

1:34 p.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll reconvene and, Gary, a special welcome to you. With your permission we'll stay on the record.

MR. SEVERTSON: That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We'd like you to go through your presentation, and then we'll have a discussion-and-answer session following that. So if you'd like to proceed.

MR. SEVERTSON: First of all, I'd like to thank committee members for fitting into my schedule and hearing me this afternoon on such short notice. I'll try not to take too much of your time. I'd like to start off by saying that I don't envy your job of drawing up the new electoral boundaries. It's going to be a difficult task.

The comments I'd like to make today are: when I looked at the 1991 federal census data that was sent out from Dave Carter's office, I looked at the number of constituencies above the mean between Calgary and Edmonton along the No. 2 corridor and east of the B.C. boundary. When you look at those numbers, it's quite obvious to me that the most area to move, if we want to keep the same number of constituencies in that area, is to the north, because there isn't much room to move the ones in the south. Some are within the mean. So with that in mind, that's your task as a committee: to decide what you want to do, but that's the way I perceive it without getting into specific lines.

Then I would like to talk a little bit about actual lines, say, in concern to the Innisfail constituency, not particular lines in my mind. I'll leave that up to you. One area that I would recommend: try to follow municipal boundary lines where at all possible. If you can't stay within municipal boundary lines, I'd recommend following either a major highway or at least a straight line through another constituency or of course a natural boundary like the Red Deer River, presently on my east side, which is a totally proper way of doing it.

When I look at the old map of the Innisfail constituency, there are at least two areas. One is in reference to Red Deer-South, which goes into the county of Red Deer. It's not a straight line; it zigzags through. A case in point: one of the lines goes through the middle of a section. There's no road allowance. I have a father and son that live in different constituencies because it doesn't follow even a section line or a road allowance. So that's one area. If they're not straight, in the case of into the south of Red Deer, then you follow the city boundary lines, which again people can identify if they live inside the city boundaries or they live in the county of Red Deer. The way it is now, a portion of the people in Red Deer-South live in the county of Red Deer, and they're in the Red Deer-South electoral boundary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we take a short break?

[The committee adjourned from 1:37 p.m. to 1:43 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we'll go back on record.

Now, let's take a look at the map of Red Deer-North and Red Deer-South as they protrude into the county.

[The committee reviewed constituency maps with Mr. Severtson]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll go back to the formal presentation.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure where I left off, but the main thing I would say is to try to keep straight lines when you're cutting through a municipality or natural boundaries or a major road like Highway 2. To me it's very important, more so for the people of Alberta so they can recognize and understand which constituency they're in. Municipal, county, MD, or city boundaries make natural ones because people relate to that.

Basically, that's all I have in my presentation. If you want to ask questions, feel free to ask.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: Just your comment on keeping straight lines when cutting through municipalities. Looking at your municipalities, they are considerably smaller than the northern municipalities. I guess, when we're looking at the northern municipalities, we maybe need to look more at trading patterns over municipalities because they're large municipalities. Therefore, it's hard to follow in the north, but I can see your point in the south, where it is possible to do that as much as possible.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mike, I agree with you on trading patterns to a point, that that's important too. I would use the other example. In the Innisfail constituency right now our west boundary line for the electoral division I think is four miles inside the county line, and I think two miles on the west side of my boundary should go to the county line because the trading patterns aren't that exact.

MR. CARDINAL: No, no. Yeah. That's good.

MR. SEVERTSON: I don't follow the county all the way to the north, but in the very west I think I'm about four miles within the county boundaries, and it goes into Rocky Mountain House, which again is not a natural area. They can't follow it as well. At least to the north on the west side of my boundaries, past the fifth meridian, I go straight west and then come straight south. That one going straight across is cutting the county, but at least it's a straight line.

MR. CARDINAL: What's the population at Bowden Institution?

MR. SEVERTSON: I'd just be guessing. I think the population is around 500.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anything else, Mike?

MR. CARDINAL: No, I don't have anything.

MR. PRITCHARD: Is the pop of Bowden different than Bowden Institution? Is that what you said: Bowden Institution?

MR. CARDINAL: Yeah.

MR. SEVERTSON: Bowden's a different population.

MR. PRITCHARD: Bowden's 967, and the institution, I don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, where's the airport?

MR. SEVERTSON: The airport is in John Oldring's riding right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think what we'll do on this one, Bob, is use one colour on the county map to mark the present boundaries for Red Deer-North and -South so we can look at a more detailed . . .

