

9:13 a.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we'll open and officially welcome Jim to our meeting this morning. As you know, Jim, we're reviewing boundaries. I know you've had an opportunity to review your own particular situation and hope you have some thoughts you'd like to share with us this morning.

Pat, any comments you had to make?

MRS. BLACK: I'm just pleased that Jim is here and can give us some insight into the southern part of Calgary and reflect on some of the needs that were expressed at the hearings.

MR. DINNING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't envy you your task. I do have a few thoughts. As you know, I represent the constituency of Calgary-Shaw, and it consists now of about seven or eight communities. It has an interesting history because the Cedarbrae and Braeside communities had originally been part of the constituency of Calgary-Glenmore, when Hugh Planche was the MLA. The remainder of the constituency – Woodbine, Woodlands, Canyon Meadows, Millrise, and Shawnessy – was part of Bill Payne's Calgary-Fish Creek constituency. When the boundaries were redrawn in 1985, they were cut up that way. It is an area that is primarily middle income, family oriented, young families, and is acknowledged as a very quickly growing part of the city.

I think there are probably two or three points I want to make. One of them centres around the importance of Fish Creek park as a natural boundary, as a natural point of shared community interest. Fish Creek park runs from 37th Street on the west side of the city limits all the way over pretty near into Bill Payne's Calgary-Fish Creek constituency, so it spans both sides of Macleod Trail. It is not owned. There is not a sense of ownership by one side of the park or the other, because access in and out of the park is on both the north side and the south side. Even though communities such as Millrise and Shawnessy are on the south side and Canyon Meadows, Woodlands, Woodbine are on the north side, the folks on the west side of Macleod Trail have a very strong, careful, caring interest in how that park is maintained. Although communities may not participate in sports together, they are bound together very strongly by Fish Creek park, as are the communities on the east side of Macleod Trail in Calgary-Fish Creek. The Midnapore-Sundance folks very much share the park with Lake Bonaventure-Bonavista, Parkland, Queensland, and other places like that.

I am a strong advocate of that shared community interest, shared common interest between the north and the south side of the park. There's a sense of ownership by both sides, and frankly I don't want any of the constituency to change, but if I had to design the boundaries, it would include a new constituency of Calgary-Shaw including Woodbine, Woodlands, Canyon Meadows, Shawnessy, Evergreen Estates, Shawnee, and Millrise. That would be my first preference.

There is one other attractive feature to it in that it is a mixture of both new and old communities: the old more established area of Canyon Meadows here but a very growing new area of Canyon Meadows here; more established but still relatively new homes and communities here but growth occurring here; more established here but growth occurring here in Woodbine. So it's a mixture of the anchor of the old and the zeal of the new, and that's got an attractive feature to it.

I believe your numbers would fit with my numbers from the 1991 city of Calgary census, which show that the numbers there would

add up to about 35,000, which would take you not that far above your 30,000 average. Cedarbrae and Braeside are more established communities. They still are young communities in the sense that they have young families, but they have a commonality of interest with the folks in Southwood, Haysboro, Palliser, and Oakridge. But I say very clearly that if I had my druthers, they would all stay together.

If the numbers don't fit, then I would suggest to you my second, less-preferred alternative, and that is that everything south of Fish Creek park on both sides of Macleod Trail could become a natural constituency. It would be at or probably below the 30,000-plus average requirement, but the growth that will occur over the next 10 years is considerable. They have a common interest in that they are both on the side of Fish Creek park. All of those communities share a frustration in that their only source in and out of the core of the city is through Macleod Trail and the LRT, and those are both highly dense parts of the city about an hour and a half ago and anywhere between 4 and 6 o'clock. That is often a concern that is expressed to me. I always say to them that it's better to have two MLAs fighting on their behalf to solve that problem – if the provincial MLA has a role to play – than just one. But there would be a mixture of people who do have a common interest. More of them are younger families with kids. It's a mixture of the new, new, new, and new. It's a bringing together of a number of new communities rather than a nice mixture of the new and the old.

Macleod Trail is a major barrier and a natural barrier for a constituency. So is Anderson Road, which I mentioned earlier. This is Cedarbrae and Braeside, and that's Anderson Road. That's a natural barrier, and naturally the city limits, which are more like this now, perform a natural southern and western boundary to any redesigned constituency. The reserve is here, still within Banff-Cochrane, I presume, and the city limits are here, so it still is a natural boundary.

Mr. Chairman, I think what I said on the record before the Electoral Boundaries Commission still applies, so I won't repeat it. I've perhaps gone into something a bit more specific with the boundaries with you than I did with the commission publicly. I think I've tried to give you an idea of those strong community interests that link or separate various parts of the southern part of the city.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good overview.

MRS. BLACK: Just a quick question, Jim. Is this Cedarbrae area fairly well complete now?

MR. DINNING: Yes.

MRS. BLACK: There isn't any growth potential there.

