

2:32 p.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll officially begin.

Barry, welcome. With your permission we'll stay on the record.

MR. McFARLAND: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The process we've been following, Barry, is to listen to the presentation by the presenter and then all get into a series of questions and answers. So if you're comfortable with that, we'll proceed.

MR. McFARLAND: You bet. Want me to fire away?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. McFARLAND: What I had to say wasn't in a formal presentation; it was just to review the present constituency boundaries in Little Bow and, I guess, to reiterate some of the qualities that I feel are unique about this particular constituency. To begin with, for the record I would like to indicate that there are 11 town and village councils which I answer to as well as three counties, three municipal districts. Those are the counties of Vulcan, Lethbridge, and Wheatland and the municipal districts of Taber, Foothills, and Willow Creek. Along with it, as with anyone else that's an MLA in rural Alberta, you've got assorted ag service boards and municipal committees and various other committees that become too numerous to mention. There are six major municipal committees within these three MDs and three councils that require a fair bit of attention. Along with that I have parts of or all of seven hospital boards: High River, Lethbridge regional, Claresholm, Little Bow auxiliary, Taber, Bassano, Strathmore, and then health care through the federal government on the Gleichen reserve, the Siksika Nation. There are parts of five health units: the Foothills, Chinook, Barons-Eureka-Warner, Taber, Drumheller, and again the federal government on the Siksika Nation.

There are seven public school boards. Again I want to stress there that I don't have the entire school board, but you're still covering parts of various school boards. Those are the counties of Vulcan, Lethbridge, Wheatland, Foothills school division, Willow Creek school district, Taber school division, and the Barons consolidated school district. At present there is one established private school and two separate school districts which were newly created in the last year, commonly referred to as four-by-fours. I guess the list could go on: you deal with anything from 17 recreation boards to ag societies to six co-ops for seed cleaning that are funded by the Alberta government, seven RCMP detachments, and so on.

After having said that, I guess the preference that I would like to see, of course, is to maintain the status quo, because I feel, as I'm sure many other MLAs do, that number-crunching with people that you represent doesn't mean the same thing in a rural area as it does in an urban area. I'm not taking away the responsibilities or putting one against the other, but the mileage is one of the things that I've found is the biggest factor in communicating with people, getting out to see people. I spent most of the summer trying to cover all the school, hospital, municipal districts, towns and villages, and I still lack four just because of timing. Anyone could drive to any one of those points in a day, but you still have to arrange your time to coincide with their time as well. They're subject to one- or two-day-

a-month meetings, and you can't always fit your schedule in with theirs. It makes it a little onerous to try to meet up with them.

Having said all that, if it does have to be that boundaries do change, I've got a few things that I definitely think would be advantageous to the MLAs around me. That would be to get back to some coterminous boundaries where possible and geographic boundaries where you know that the trend is for people to commute to this particular area for trading, education, and health purposes, whatever. If I were to start at the north end of Little Bow, I would see maintaining the Siksika Nation within Little Bow. Just for the record, I only received one vote up there, so for sure I'm not doing it out of political favours. There is a small, small band between the Trans-Canada Highway and the north edge of the Siksika Nation, and that's the county of Wheatland portion that I have, along with the village of Cluny and the town of Gleichen.

I had a little bit of trouble coming up with the numbers. I used this map, which Ted made available to me. Of course, the townships don't necessarily exactly go along with the boundaries, but the figures that I could come up with in cutting out those two portions – Gleichen, Cluny, and that part that I could determine was the county of Wheatland – amounted to 457 people, not a big number. Those people are on the north side of the reserve, separated again by the Bow River, and their natural tendency is to go north, never south. So really they're looking at a fairer representation from that Strathmore-Drumheller area than they would be in anything from the south. I believe there are only – I've made a note – four crossings on the Bow River between Highway 2 and Brooks: one at Carseland, two on the reserve, one at Cluny, and a ferry across the Bow River in the northeast quadrant. So although on the map it looks like a fairly short distance, it's still a long way around for anyone to get from the north to the south or vice versa. So that's quite a geographical barrier for anyone on that north side.