MR. SEVERTSON: I should have brought mine from my office in Innisfail because I do have it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's okay. We'll do that, and then we can get a better sense of what you're saying. I think it's valid if you've got one township divided, and it's not divided . . .

MR. SEVERTSON: One section divided.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. One section divided in such a way and it's not following the road. Surely with Highway 2, which is a four-lane divided highway that everybody recognizes and can relate to – and we've also got 2A and the railroad tracks.

MR. SEVERTSON: People can identify either one of them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the Red Deer River. So you've got both. Okay. That's good. Anything else?

MR. SEVERTSON: Then to the southeast corner, while you've got the map out, you can see how the county line, if you move up, would be a crooked line, but at least it'd be identified. If you do go to the south, I recommend you keep a straight line over to Highway 2. As it presently is, I think it's within four miles of Highway 2 in the south boundaries, and it takes in part of Mountain View municipality and Kneehill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. To run a straight line as you're suggesting would mean cutting through one county and one MD.

MR. SEVERTSON: Yeah. That's what it does now, but if we stay with that type of a boundary, I'd recommend it at least go over to Highway 2.

MRS. BLACK: That would be this one here?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, down lower.

1:53

MR. SEVERTSON: There's number 2, I think, Pat. You had your finger on it. Right now it goes straight down. You're on 2A, right there. It goes straight after that.

MRS. BLACK: This one coming down.

MR. SEVERTSON: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks very much.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you again for your time, and I hope I didn't take too much time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Glad to have you in.

MR. SEVERTSON: I wish you guys well.

[The committee adjourned from 1:53 p.m. to 2:02 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're ready to reconvene. Tom, welcome.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're on the record with your permission.

MR. MUSGROVE: Uh huh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The process we've been following is that we've heard from presenters and then we go into a general question-and-answer session. If you want us to study a map or look at some particular boundaries, either current or proposed, we'll be pleased to do that. We appreciate you coming in to give us a hand. Over to you.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you. Well, I don't have a lot to say. Forgive me, I didn't get all the information that I wanted to bring with me, but I believe my constituency is something around 4,000 population less than 25 percent of the average. It's minus 13 percent below the 25 percent, more or less, so I guess what we have to talk about is population from somewhere to bring it up to the 25 percent.

I don't agree with the interim report from the Electoral Boundaries Commission because they had taken off some of my constituency which had voiced the opinion that they would like to stay as part of Bow Valley. That included Empress and all of the MD of Cypress that was in my constituency. They have stated that they would like to stay in. Then in the interim report they had given me an area almost to Drumheller and almost to Strathmore, which I don't have any problem with except those people like where they're at. At one time I had that portion of the Blackfoot reserve that is north of the Bow River. I don't know what kind of a population we're looking at there, but I don't have a problem if they are included, if that would bring it up to the 4,000. In Shirley Cripps' report she is suggesting that they include the town of Redcliff, and that's not a problem to me. I haven't really had a discussion with the people of the town of Redcliff to see what their opinion is one way or the other. My constituency goes up to secondary road 561, which is the north boundary. There are people up there that previously had suggested that they should be part of the Bow Valley constituency because they considered themselves part of the Gem community, and part of it is still in the county of Newell. So that's a proposal. Now, I haven't done a population count on any of these areas to see where they're set in the population.

Those are some of the options we could look at in a way to bring Bow Valley up to the needed population. I certainly don't agree with the proposal in the interim report, by the way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Tom.

Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: Yeah. Just give me a minute here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. While you're looking, anything, Pat? You seem to be doing some studying too. Well, then I'll lead off.

I can remember the hearings for the commission that I attended in Drumheller. People from the county of Wheatland were very strongly of the view that they did not wish to be aligned with the Bassano-Brooks area. In fact, if anything they thought we should try to follow the boundaries between the county of Wheatland and the county of Newell. I'm hearing you say that that makes sense. I would also think Brooks to Redcliff is sensible in that the ties between Brooks and Medicine Hat – the college now with the campus at Brooks and so on. There's a lot of travel along Highway 1.

MR. MUSGROVE: As a matter of fact, at the present time quite a few people that live in Redcliff work in Brooks at Lakeside Packers, and they come out by bus or commute.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

Tom, can you help us on the Empress area? The Empress area south of the Red Deer River is part of special area 2. Where do those kids go to high school?

MR. MUSGROVE: Well, for a great distance east of Jenner they go to school in Brooks. Some of the kids from Empress and Bindloss go to school in Oyen and some go to school in Medicine Hat or wherever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. But are they part of a school district that includes Oyen?

