conservative

Constituency of Peace River

The next submission comes from Peter Woloshyn, the reeve of the county of Parkland No. 31, a letter dated June 12, 1992.

The Council of the County of Parkland has had an opportunity to review the Final Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission 1991/1992, as well as the Individual Reports from each member of the Commission. We would respectfully submit two recommendations regarding the "Spruce Grove" electoral constituency.

First, it is strongly recommended that the west boundary of our constituency be moved further west to Range Road 50. The proposed boundary in the report has the boundary just west of the Town of Stony Plain. This would leave many of our residents, who consider and utilize Stony Plain as the trading centre for most of their needs, in the Drayton Valley constituency. These residents very seldom use or even visit Drayton Valley in their day-to-day travels.

Secondly, the report suggests that the name "Spruce Grove" was chosen as the constituency name mainly because the City of Spruce Grove is the largest populated municipality in the constituency. We believe that the name "Parkland" is more representative of our constituency and because our records indicate that the County of Parkland has the largest population in the proposed constituency, we strongly recommend that the name be changed to "Parkland".

We respectfully submit our recommendations and trust they will be given every consideration when the government is reviewing the report and determining the new provincial electoral boundaries. Thank you.

Peter Woloshyn,

Reeve.

Our last one today is from Derek Fox, MLA for Vegreville, a letter dated August 18, 1992.

For your information and for the information of members of your Committee I am sending you copies of a letter I sent, as MLA for the Vegreville Constituency, to Mr. Justice Charles Virtue, Chairperson of the Electoral Boundaries Commission in May of 1991.

Yours truly,

Derek Fox, MLA

Vegreville

Dear Justice Virtue:

I have, over the last several months, made presentations on the purpose and process of the Electoral Boundaries Commission to local governments, Chambers of Commerce, and other groups in the Vegreville Constituency.

While I recognize that it may be difficult for groups to organize and agree on submissions to the Electoral Boundaries Commission, I wanted to present information and stimulate interest hoping that individuals would be encouraged to take part in the process.

I must admit that public interest in this whole process seemed limited and certainly was overshadowed by people's more immediate concerns. I suspect that interest in a general way will not be piqued until actual proposed changes are announced in your interim report.

I am well aware that my submission to the Electoral Boundaries Commission may be viewed by your members in a somewhat different light because I am a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Indeed, there may be those who would assume my position implies that I have both a political and personal axe to grind in that regard. I am prepared to take those risks in making my submission to you because I feel that my years as MLA for the Vegreville Constituency have helped me develop a regional perspective that may be difficult for others to present.

I recognize that in order to comply with the provisions of the new Electoral Boundaries Act that the Vegreville Constituency must get larger. I have made some effort to examine possible changes that could be made to the constituency that would accommodate that reality in a way that is practical and reasonable in terms of the geography, the history, the economics, and the culture of our area.

I submit that in that part of Alberta south of the North Saskatchewan River and east of the City of Edmonton, there is a distinctive region where the people have much in common socially, culturally, historically, and economically. Highway 16, the

Yellowhead, is the major transportation artery in the region and the town of Vegreville is the largest community.

In a general sense, the area to which I refer is contained within the Counties of Lamont, Two Hills, Minburn, and Beaver, and is almost completely within the Vegreville Federal Riding. The Vegreville Health Unit provides service to the region and is as well primarily within the boundaries of those four counties. Additional regional ties include the Lamont-Two Hills Community Futures project and a variety of hospital, lodge, school, and telephone exchange districts.

I have tried, where possible, to recommend new boundaries that are concurrent with municipal boundaries, roads and waterways. They are described as follows.

Beginning in the Northeast corner of the constituency, the existing east boundary could be moved further east to include the balance of Division 3 in the County of Two Hills; (Range 10, Townships 55, 54 and 53) proceeding south along that division line to the boundary of the County of Minburn then west along SR 631 to the boundary between divisions 3 and 4 in the County of Minburn then south to include all of Division 4 in the County of Minburn (Range 11 and 12 Township 52) then west along the division boundary in the County to just north of Ranfurly then south past the Village of Ranfurly to include the balance of Division 5 in the County of Minburn then west along the County boundary to the boundary in the County of Beaver between the Divisions 2 and 3 south to include all of Division 3 in the County of Beaver then west to include all of divisions 3, 4, 5 and 6 and north to include the balance of Divisions 6 and 7 in the County of Beaver.