On the west side, again just in terms of trying to get some of these boundaries as coterminous as we can with existing municipal districts, if it had to be, I could see moving the very northeast corner of Little Bow back to the county of Vulcan line.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Northeast or northwest?

MR. McFARLAND: Northwest. I'm sorry. You're right. That would take the Blackie-Mazeppa area back into the MD of Foothills, which would, I presume, go into Highwood. In that particular area the best I could approximate was about 763 people. If you want a breakdown, I could give it to you: 266 are in Blackie, the town itself, and the balance are in the rural area.

There was a proposal on one of the maps in the interim report that showed what I thought was ID 6 coming into Little Bow. I only mention this for clarification. I don't know if it's something that is going to happen or not. I don't feel that it would serve those people well to be taken out of this area of IDs and then plunked out into the middle of one. It only represented 128 people.

Now comes the other part. I could see a combination of a couple of different things. The biggest effort would be to incorporate more of the county of Lethbridge No. 26 into Little Bow. If I had a preference and if it were possible, I would take the southern boundary of Little Bow constituency at Highway 23, drop it down I believe eight miles to 519, and from there go east along the south side of Nobleford to the Shaughnessy junction.

2:42

MRS. BLACK: That would take in Nobleford and Picture Butte?

MR. McFARLAND: Picture Butte, and at the junction of highway 519 and Highway 25, drop straight south past Shaughnessy and

Diamond City and continue it on to the Oldman River. Now, that area I would refer to as the Nobleford area alone would have approximately 1,173 people. If you extended the boundary east to the present Little Bow boundary, which is three miles east of Picture Butte, it would then pick up the Iron Springs area. Those people all share school systems, the same agricultural base, a lot of irrigation, the same county, and the same postal address. They're in the same hospital district. The only problem it presents for a lot of the people in that area is that rather than dealing with one public school board, there's a separate school board in Picture Butte as well, and a number of people in that area of Dutch descent have children going down to Calvin Christian, which is in between Kipp and Monarch, and the rest go into Emmanuel Christian in Lethbridge. I believe the county of Lethbridge has something in the neighbourhood of 30 to 35 percent of their rural students going to private schools. So that's been a problem for that area.

Anyway, the Iron Springs area had 453 people, Picture Butte had 1,576, and Diamond City area has around 710. So that's 3,912-plus people, give or take, by the numbers on this map here. If you took off the 1,220 up in the Blackie-Wheatland-Cluny-Gleichen area, you still end up with a 2,564 net gain. I don't know how close you want me to get, or anyone else for that matter, to the median.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's up to you.

MRS. BLACK: Well, that still would leave you shy, I think, populationwise.

MR. McFARLAND: Yeah. I didn't have any figures other than in this one, and I don't know what year this 2,300 represents or if this was with Mrs. Cripps' proposal of changing the boundaries.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, to be clear, that was one of five reports by the commission. They didn't come to a conclusion on it, but it is the view of one of the five members, yes.

MR. McFARLAND: Right. I'm not siding with that particular one other than when I refer to the two maps that came out with that report. The one does nothing more than move a huge area over on the east side, which is the Vauxhall-Hays area, and push it over onto the west side. All it's doing is swapping east for west.

In the numbers that I could find there is a difference, and it's fairly substantial. I don't know how accurate the rural numbers are around here. For instance, Claresholm has 3,382; Stavelly, 454; Nanton, 1,562; whereas Vauxhall only has 984. There's a number of small villages in the 200-person range. It's intensive irrigation in this area, and that may or may not make up for the numbers in a traditional ranch/agricultural setting. I couldn't see a huge variation in the numbers swapping one for the other on this particular map.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. McFARLAND: I had a couple of A and B alternatives. They were just matters of playing with boundaries, of course, and I don't know what the advantage would be.

MRS. BLACK: What you've just said, is that on the map you have there?