MR. MUSGROVE: No. Except the town of Empress. I don't know why it is, but the town of Empress itself, which has about 250 people, is part of the school district that includes Oyen, but the rest of it is part of the Cypress school district, which is east of Medicine Hat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So even though they're part of special area 2, headquartered in Hanna, some of those school kids in fact go to school in the Cypress school division.

MR. MUSGROVE: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MR. MUSGROVE: They've got four schools there – one in Jenner, one in Bindloss, one in Buffalo, and one in Empress – where they have elementary students. High school kids from almost to Buffalo are transported every day by bus into Brooks, but some of the ones in Bindloss go to high school in Oyen, and some of them on a tuitional agreement or . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: But as far as you're concerned, that area which currently is part of the Bow Valley constituency should remain part of the Bow Valley constituency?

MR. MUSGROVE: Yes; I've had that strongly put to me. Even at the meeting in Medicine Hat the people were adamant that they would rather stay part of Bow Valley.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. And the population?

MR. MUSGROVE: There's not a lot of population in there, because as you know, it's only between the British block and the Red Deer River. That is not a high-density area by any stretch of the imagination.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll have to go back and review the tapes of it too.

MR. MUSGROVE: Then we have the people on the west side of the block and the south side of the block as part of my constituency, and of course we have Ralston and Suffield.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tom, I haven't read the transcript yet, but did the people in the Empress, Buffalo, Bindloss, and Jenner area who argued to stay in Bow Valley do so at the hearing in Medicine Hat?

MR. MUSGROVE: Yes, Medicine Hat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I'll have to read that. Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: Yes. I just have a quick comment and a question. You mentioned Redcliff as a possibility for inclusion in the Bow Valley constituency. Using the 1991 census, Bow Valley is now 19,741, and if you added Redcliff with its 3,800, you'd have a population of 23,551 which is 21 percent, which is within the 25 percent range. Would that be something that would be agreeable?

MR. MUSGROVE: That would be more than necessary.

MR. CARDINAL: Yes. You'd be within the 25 percent, because it would be minus 21.50 percent, something like that.

MR. MUSGROVE: No. I don't see that being a problem. Like I say, I haven't talked to the people in Redcliff to see what their opinion of this would be. But it's obvious that of all the constituencies in southeastern Alberta, the correction to Cypress could be made. Obviously it's going to have to have some of the population it doesn't have anyway, and it could be all corrected.

2:12

MR. CARDINAL: Redcliff is within Cypress-Redcliff now, right?

MR. MUSGROVE: Yeah, that's right.

Now, that's one of the options. There are some other options like the Blackfoot reserve, and I don't know what kind of population we're looking at.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The difficulty with that, Tom, is that unless we significantly change boundaries, it would be a long sliver protruding from your constituency to include the reserve.

MR. MUSGROVE: Yeah. That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Other questions? Pat?

MRS. BLACK: How many people are at Suffield?

MR. MUSGROVE: Suffield town – it's a hamlet actually – has a population of about 200 and some people, I believe. Ralston, which is a federally-operated town – I don't know whether you'd call it a town or a hamlet, because it's completely under federal jurisdiction – had a population of about 450 people the last time I updated.

MRS. BLACK: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anything else, Mike?

MR. CARDINAL: No, that's all I have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's it. Pretty straightforward, Tom.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

[The committee adjourned from 2:13 p.m. to 3:08 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we'll officially recommence. Welcome to you, Alan, and to you, John. Alan, you're on now. The process

we've been following is that unless specifically requested by the participants, it's on the record and *Hansard* will record. We usually listen to the presentation and then go into a general question-and-answer session. If you're comfortable with that, Alan, we'll proceed.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In thinking about what I would say this afternoon, when I was driving up and stopped in Killam to have lunch, I read the *Sun* and the article about the comments of the mayor of Edmonton, which I found quite interesting and disturbing. So my thoughts changed around. As you drive along, sometimes it would be useful to be closer. You wouldn't have as much time to think about what you're going to say. She was quoted in the paper as saying that under the current rules most urban areas have less effect than voters in other areas. "The splitting of communities is not an acceptable solution." Well, that's probably one thought the people in my constituency would have. I use that just as an illustration. I wonder how long it took the mayor to come from her office over to here. I left home after I took the kids to school at quarter after 8 this morning. I stopped for 15 minutes and had lunch. I'm not at the south end of the province as far as you are, Mr. Chairman, nor is the capital in the middle of the province. I think that illustrates the size of this province.