Additional possible changes along the eastern boundary of the constituency could be to add all of Division 2 including the Village of Myrnam in the County of Two Hills and could include all of Division 2 in the County of Minburn including the Village of Innisfree.

To justify these recommended changes, it is my contention that the Hamlet of Beauvallon and the Village of Myrnam have much more in common in terms of economics, history and culture with Two Hills and Vegreville than they do with Lloydminster. Further, the Hamlet of Ranfurly and the Village of Innisfree have much more in common economically, historically and culturally with Vegreville than they do with Vermilion. The changes recommended along the southern and western boundaries of the constituency to include all of those divisions in the County of Beaver I think are justifiable changes because there are currently small portions of the County of Beaver that are included in both the Vermilion Viking, Camrose and Clover Bar constituencies. Certainly from a point of view of coterminous boundaries with the County and uniting people in their provincial constituencies within their school districts and with their trading districts makes good sense.

Other options for consideration would be to move the north boundary of the Vegreville Constituency to the North Saskatchewan River to include the balance of Divisions 5 and 6 and all of Division 7 in the County of Two Hills including the Village of Willingdon and all of Divisions 3 & 4 in the County of Lamont including the Village of Andrew and the Hamlet of St. Michael. This would include Townships 56, 57 & 58 within Ranges 19, 18, 17, 16, 14, 15, 13 & 12. Again the good natural boundary would be the North Saskatchewan River for the northern part of the constituency. This would be coterminous with the current boundaries of the Vegreville Federal constituency and would bring the Villages of Willingdon and Andrew into the Vegreville Constituency. These two communities, I submit, have much more in common economically, culturally and historically with Vegreville than they do with Smoky Lake on the other side of the North Saskatchewan River or Redwater in the constituency that they are currently in.

Thank you for your efforts and consideration of these recommendations.

Yours truly,
Derek Fox, M.L.A.
Vegreville

I have copies for the committee members, and I'll give you copies as well for your transcription.

Those are our submissions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

We're expecting three presenters today.

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes, we are. We're expecting Butch Fischer; we're not exactly sure what time. Gary Browning should be here at 3 o'clock from the AUMA, and Roy Brassard at 4 o'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, we'll take a short break then.

[The committee adjourned from 2:47 p.m. to 2:54 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome to Gary Browning, the president of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, and to John Maddison, my good friend down there at Taber, who now is the executive director of the association. It's my understanding that there is a portion of the presentation this afternoon that you'd like to have on the record and then request that we go in camera for a portion. Is that correct?

MR. BROWNING: That's correct, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Very good. Well, I'd invite you to proceed.

I mentioned earlier and I'll restate it now that unfortunately we're missing two members of our four-member committee. We knew Stockwell Day would be away this week. Unfortunately, Pat Black's husband underwent major surgery last week, and she was called back to Calgary today. So we anticipated there would be three of us during the meeting, and we're down to two, but with *Hansard* we'll be able to share information with the other members.

MR. BROWNING: Okay. Great.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gary.

MR. BROWNING: Well, thank you very much for the opportunity to be here this afternoon. I am representing our Urban Municipalities Association, and just to refresh everybody's memory, if you will, we do represent 292 municipalities that range from villages to towns to cities. I suppose because of that diversity in our membership, we have a large vested interest in the outcomes of the committee and the final resolution to this particular issue.

AUMA dealt with the issue initially when the first committee, the select committee, was formed in that we did take it through the process that we do normally follow for any legislative ideas, and that is that we have a legislative statutes review committee that takes a look at these types of things and will provide a recommendation to the board. The legislative services committee is well founded in that it is representative across a broad section of municipalities so that we do have good representation in there. They did take the issue at hand. They did research it; they did investigate it to the extent of talking to some municipalities in regards to their feelings and did look at it from an association's point of view.