MR. DINNING: No.

MRS. BLACK: So mainly back in here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Plus the new part of the city here.

MRS. BLACK: Yeah; this little bit of Woodbine and down in the Shawnessy area.

MR. DINNING: They're about to cross 14th Street here. There's development all through here, and they've now crossed 14th Street and there's development. This is Evergreen Estates right here.

MRS. BLACK: So this little grouping here is where the major growth is, but not up here.

MR. DINNING: It's here.

MRS. BLACK: Okay.

MR. DINNING: And it even goes over into Canyon Meadows. There's still a lot of development going on there.

MRS. BLACK: Okay. Well, I think those are good suggestions. The problem with this quadrant is the growth that's there and the potential for growth.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that not one good reason to keep constituencies with established areas in growth areas rather than trying to develop new constituencies all in the growth areas? Otherwise you can get a huge population between now and the next redistribution.

MR. DINNING: I believe you're absolutely right, and I think that was some of the logic and rationale that was used to establish the constituency the first time. As you recall, Bill Payne sat on that commission and knew five-sevenths of that constituency extremely well and saw the growth occurring. I believe that's why he strongly recommended that the likes of Cedarbrae and Braeside and the more established Canyon Meadows marry up with the growing areas. It is a nice mixture. As an MLA – and any MLA would do this, I believe – I've tried to bring the community leaders and community executives together regularly so that they shared ideas and shared common interests, whether it was transportation, recreation, education, and there is a good spirit in and among those seven established communities, their executives and their leaders.

MRS. BLACK: The only other thing I would ask is – there are some fairly clear lines, Anderson Road being one of them, which is an historical road in the southern part of the city. Are any of the more established and the newer communities sharing joint community sites?

MR. DINNING: These two, Woodbine and Woodlands, have in fact joined community associations to form the Woodcreek Community Association, and they will be joining together to build a new building in time. There's just absolutely no doubt that those two communities are more inseparable than any of the other communities.

MRS. BLACK: What about Shawnessy and Millrise?

MR. DINNING: Shawnessy, Millrise, and Evergreen Estates.

MRS. BLACK: Have they joined in a joint fund-raiser?

MR. DINNING: No. There are some shared interests there. They toyed with the idea of joining Sundance and Midnapore, but they agreed not to agree and have gone their separate ways.

MRS. BLACK: Is that maybe because of Macleod Trail again?

MR. DINNING: Yes, partly.

MRS. BLACK: What is that? About a four- or five-lane highway?

MR. DINNING: It's a six-lane expressway now.

MRS. BLACK: It's a large interchange to go across.

MR. DINNING: Yes.

MRS. BLACK: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MRS. BLACK: Schools and that: those are all about the same?

MR. DINNING: Yes. All the communities in that end of the city share a need for more schools.

MRS. BLACK: Like the other quadrants.

MR. DINNING: Like the other quadrants.

The Catholic school board, under the government's five-year capital plan, has requested more schools. They've requested them, they need them, so we've approved them – now I speak as Minister of Education – whereas the Calgary public board has not requested schools down there, and of course the government can't give them schools unless they ask for them. I say that as minister. As an MLA I have strongly and publicly encouraged them to put those schools on their list so that the likes of Millrise and Shawnessy and Woodbine and Woodlands would be receiving additional schools or spaces in the next five years.

MRS. BLACK: The reason I ask that is – you know that the joint community effort that went into the Simons Valley school was between two separate communities that had joined together to make their plea to the school board for a school, and that's now ready for opening.

MR. DINNING: Yes.

MRS. BLACK: I was just wondering if there was some similar scenario down there.

MR. DINNING: Well, we've encouraged that same kind of coming together of communities like Woodlands and Woodbine, Shawnessy and Millrise to get them to go after the school board, as I have as an MLA, to . . .

MRS. BLACK: Get on the priority list.

MR. DINNING: . . . say, "Look, the need is here; let's get on the priority list."

MRS. BLACK: That's great.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mike, we've been reviewing Calgary-Shaw in particular, the constituency Jim represents. He's been going through various configurations. Are there any questions you had that you wish to ask? We're about to wrap up.

MR. CARDINAL: Sorry I came in late. No doubt, Jim, you're aware of the projected growth pattern in that area.

MR. DINNING: That's right, Mike, I am. I've shared with the members of the committee how I would recommend that you accommodate that growth pattern so that you don't just plan only for the new but that you try and find a marriage of the anchor of some of the old giving strength to the growth that will occur from the new. You'll see in the transcript that I've made some recommendations on

how you might recut the constituency, although I made it clear that my druthers were to keep it exactly the way it is.

MR. CARDINAL: That's your number one recommendation.

MRS. BLACK: But you know that can't be.

MR. DINNING: Well, it's not realistic. It can't be. It's over 51,000 people right now.

MRS. BLACK: There has to be some change, Jim.

MR. DINNING: Yes.