The other thing in reading the article, the comments that one vote in the city is worth less than a vote in the rural area: I just don't accept that, simply because I understand the city has variance in their wards, 10, 15 percent plus or minus. So does she have a council with unequal votes? I can't speak for her, but I would suggest she thinks she doesn't. I think personally with all the years I've served in the Legislature, it is the same way. We have to look at the thought that it's not just one person, one vote; it's also access to the MLA. How long does it take him or her to get to a constituent, or how long does it take for a constituent to get to them? In my instance, as rural members know, it can take an hour to an hour and a half for a constituent to come to the middle of the constituency or my constituency office or my home. Or vice versa, it would take me that long to get to a constituent. It takes six hours a week to get to the capital one way. If you put that together, that's a day and a half lost out of the week. You multiply that out by a year and you're short about two months out of the year in work time. If you are in an area with a higher population and closer to the capital, you have less travel time, plus you have more time to deal with constituents. I think when the case went in front of the Supreme Court and the justices wrote the verdict or whatever it's called, many of them understood that there are some concessions that need to be made because of area, because of distance, et cetera.

My constituents presented a brief to the first legislative committee. They believed they were heard, and when the report was prepared, you showed them that they were. They waited for the next report to come out. They knew that those who were on the commission had access to all that material including the transcripts. They read the interim report with disbelief, and again, because I urged them, all the municipalities and individuals alike made presentations to the commission in both Lethbridge and Medicine Hat hoping they would be heard. I guess they were listened to, but from the next report that came out, obviously they weren't heard. So there's a concern out there about what happens. They are hoping somebody is going to listen to them and hear them, not just hear them but listen to them.

I've had various comments about the second report from the commission that came out. You know, how could they hear all those statements and comments that were made and not listen to any of them? How could they sit there for two hours and then ask the same question of the people that was unassociated with what they had said but was associated with a belief that they personally had? How

could the Chief Electoral Officer, a servant of this Legislature, not serve the Legislature? How could he make a statement and play lawyer or judge rather than follow directions given? Those are comments that have been passed on to me since the report came out. I think you've all read and some have heard what I had to say at both commission meetings, and most of it's said there.

One of the things in my constituency when the first report came out was that the population was wrong. When I questioned, "Is it right?" I received a letter almost telling me I didn't know what I was talking about, that the population was right. I didn't know until the second report came out that it wasn't. When the last report came out there was about a 3,000 or 3,500 difference in people that were short on the population count, which brought the proposed constituency as drawn by Mrs. Cripps' maps or even as drawn on the initial report map within about 2 percent of Medicine Hat more or less. So the population was very close. I didn't even know they had found the correction until that time. But I'm assuming that in the information the Speaker sent all of us last week on our population the necessary corrections had been made and it's more accurate than those that were used for the population of my constituency earlier.

I know there's no question that Cypress-Redcliff constituency is low in population. I remember one time Henry Kroeger and I calculated the size of our constituencies when he was a member for Chinook, and I think Chinook is slightly bigger by about a township or less than a township in area.

I think all the suggestions that were made at the hearings in Medicine Hat outlined what could be done with the constituency. There was agreement among most of the participants that the constituency boundaries could be drawn on the lines of the MD of Cypress No. 1 and the county of Forty Mile No. 8. Part of that is Bow Valley now, and it puts a few extra people in. It's obviously going to affect the percentage of votes Bow Valley constituency has, but on a couple of occasions on other redistributions the people from that area south of the Suffield Block made petitions and sent letters and appeared before commissions to be included in the Cypress-Redcliff constituency because all their business is done in Redcliff. I've had that constituency when it's been represented by an opposition member and when it's been represented by a government member, and we've managed quite adequately to get along with the municipal district of Cypress.

3:18

The presentation that was made on behalf of the people of Grassy Lake was to leave that boundary the way it was. Their reasoning was that in 1953 or '54, just about 40 years ago, that part of the constituency was added from Taber, I guess it was called then, and remained there ever since. So their desire is leaving simply because of history. Also, the mayor that represented the town admitted that he could see people making the comment that lines could be drawn at municipal boundaries as well. The other presentation was from the mayor of Redcliff, who suggested – and that was brought about by discussion in town council – that if there were to be two constituencies in the Hat, Crescent Heights, which is north of the South Saskatchewan River, and Redcliff could be put together to be one constituency. I don't think that gives them quite enough population, firstly, for a constituency. When questions were asked of him by the group, he said that he understood why the rest of the groups were drawing the lines on the municipal boundaries and didn't have a problem with that but he was presenting the views as per the directions from the town council.