MR. McFARLAND: No, I didn't put them on the map at all. I can; that wouldn't take any time at all. What I wanted to bring out was: if you have to get into the MD of Willow Creek, for instance, all you're doing is representing a part of it; you're still going to leave another part or possibly two with two other MLAs. I thought

perhaps it would be cleaner to leave the entire MD between two MLAs rather than three if that's what it comes down to, or one rather than three. For that reason I thought it might be a little wiser to drop in further on the county of Lethbridge since I already have part of the county of Lethbridge.

The other alternative was to cut off the MD of Taber and leave that in Taber-Warner so that they're consistent with their MDs and their MLAs, but in order to do that and to equalize the numbers, you would have to drop all the way down to the Oldman River and take in Coalhurst and some of the outlying areas: Kipp, Monarch. Irregardless, I still think Highway 23 at this point here is a fairly important dividing line. It will split the Monarch area and the west Nobleford area, but I can't see anything else unless we go out to the county boundaries. If we do that, it's going to infringe on the Macleod riding to such an extent that I don't know if they'll have the numbers left. This is very heavily populated in this area here. This is the river, of course, a good natural dividing line geographically. I can see the Oldman is a good one, and I can see on the west side the existing MD and county boundaries as being other good ones.

It won't make a whole lot of difference to me in terms of travel whether it's now longer this way or longer that way. It still takes a little over two hours just to go from the northwest to the southeast corner.

The last thing I noticed on their recommendations for what you might take into consideration was the road network. I guess this comes from county council days. We always felt that because we were sparsely populated, we never warranted the number of secondary or primary highways that a lot of other areas in the province have, and we don't expect to, especially comparing ourselves to the corridor between Calgary and Edmonton. That's not realistic. On the other hand, there aren't that many secondaries east-west that connect these communities; Vauxhall over to Claresholm, for instance.

The final point is that the Little Bow River does create a little bit of a challenge. It goes through the west side, and it cuts across a couple of MD and county boundaries here, but by and large in the very northwest corner we could almost follow the Little Bow as it presently does and then start dropping on township and range lines to meet up with the county of Lethbridge.

I'm sure you've heard enough of this before, so I'll cut it off at that if you want. If you have any questions for me, I'll be happy to try to answer them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much, Barry.

MR. McFARLAND: You're welcome.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions? Mike, start with you.

MR. CARDINAL: I just have a question. The Siksika Nation is in your constituency?

MR. McFARLAND: Right.

MR. CARDINAL: The north portion of it?

MR. McFARLAND: Yes.

MR. CARDINAL: What's the estimated population of that?

MR. McFARLAND: Twenty one hundred and six.

MR. CARDINAL: By the census or is that the actual population?

MR. McFARLAND: For 1991. That was on these sheets here.

MR. CARDINAL: Yes, I know, but what is the actual population?

MR. McFARLAND: I only have this to go by.

MR. CARDINAL: I find those sheets are not exactly representative of what is out there. I mean, you know the area. I just wondered.

MR. McFARLAND: I don't know that it would be that far off, because there were, I believe, 890 voters.

MR. CARDINAL: That doesn't mean . . .

MR. McFARLAND: Lots of kids.

MR. CARDINAL: I just show a government list that shows 4,108 population on that, and the census shows only a little over 2,000. I just wondered.

2:52

MR. McFARLAND: I really couldn't answer you, Mike, on how accurate your figure is or the 2,100.

MR. CARDINAL: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anything else, Mike?

MR. CARDINAL: That's it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pat?

MRS. BLACK: No.

The only thing for clarification is that I've got the highway drawn down into county 26 along past Picture Butte. How far over did you want to go in your presentation?

MR. McFARLAND: Do you want me to come over and take a look?

MRS. BLACK: Yeah, maybe you could. You come over to the Little Bow, come down this way, and then where do you go over here?

MR. McFARLAND: Right on 519.

MRS. BLACK: This is 519?

MR. McFARLAND: Uh huh.

MRS. BLACK: Down?