MRS. BLACK: Just north of Cedarbrae is Oakridge. I was going to ask you: those communities are about the same age bracket, are they not?

MR. DINNING: Yes.

MRS. BLACK: There would probably be some commonality there.

MR. DINNING: Yes. They were once together in Glenmore.

MRS. BLACK: Yeah.

MR. CARDINAL: Fifty-one thousand would bring it 30 percent above the average, potentially.

MR. DINNING: Mike, I accept the fact and the constituents begrudgingly accept the fact that the constituency boundaries are going to change.

MRS. BLACK: What do you think of the idea of the bottom part of the community going out of the city?

MR. DINNING: I'll only repeat what I said at the commission hearings in Calgary. I can't argue strongly enough against taking any part of the corporate city limits and the established communities within the corporate city limits or the beginning-to-be-established communities and putting them into Highwood. There was just unanimous strong feeling against that, especially from the likes of Shawnessy and Millrise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As you know, Jim, that was never the intent of the previous all-party committee. The intent was that if there were areas recently annexed that were acreages or farms that had traditionally been part of in that case Highwood, the commission could consider leaving them in Highwood. But the idea of bringing well-established communities or newly established communities into rural ridings was never the intent.

MR. DINNING: I knew that because you and others had told me that.

I just should tell you that in this area here there are probably 300 residents that live on acreages. Mine is partly a rural constituency today. There are not as many head of cattle roaming the plains in Calgary-Shaw as there perhaps are in Taber-Warner, but there are some. So I would recommend that this area here, although it's now in the city, be part of the city. But if that's what you had to do – that's what you contemplated in the first committee – then you could do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You know that we are meeting with Mayor Duerr in September. Based on the comments he's made publicly to date, I believe that will be his recommendation as well.

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MR. DINNING: But you're talking about less than 1,000 people, which would jigger the percentage points half a point.

MRS. BLACK: Well, in your end.

MR. DINNING: Yes.

MRS. BLACK: In your end and down south, yeah. There are other folks in other areas on those acreages that don't want to be part of the high density.

MR. DINNING: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But we've had a very strong argument made by a variety of people to respect municipal boundaries. If we're going to respect municipal boundaries, I think that's . . .

MR. DINNING: I agree. I said to the commission: draw a big black line around the corporate city limits and move from the outside in rather than moving from the inside out and letting the spillage take its course. I recommended that they do otherwise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MR. CARDINAL: I just have one more question for Jim. You're familiar with Calgary. As you realize with the existing population, we're now looking at around 30,000 for each MLA for the whole province as far as the constituencies. I notice that an alderman in Edmonton is serving 50,000 people on the average. A Member of Parliament is serving in the 80,000 to 100,000 range on the average. Is there an indication in Calgary as to what population an alderman would serve in Calgary presently?

MR. DINNING: Seven hundred and ten thousand divided by 14.

MRS. BLACK: Well, there are 14 aldermen, and there are 708,000 to 710,000 people.

MR. DINNING: You're making me do my math. That's about 50,000 apiece.

MRS. BLACK: And you've got six Members of Parliament.

MR. CARDINAL: That's working quite well now, serving 50,000 people?

MRS. BLACK: Well, they've just gone through a redistribution in Calgary and have left it at 14.

MR. DINNING: It's not my position to assess how the municipalities do it.

MR. CARDINAL: The reason I say that, you can understand. I'm a rural member who serves a constituency that has 58,000 square miles dealing with hundreds of different organizations: agriculture, forestry, oil and gas industry, Indian reserves, highest rate per capita on welfare. I as an individual member serve that area. How would you compare a constituency like that with, say, a constituency like

yours that has 41,000 population in a small area compared to what some of us have?

MR. DINNING: Mike, I think the people I represent are torn between the simplicity and the obviousness, if there's such a word, of rep by pop vis-à-vis, on the other hand, sort of representing regional interests. Every opportunity I can, I say to the people I represent that I can drive from one corner of the constituency to another in 13 minutes without a radar detector, that people can walk from anywhere in my constituency to my office, which is in the middle, within 60 minutes and that they can bike within 20. I contrast that with – I've used Shirley McClellan in Chinook as an example: nearly 10,000 clicks of roads, two and a half hours between one corner and another, an incredible sparsity of population. You can't say that rep by pop has got to be the way it is in Calgary and then go out to New Bridgen and say that it's got to be the same out there. There's a fairly good understanding of that with the people I spoke with and the people I represent, but understand that there is an attractiveness and an appeal to the simplicity of rep by pop. But I know, like you know, that it simply doesn't work. I would still advocate for 19. I think Calgary is in need of that one and possibly two additional seats.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Anything else?

MRS. BLACK: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Jim, thank you very much for coming in.

MR. DINNING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You were well prepared, and you've given us some good information.

MR. DINNING: I appreciate it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

[The committee adjourned at 9:38 a.m.]