Proposed lines. I would suggest a line in Medicine Hat south and west of Highway 1, which would take in what's called South Ridge. I asked a planner some time ago and he said that he thought there were 4,100 people, something like that, in South Ridge. There is

also a trailer court within the city boundaries. I don't know how many people are in that one. That's south of the city. If you follow the highway through, there's also a trailer court north of the airport and a fairly large senior citizens' home north of the airport as well. I think those numbers would bring the population of the constituency fairly close if not closer than the 25 percent plus or minus as suggested in the Act.

I guess that's about all I have to say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Questions or comments? Pat.

MRS. BLACK: I'm just trying to see where this fits. Okay, this fits in. So what you're suggesting is there's a natural boundary with the Trans-Canada Highway through the southern part of Medicine Hat. Are these acreages out in this Seven Persons Creek, or what's in here?

MR. HYLAND: No. There's development there with the city.

MRS. BLACK: The airport's on one side of the creek. What's on this part down here?

MR. HYLAND: Nothing. Well, there's a par three golf course and that sort of thing down there, but what you have is mostly – polls 77, 71, 72, and 78 are houses or apartments. The top corner of 70 up to about where the south is on South Ridge Drive is housing. Beyond that is undeveloped.

MRS. BLACK: What about in this, 48? Is this the seniors' area, the Tower Estates?

MR. HYLAND: No, Tower Estates is the mobile home park.

MRS. BLACK: Okay.

MR. HYLAND: The seniors' is just below that, north of Gershaw Drive.

MRS. BLACK: Down off Bannon Avenue, it looks like.

MR. HYLAND: Yeah, whatever it's called. Then that area where it shows 48, if you follow the highway through – you see, 48 crosses the highway – even though that's divided into lots, it's commercial. There are no homes in there.

MRS. BLACK: This is all commercials?

MR. HYLAND: Yeah. Commercial and motels.

MRS. BLACK: So there's no residential at all then. Okay. What about on the other side of the highway? Is it commercial or residential?

MR. HYLAND: No, that's residential. That's why I suggested that if you're going to cut it, you cut it at the highway because it's a natural border.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mike?

MR. CARDINAL: I was just going to say: the outline that shows there is the city limits?

MR. HYLAND: Yeah. Actually, the constituency at one time, up to the last redistribution, took in part of that area because the city limits weren't out that far. The trailer court that's called South Ridge

would be in 78. You see those lots drawn in in 78? They're about halfway down. Just the north side of that were the last boundaries of the constituency, in that area. That trailer court at one time was within Cypress, and then the city annexed the land. The next time the Act was passed, the description said the corporate limits of the city of Medicine Hat.

MRS. BLACK: And then what would be down farther, through 79, 81?

MR. HYLAND: Some acreages. Most of the stuff in 81 is on the Medicine Hat side of the highway. The same in 79. See how 79 dips in there? Most of that's in there. There's very little on the south side.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Anything else, Pat?

MRS. BLACK: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Stock?

MR. DAY: I appreciate the detail that you've given us. That's helpful. Just a general comment. When you started your remarks, Alan, I appreciate the frustration that you've got when you hear reports about what appears to you an ignoring of the concerns and the realities that are being faced by rural constituencies. One of the most frustrating parts of this whole exercise is the constant refusal, either deliberate or otherwise, of the media to report some very important and key things which I think would help your constituents in terms of their frustration which you're expressing here today. One of them in the main is that our Act, as you know, was submitted by us, at our own request of the government, to the Alberta Court of Appeal to see if it met all the guidelines, all the constitutional realities of voting and voting parity and everything else, and it did absolutely. The Supreme Court ruling in the case of Carter v Saskatchewan, which went to the Supreme Court, which our Appeal Court waited for and which certain intervenors in Alberta waited for, absolutely, unquestionably upholds the fact that rural communities are a community of interest. To quote from the Supreme Court ruling: their existence warrants departure from voter parity.

Since it's on the record I'm not saying anything unknown about the Chief Electoral Officer's remarks, but in his own report – and here's why you were frustrated, I'm sure, as you've already mentioned in the hearings – he says, "I agree that relative parity of voting power is required for effective representation." Yet the Supreme Court ruling says:

First, absolute parity is impossible.
Then it says:

Secondly, such relative parity as may be possible of achievement may prove undesirable because it has the effect of detracting from the primary goal of effective representation.