MR. McFARLAND: This is Highway 25. Just take it to the river. Instead of following the highway over, just straight down on the township.

MRS. BLACK: Oh, okay. Then where?

MR. McFARLAND: It hits the Oldman River right here.

MRS. BLACK: Oh, okay, and then along the Oldman.

MR. McFARLAND: It might show up better on the bigger map over here.

MRS. BLACK: Okay. Well, when we're finished, we can go over it on the big map. I see.

MR. McFARLAND: That way it leaves the natural geographic boundary intact.

MRS. BLACK: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Stock?

MR. DAY: Further on the natural boundary there, Barry, you'd mentioned the northwest corner. It could go along where the river is.

MR. McFARLAND: It crosses where the river is.

MR. DAY: At Bassano, you mean?

MR. McFARLAND: No. Are you up in the northeast or northwest?

MR. DAY: I'm looking at the northeast. Okay. I'm sorry.

MR. McFARLAND: I should have said the northwest.

MR. DAY: I think you did. It's my mistake.

MR. McFARLAND: The Little Bow crosses out of the MD of Foothills northeast of Nanton and comes into the county of Vulcan.

MR. DAY: Right. What I'm wondering there: your whole eastern boundary is river, right?

MR. McFARLAND: Right.

MR. DAY: We do hear about natural boundaries. If your northern boundary then was the Bow – it is part of the way, but then it breaks off there.

MR. McFARLAND: It could come down along the foothills.

MR. DAY: Yeah. If the river were the northern boundary from just south and west of Bassano there, straight over instead of jogging up – right now it takes in Gleichen. What happens if it didn't do that? If the river made the entire northern boundary, what happens there?

MR. McFARLAND: It isolates one part of the Siksika Nation from the other.

MR. DAY: Oh, okay.

MR. McFARLAND: The river goes through the north half of the Siksika Nation at that point. All I was suggesting before you got here is that there is a small band that belongs to the county of Wheatland between the northern edge of the Siksika Nation and the Trans-Canada Highway, the present boundary, and it wouldn't amount to six miles or so.

MR. DAY: The county of Wheatland: is that number 2 or 16?

MR. McFARLAND: It's 16.

MR. DAY: Okay.

MR. McFARLAND: In that area is the village of Cluny and the town of Gleichen.

MR. DAY: Okay.

MR. McFARLAND: I made the same proposal to the Drumheller health unit. They asked if there was any problem if the Drumheller health unit actually dropped down into the reserve as well, and I said no, because it's natural that they go that way. Why force them into going another 50 miles south?

MR. DAY: Okay. Thanks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Barry, the only question I'd have for information: there's a small resort village in the Siksika Nation; is that strictly summer residents, or do some people now live there year-round?

MR. McFARLAND: It's accessible year-round, and there may be a few there year-round.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bob, we should just confirm that, if indeed that is the case, that those people were counted for census purposes.

MR. PRITCHARD: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's on the reserve itself and right down on the river flat south of Cluny.

MR. DAY: I have just one more, Mr. Chairman. In that northwest corner it sort of jogs over and comes up through MD 31.

MR. McFARLAND: Foothills?

MR. DAY: Yeah. What happens if it followed the county line of county No. 2 straight north instead of jogging over? You see, if east of Nanton you came up and then jogged over and your boundary then became that boundary of county No. 2 instead of jogging over to the west and coming up and hitting the Bow River, what does that do? Do you see what I'm saying?

MR. McFARLAND: I think I do, but maybe you should show me on here.

MR. DAY: What happens if you go this way and follow the boundary line?

MR. McFARLAND: That's what I was suggesting.

MR. DAY: Okay.

MR. McFARLAND: Stock, I think we have 700 and some people between the town of Blackie and the rural area around it that would go back into the MD of Foothills and presumably Highwood.

MR. DAY: Okay. Thanks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions? Okay.
Barry, thank you very much.

MR. McFARLAND: You're welcome.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bob has several pieces of correspondence that we can read into the record. So we'll do that, and then we'll take a break.