Because of that diversity I suppose primarily and the need for the association to take a look at it from a provincial aspect, their recommendation to the board was that we would 'captionize' the information that was made available to us through the handle so that we're there at that particular time, but more importantly the board took a position that they would encourage very strongly the municipalities to individually take it upon themselves to appear in front of the committee. I'm sure you did see some of those as you traveled across the province to the extent that you did extend the committee hearings in order to listen to some of those municipalities and other groups that hadn't had an opportunity to talk to you.

That is primarily AUMA's position. Because we are looking at it from a provincial scope and because we are representing such a wide diversity of municipalities and looking at it from their respective points of view, we stressed very, very strongly to them that they participate individually. Now, that obviously has an impact on them directly, because the city of Edmonton, for example, or my own home municipality of the town of Devon have a direct interest in who is representing them. It should not be taken as an association point of view per se. That is where the AUMA stands at this particular time. The AUMA has not changed its position in regards to that option that they've taken.

I would be open to any questions in relation to that stance at this particular time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mike, any comments or questions?

MR. CARDINAL: Just a quick comment. You indicated that your organization would look at the whole process in the provincial aspect and encourage each individual municipality to participate in the process. Have you had an opportunity to review in general the participation by the municipalities, and as an organization do you feel that the representation has been good enough to do a proper job of putting the process in place by the committee?

MR. BROWNING: Mr. Cardinal, no, not directly. We haven't analyzed it to see how many municipalities have actually directly responded to the committee and appeared in front of it. You would know that better than we would. But again, it appeared to some people that the association was backing away from this as an issue that they should be taking on, and to be very frank with you – and I must be very open about it, again to stress the point that a municipality is being represented by their MLA – they should be the ones that should be placing their voice forward on what particular constituency they should or should not be involved in. It's that important and has to be stressed I think quite strongly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just further to that point. Both in the previous select committee hearings and in the commission hearings, urban municipalities were very well represented. While it's true there were different points of view, there were also areas where there was a strong commonality. One area, looking at our original committee meetings, was to respect municipal boundaries, and if changes had to be made to existing constituency boundaries, wherever possible go to municipal boundaries. In the commission hearings, in my read of the minutes of *Hansard*, a common theme between the large urban, the smaller urban, and the smaller rural towns and communities would be the objection to the so-called 'rurban' ridings, a combination of urban population with rural folk. So I think the members of your association came out and made their views well known to both the committee and the commission and expressed themselves quite clearly.

MR. BROWNING: Yes, we're aware of some of the presentations and some of the feelings of the municipalities. There's no doubt about that. That's very clear, and they have voiced it. Again to stress the point, Mr. Bogle, exactly for that reason they're the ones that should be expressing their desires on how they should be represented. We do not want to place a provincial position that would be treated as an indication of what they should or should not be saying. We wanted that to be completely open, and I think they responded well to that.

Just a terminology difference, if you will, and I suppose we get involved in that to a certain extent. We speak of urban Alberta and rural Alberta. When we speak of urban Alberta, we seem to think of

the two large metropolitan areas and the rest of Alberta as rural. Being the representative of an urban association, urban Alberta extends right across the province, as I explained, through all those municipalities. So when we speak of rural representation, we are obviously speaking of the representation in those urban areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Agreed.

Any other comments or questions, or are we ready for a motion? Okay, Mike, would you so move that we go in camera?

MR. CARDINAL: Yes, I do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. All in favour? Carried.

[The committee met in camera from 3:02 p.m. to 3:29 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome, Butch. We're pleased to have you here. Welcome to your research assistant. This is her second appearance before the committee. It's nice to see you again, Karen.

MS HUDSON: It's nice to see you.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Robert. I'm pleased that you gave us an opportunity to come over and express our concerns. I guess my biggest concern is probably the variation factor. I know that's a difficult job for you people. I know it was a difficult job for the commission, and it's something that I think we have to probably make some decisions on. I felt that the commission made a variation of around 10 percent, I believe it was, with their proposals. To me that interferes with our democratic system. We have to have fair regional representation. In our case we went probably from over 25 percent down to 11 percent, and I don't think that is a very fair way to treat those people, because certainly access to your MLA is the number one thing those people are interested in. When you get the number of towns and municipal governments that we have, I fail to see how you can give a variation factor of 11.2 percent and still be fair.