3:28

Unfortunately, it's going to be left up to you and whatever means are available to you to communicate to your constituents that this group here, at least the government, is absolutely committed to the intent and also the letter of the Supreme Court and our own appeal court in terms of making sure that the urban interests are met but also that the rural interests are met. Why that does not get reported, I have no idea. It is very frustrating. All that gets reported are remarks as from Her Worship yesterday, saying that she doesn't feel the representation is fair, when in fact the Supreme Court and the appeal court absolutely uphold exactly what we have been proposing

here. But communication is the key, and I can only encourage you to try and communicate these types of things to your constituents.

I was shocked, as were many people here yesterday, when one of the points made by the city of Edmonton was that they're very upset about the fact that we're not using the 1991 census data. Well, we so clearly dealt with that some time ago in the motion that set up this whole process, saying that we were dealing with it. The mayor and her people, her advisers, were in shock. They were unaware that we had already said that we are going to use the 1991 census data. The reason I'm telling you that is because we've got a real communication problem between ourselves and the people of Alberta. These types of things don't get reported.

We will help you as far as basic information in easing that frustration, but it's largely a task you're going to have to take on individually. I want to assure you that we are going to be consistent with the Supreme Court and with the Alberta Court of Appeal, which see rural communities as a community of interest and that their existence warrants departure from voter parity. Effective representation has always been the key. That's the Canadian history, and we'll make sure that your folks get effective representation. We'll just have to personally bring that message to them.

MR. HYLAND: Well, I can do that, and I can continue to do it. The simple fact is that the comments and the support that I have out of the local weekly media in my constituency were super. They backed what the people said, and they reacted in their own editorials according to that because they're people who grew up in small-town Alberta or elsewhere, and they understand that.

The tough thing to communicate wasn't the first report that came from the legislative committee, because the people can see where they were listened to. This report was bad enough, communicating it. The worst one was that one. In trying to convince, as you know, it's not a committee or a group or whatever. It's, "Why did the government do this to me?" So you try and explain that to them.

MR. DAY: Well, that's the challenge: to assure them that the government is not doing it to them but is merely representing what the rule of law is saying and what our whole Canadian history has said.

MR. HYLAND: That's much of what the editorial and the stories written by various other people in town said in the local paper.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anything else, Stock?

MR. DAY: No; that's good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: I don't have any at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.
Anything else, Pat?

MRS. BLACK: No. I was just wanting to verify some population numbers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Bob is doing that too. We're looking at the numbers listed by the Chief Electoral Officer in 1991. It seems lower than the figure we had for 1986. We'll just double-check right now. It appears you're using the census figures for 1986 at 14,335 and the reported figure for 1991 at 14,594.

Nothing else? Okay.
Thanks very much, Alan.
John.

MR. DROBOT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize the job of the committee is a difficult and thankless one. I appreciate the responsibilities and the expectations placed on the committee, and I wish you well.

I know that the committee has heard the facts of the current St. Paul constituency before . . .

MRS. BLACK: I'm sorry to interrupt you. I'm afraid you've picked up the wrong number there. Cypress is 16,000.

MR. PRITCHARD: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The figure that we have for 1986 is 16,520, and for 1991 we've got it down at . . .

MRS. BLACK: Fourteen five forty-nine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. So we could double-check. I can't believe there'd be that kind of a population drop.

MR. HYLAND: Redcliff and Bow Island have both grown, and that's just two of them.

MR. PRITCHARD: What is the population of Redcliff?

MR. HYLAND: Thirty-eight ninety something.

MR. PRITCHARD: Thanks, Pat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt, John.

MR. DROBOT: No problem.

MRS. BLACK: You'll have to excuse me. I like numbers.

MR. DROBOT: I know the committee has heard the facts before of the current St. Paul constituency. In places we are 120 miles long and elsewhere only 18 miles wide. There are more than 20 local government jurisdictions in the constituency, including four counties, several towns and villages, one ID, four native reserves, one Metis settlement. There are also 14 school boards and four county boards, and they all command and demand the MLA's attention and attendance. These facts have been presented to you before but are critical to your deliberations. I hope that you enjoy your review.

Today, however, I want to focus on some other concepts which must enter into your deliberations. In consideration of representation for the people of the current St. Paul constituency, I ask the committee to keep the constituency largely as it is for cultural reasons, reasons purely relating to representation of groups and organizations, and a need for the people to articulate their dreams and desires from a distance that is far from the capital. Trade patterns must be taken into consideration. As in 1986, the part of the county of St. Paul south of river petitioned the commission to be a part of the St. Paul constituency as they were only two miles away from Elk Point – their school, their town, et cetera – and that was granted.