MR. PRITCHARD: We have three written submissions we've received of late. One, September 11, 1992, from the county of Barrhead No. 11.

Re: Proposed Provincial Electoral Boundaries

The Council of the County of Barrhead No. 11 requests, in your review of the Provincial Electoral Boundaries, you consider the following proposal for a Barrhead/Lac Ste. Anne Electoral Division.

Council recommends the proposed Electoral Division would incorporate in their entirety, the counties of Lac Ste. Anne and Barrhead including all incorporated Summer Villages, Villages and Towns within their boundaries.

Council believes it is very important for constituency boundaries to follow local community interests, trading patterns, geographic features and municipal boundaries. The two counties currently share hospital and ambulance district boundaries, they are similar in terms of economic factors and the general demographics of the area tend to flow north and south.

It is generally acknowledged that rural ridings are more difficult to represent because of transportation and communication difficulties. Further, rural voters make greater demands on elected representatives because of the lack of access to alternate resources.

Because voters within the proposed constituency boundaries have common priorities and concerns it would assist and increase the effectiveness of the local M.L.A.

Council believes it is crucial that municipal and local boundaries be respected wherever possible in drawing of the new provincial constituencies and also that the new system of boundaries disrupt the existing boundaries as little as possible.

Council thanks you for your consideration of their concerns and should you have any [further] questions, please address them to the writer.

Yours truly,
Frank Booth
County Manager

The second written submission we've received is dated September 10, 1992, to Mr. Bob Bogle.

For you and your committee's information, I attach copies of two submissions, concerning Sherwood Park's boundaries, made to the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Yours truly,
Peter [Elzinga]

The first submission is from the county of Strathcona. It's dated August 16, 1990. It was addressed to the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries.

Attention: The Honourable Bob Bogle
Re: Electoral Boundaries in the Province of Alberta

We are pleased to submit our Response to the Report and Recommendations of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries.

Should you wish clarification on any matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours very truly,
Iris S. Evans, Reeve
Strathcona County

Because of the complexity of the attachments with charts and maps, I'll hand copies of those to each member for their review.

3:02

We also have an attached submission from Mr. Elzinga's letter. Submission made on behalf of the Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce
Electoral Boundaries of Sherwood Park

Our submission to the Committee is to object to the proposed changes. We believe that the Commission has concentrated their efforts mainly on achieving an averaging of the electoral vote. This has

resulted in a patchwork or bandaid effort. It is our goal today to convince the Commission that the proposed boundary changes must not be approved.

Firstly, we cannot permit the long 'L' shaped arm that extends south along the eastern extremity of Sherwood Park and highway 21, west along Wye Rd. to the Edmonton boundary. This divides the population in the wrong direction. These constituents have very little in common with Fort Saskatchewan. The Sherwood Park population requires the division of its electoral boundaries into two (north and south or east and west) electoral constituencies.

Secondly, we must point out to the Commission that Sherwood Park is expanding rapidly. The present population is 35,504 with an additional rural population of 20,269. The predicted growth for the next 5 years is an additional 10,000. Within one or two election terms, Sherwood Park will be entitled to 2 electoral constituencies. This matter should be addressed now.

In summary, very little if any change should be made to the Sherwood Park electoral boundary at this time. We recommend that the Commission give serious consideration to the long term requirements of the Sherwood Park constituents.

It is our opinion that these proposed boundaries are dealing only with the past, not the future. We believe that Sherwood Park should be represented by 2 Members to the Legislative Assembly as our size is equal to Lethbridge which has 2 members.

Sherwood Park is growing at a rate of 3,000 people annually and projected to be 75,000 in the year 2010. Therefore, we the Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce would recommend that the Sherwood Park electoral boundaries remain as they presently are, with the area divided into 2 halves with each half represented by 2 M.L.A.'s representing approximately 23,000 residents . . . which would be 15% under average in 1991.

Those are our submissions for today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 3:03 p.m.]