One of the things that I feel was probably overlooked, maybe not overlooked so much but not noticed as much, was the military base. The military base is not quite a quarter of the Wainwright MD; it takes up probably a fifth to a quarter of the Wainwright MD. There are 186 people who live there, and I must say that they don't live there permanently. It's something that they go in and out and in and out so much that it's very difficult to even say that there are permanent people there. But when you take the size of the area, which I believe is 240 square miles – it might be more than that. I just haven't got those numbers in my head. When we go to do anything, we have to around that base. We have constituents all the way around the base. Without people in it, it certainly makes this area a little bit more of a unique area. I do hope that your committee will take that into consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just for clarification, Butch. Bob, because we're using 1991 census figures, the residents on Canadian Forces Base Wainwright who were there the day the census was taken would be counted.

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So if those residents, even though they're not what you call permanent, were there on census day, they'd be counted and included in the MD 61 census. Can we just verify that point?

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes, sure.

MR. FISCHER: I guess what I'm saying to you, Bob, is that quite often those people get transferred out or moved around. They're in and out, and certainly they're permanent only to the extent that some of the positions are permanent, not the people themselves.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. PRITCHARD: That's a good point. We'll verify it.

MR. FISCHER: I would like to see the committee take that into consideration. This is only in my own mind, and it's been brought to my attention by a number of my constituents around there, that maybe that's a just reason to up that variance percentage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, clearly, we know that the courts have indicated that we can be up to minus 25 percent away from the norm. We know that all of our constituencies can't be at the minus 25 percent, but surely distance from Edmonton and sparsity of population and the number of municipalities should be a factor in determining which constituencies are at the outer extreme, and the fact that your constituency goes right to the Saskatchewan border is indeed a factor.

MR. FISCHER: Well, certainly there's a lot of size. There's a lot of traveling to be done in it. The shape that it is isn't too bad, with the exception of running around the perimeter of the camp.

The other thing that was brought out very loud and clear to the commission and wasn't acted upon that I felt maybe was a bit of unfairness was the fact that they brought in Highway 16. Each one of those people in their submissions at Vermilion stated that their trading patterns, their school patterns, their recreation – everything leads towards Edmonton. The school in that case goes the other way. We don't have very much contact back and forth between Highway 14 and Highway 16. It seems to me that if we wanted to get more population and had to go some way, you would probably go farther west rather than go north there. I know that the people at those committee hearings did strongly express that, and I think it was for quite good reason. I just wanted to bring that to your attention. Really most of what I'm proposing here has been brought out in the public hearings to the commission and earlier.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good. Anything else in your presentation, Butch?

MR. FISCHER: Well, I don't think so. Most of mine is just the general overall picture. I was trying to go back in the history of our constituency there, right from 1905. I didn't get entirely everything, but I don't know if we've ever been as low as 10 percent in the variation. It makes it interesting why all of a sudden we should have done that this particular time. I don't want to be negative to what the commission has proposed, because certainly they've had a difficult job. I'm just trying to give a common ground thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Butch, we've been refreshing our memories, reading the transcripts on the all-party committee hearings – there were 39 in total – and the hearings held by the commission. How many in total, Bob?

MR. PRITCHARD: Twenty.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Twenty. One common theme that comes out is that when boundaries have to be adjusted, if you have to move from

your existing constituency boundaries, wherever possible go to municipal boundaries. I was trying to think back specifically – and I'll have to review the minutes – to when we had our hearing out in Wainwright. I know the integrity of the constituency was argued very strongly by people; I think the municipal boundaries too.

Mike, anything you want to add?

MR. CARDINAL: No, I don't have any questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Karen, anything you'd like to add?

MS HUDSON: No, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's it, Butch?

MR. FISCHER: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks very much for coming in. We appreciate it.

Okay. We'll adjourn, then, until we have our next presenter.

[The committee adjourned at 3:38 p.m.]