There are diverse cultural communities in the St. Paul constituency struggling for development and stability. In our constituency the treaty Indians, the Metis, and the Francophone peoples are clustered. They have formed strong communities that developed many organizations and associations to pursue the agendas of their people. Provincial agendas which are pursued by the Francophone

community in St. Paul, for example, benefit the Francophones dispersed throughout the rest of the province.

At the current level of representation the MLA has time to serve these constituents throughout the mainstream channels of local government as well as through their own associations. The people of St. Paul utilize the standard government organizations such as town, village, and county councils, et cetera, but there is more. The Metis are pursuing aboriginal self-government with settlement councils and general councils. I have met with them many times now, and they have some growing pains in becoming part of the municipal government. The treaty Indian peoples are exerting themselves as a first nation with band council, regional band associations, the Indian associations of Alberta and Canada, and the Assembly of First Nations. They also wish to meet with the MLA quite often to discuss their many concerns. The French are struggling for Francophone recognition in many ways through various organizations. The MLA is expected to meet these groups.

These factors multiply the number of groups that the MLA must represent, and it heightens the responsibility of the MLA serving them. If the committee substantially increases the size of the constituency, there will be less time to assist these individuals and groups to articulate their needs, and Albertans will suffer in and beyond the specific boundaries of the constituency. Given this, I believe that effective representation for these individuals means substantial deviance from the average constituency size. These cultural groups are largely underrepresented in the Legislature as it is. The committee must be sure that the boundary lines respect the desires of these individuals to maintain their ability and their needs within their provincial constituency and within the province.

In addition, our constituency is substantially distanced from the capital, with one boundary on the Saskatchewan border. The comings and goings of the constituents in the far east are different from those in the far west in cultural, in agricultural soil zones, and the natural trading patterns as well.

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Our geography, industry, and employment vary greatly from the people in the western part of the constituency. These types of things affect the perspectives and issues of provincial concern. The people in the eastern part of the constituency should have balanced representation with bordering constituencies in the western part of the province so we are not overshadowed by them nor are they overshadowed by ourselves.

The people of the St. Paul constituency clearly indicated in their submissions that voter equality based on numbers would not lead to equitable or effective representation. I believe this was consistent with the overwhelming message of Albertans. The courts have upheld the 25 percent variance. I encourage the committee to take your direction from Albertans and use that 25 percent variance to its fullest extent for the effective representation of all Albertans.

A question I have is: will the committee be rereading the transcripts of the previous committee and commission hearings from St. Paul before making decisions? Many St. Paul constituents took time to prepare their thoughts, and I want to ensure that they are brought to your attention. At the commission's hearings, one or two individuals proposed specific lines important to the individuals living in the areas in the terms of trading patterns and the sense of the community. I wish to remind the committee of this.

I think that's it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just before I go to other members, John, I might respond to that last request of yours. We have set aside time so that we can go back and refresh our memories first on the 39 public hearings that we held and also to review the *Hansard* of all of the

hearings held by the commission. So your constituents who spoke and made recommendations on where lines should be: that will certainly be taken into consideration before any final report comes down.

MR. DROBOT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mike.

MR. CARDINAL: Yes. I just have a couple of specific questions. I notice on the overlay here, part of a small portion of county 19 is under the Bonnyville constituency now. Could you see that small portion directly north of St. Paul, using the municipal boundary, go to St. Paul?

MR. DROBOT: If we look at the chamber of commerce presentation, it said:

A second recommendation we have, and this is a very specific one, is with regards to the boundary line for the constituency north of St. Paul. Our suggestion is that this boundary line north of St. Paul follow the county of St. Paul boundary instead of the existing boundary. Right now the constituency of Bonnyville starts a mere four and a half miles north of St. Paul. There's an area there that is presently in the Bonnyville area which is within the county of St. Paul and which trades primarily in St. Paul.

School services, other services, et cetera.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So just to be clear on that point, you'd be happy to see the line follow the line between county 19 and MD 87?

MR. DROBOT: It's logical, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. CARDINAL: But, John, in addition to that I know St. Paul is quite an agricultural centre, and south of Lac La Biche, the Rich Lake area is quite an agricultural area, including the Kikino Metis settlement. Do the people use those services in St. Paul yet?

MR. DROBOT: Yes, Mike. Primarily because Lac La Biche has few implement dealers, et cetera, St. Paul is the centre and therefore they use that. However, we also have to take into consideration the fact that if we were to go any farther north towards Lac La Biche, we'd have to go clear out of the constituency to have even a paved highway to commute back and forth. So we'd have to go all the way to the other side of Vilna to go north.

MR. CARDINAL: Now, there are other services that are common in that portion. Lakeland College, for example, serves north and south in that area. Employment and Immigration serves that region north, and Career Development and Employment and Family and Social Services. I assume there are other departments, no doubt, that are situated either at Lac La Biche or St. Paul.

MR. DROBOT: To a point. But you have to also realize that the main traffic pattern from Lac La Biche is to Edmonton.

MR. CARDINAL: Yeah. Highway 36 to Boyle. Okay.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, I hope you'll bear with me. John, again I'm looking at the numbers from 1986 and then this sheet that came from the Chief Electoral Officer, and I find it difficult to accept the concept that 10 percent of the people in your riding have moved out. I'd request, Mr. Chairman, that these numbers that have

come out be verified, because I can't see that there could be that big a drop, again in the riding of St. Paul. Now, maybe this is another scenario where there are some Indian bands that have not been taken into account again.

MR. DROBOT: I have some difficulty with that also, because the town of St. Paul is growing. The population is almost 5,000. Because of the oil activity in the Elk Point area the town has grown. There are people living on acreages working in the heavy oil just south of Elk Point that's called the Lindbergh field. So I do have a problem with the population figures.

MRS. BLACK: Well, I do too. I look at that section of the province, if we might, Mr. Chairman, with the activity in the oil patch in the Lloydminster-St. Paul area, and I really have grave difficulty in accepting that there would be that much of a drop in population when the activity has increased dramatically in the last five years. Could we verify those numbers?

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes, we'll have to get them verified.

MR. DROBOT: My understanding is that a large part of the native population, especially in Saddle Lake, did not abide by the census and were not covered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've been working with both federal Indian Affairs and Municipal Affairs to verify the numbers of those people who were not counted for census purposes. The issue that we're dealing with that Pat has raised relates to a report done by the Chief Electoral Officer pursuant to section 11 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, wherein the Chief Electoral Officer is required to file with the Assembly a list of constituencies which fall outside the plus/minus 25 percent range. We were somewhat surprised that the report came in as quickly as it did. At this time we have a breakdown based on municipal populations, but we don't have a precise breakdown based on constituency populations. We'll do our best to verify the numbers. We are working almost daily with census Canada and Statistics Canada so that we are certain that we'll be able to have a breakdown on a constituency-by-constituency basis. That's absolutely imperative before we file our final report.

Okay. Anything else, Pat?

MRS. BLACK: No. I just have a concern with these numbers. I find them hard to believe.

MR. DAY: John, you'd mentioned some sensitivity to the possibility of county lines and constituency lines coinciding. You mentioned MD 87 there on the northern boundary. It does coincide also on the southern, but if I'm reading this correctly . . .

MR. DROBOT: That is correct. I think there is room for adjustment there.

MR. DAY: Okay. Also, what about the western boundary line? Right now it's significantly west of that county line between 13 and 19. Does that create a difficulty also? Is that what you're suggesting?

MR. DROBOT: No. Strangely enough it doesn't. Most of the people in the area are adamant that they be a part of the St. Paul constituency because of the trading pattern.

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MR. DAY: Oh, okay. That was my only question, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DROBOT: I might add, Mr. Chairman, that although there is some flow north and south, the majority of the trading pattern is east and west because that's the way the towns are situated. I might say that perhaps it's the only constituency in the province that has seven bridges across the North Saskatchewan River, but that's mostly due to effective lobbying of MLAs in the past.

MR. CARDINAL: At least you have bridges. I don't even have roads.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions of John?

MR. CARDINAL: I have one further question for John. John, you're familiar with the two Indian bands that are within the St. Paul constituency. I notice that the Kehewin band has 1,203 population and Saddle Lake over 6,000.

MR. DROBOT: Well, the Kehewin band is in the Bonnyville constituency, but Saddle Lake is large, and then, of course, you have Frog Lake, you have Goodfish, and you have part of the Onion Lake reserve. Part of it's in Alberta; part of it's in Saskatchewan.

MR. CARDINAL: Which ones are in your riding?

MR. DROBOT: All of them except Kehewin.

MR. CARDINAL: Saddle Lake: what would your estimate be on that population? The 6,000, 5,000 figure?

MR. DROBOT: Yes, something like that.

MR. CARDINAL: Okay.

MR. DROBOT: The others are smaller.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks very much, John.

[The committee adjourned at 3:49 p.m.]