

Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings
Edmonton

10:00 a.m.

[Chairman: Chief Judge Edward R. Wachowich]

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, if you could please be seated, we would like to start these hearings. I would like to make a long introductory remark.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Edward Wachowich, and I am the chairman of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I am also the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta. I have a feeling that my other job will be much easier than this one, but I hope not.

Let me introduce you to the other members of the commission. There is Robert Grbavac of Raymond on my far left, Joseph Lehane of Innisfail on my immediate right, John McCarthy of Calgary on my far right, and Walter (Wally) Worth on my immediate left. The five people you see before you make up the commission, and I want to say that we are very happy to be here to receive your comments and consider your thinking with respect to our duties.

Why are we here? The commission is holding public hearings here in Edmonton to receive and to consider your arguments and points of view with respect to the areas, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions in Alberta. We must do this according to a particular set of rules, which I will review in a moment.

I want to assure you that every member of the commission has reviewed the law and the literature which has been recently written concerning electoral boundaries in Alberta. So I want to tell you that our minds are open inasmuch as we have not reached any conclusions, but I need to remind you also that our minds are not empty. We have given this matter a lot of thought, we have reviewed the law, we have reviewed the work of previous commissions and committees who have studied boundaries in Alberta, and we have reviewed what the courts have said about electoral boundaries in this province and in Canada.

Summary of the electoral boundaries law. I would like to put before you for your consideration the following summary of the law of Alberta with respect to electoral boundaries. One, our function is to review the existing electoral boundaries and to make proposals to the Legislative Assembly about the area, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions in Alberta.

Two, we have very limited time to accomplish this task. We must submit a report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly setting out our recommendations with respect to area, boundaries, and names of any proposed electoral divisions with our reasons by the 31st of January 1996. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall make the report public and publish the commission's proposals in the *Alberta Gazette* as soon as possible.

Three, the commission is required to hold two sets of public hearings. This is the first set. These hearings are being held before we make any report or proposals to the Speaker. The second set of hearings will be held in 1996, probably in March, after our report to the Speaker has been made public. We are required to hold public hearings to enable representations to be made to us by any person or organization in Alberta about the area, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions. We are required to give reasonable public notice of the times, places, and purposes of our public meetings, which we have done in this case.

Changing our report. After our report is published by the Speaker, we will undertake a second set of public hearings, as is required by

the Act, and lay before the Speaker a final report by June 30, 1996. Again, the Speaker shall make this report public and publish it in the *Alberta Gazette*.

If more than one report is submitted from among the members of the commission, the report of the majority is the report of the commission, but if there is no majority, my report, or the report of the chair, is the report of the commission.

The final report of the commission is then laid at the earliest opportunity before the Legislative Assembly, immediately if it is then sitting or within seven days after the beginning of the next sitting.

New electoral divisions. Then it is up to the Legislative Assembly by resolution to approve or approve with alterations the proposals of the commission and to introduce a Bill to establish new electoral divisions for Alberta in accordance with the resolution. This law would come into force when proclaimed before the holding of the next general election.

Redistribution rules. Population. Population means the most recent population set out in the most recent decennial census of the population of Alberta as provided by Statistics Canada. We are also required to add the population of Indian reserves that were not included in the census as provided by the federal department of Indian and northern affairs. But if the commission believes there is another provincewide census more recent than the decennial census compiled by Statistics Canada which provides the population for proposed electoral divisions, then the commission may use this data.

Number of electoral divisions. The second rule is that the commission is required to divide Alberta into 83 proposed electoral divisions. The commission may take into consideration any factors it considers appropriate, but it must and shall take into consideration the following.

Relevant considerations: one, the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; two, sparsity and density of population; three, common community interests and community organizations, including those of Indian reserves and Métis settlements; four, whenever possible existing community boundaries within the cities of Edmonton and Calgary; five, the existing municipal boundaries; six, the number of municipalities and other local authorities; seven, geographical features, including existing road systems; eight, the desirability of understandable and clear boundaries.

Population of electoral divisions. The population rule is that a proposed electoral division must not be more than 25 percent above or below the average population for all 83 electoral divisions. There is an exception to the 25 percent rule. In the case of not more than four proposed electoral divisions the commission may have a population that is as much as 50 percent below the average population of the electoral divisions in Alberta if three of the following five criteria are met: one, the area exceeds 20,000 square kilometres or the surveyed area of the proposed electoral division exceeds 15,000 square kilometres; two, the distance from the Legislature Building in Edmonton to the nearest boundary of any proposed electoral division by the most direct highway route is more than 150 kilometres; three, there is no town in the proposed electoral division that has a population exceeding 4,000 people; four, the area of the proposed electoral division contains an Indian reserve or a Métis settlement; five, the proposed electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the province of Alberta.

Crowsnest Pass. For our purposes the boundaries Act instructs us that the municipality of Crowsnest Pass is not a town.

This is a very general overview of the legislation, but we must now also turn to the guidance that has been provided by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Supreme Court of Alberta.

What the Supreme Courts have said. The Supreme Court of Canada and the Alberta Court of Appeal have agreed that the right to vote under the Charter includes, one, the right to vote; two, the right to have the political strength or value or force of the vote an elector casts not unduly diluted; three, the right to effective representation; four, the right to have the parity of the votes of others diluted, but not unduly, in order to gain effective representation or as a matter of practical necessity. The rulings of the Supreme Courts as well as the electoral boundaries Act must guide our decisions and ultimately the proposals that we make to the Legislature.

Focus. The commission in its public advertising has clearly stated that it is considering after its preliminary deliberations, one, merging a number of rural electoral divisions into contiguous or neighbouring divisions; two, adding a number of urban electoral divisions to Edmonton and Calgary; three, any other revisions necessary to achieve one and two.

We have set forth our focus after preliminary deliberations. We have not reached any final conclusions. The commission wishes to hear the views of all Albertans with respect to this focus. Please let me assure you that our preliminary deliberations are preliminary and that no final conclusions have been drawn. The commission will not move to the consideration of proposals without the benefit of input from individuals and organizations in Alberta. Indeed, this is the purpose of the public hearings.

I also want to say that without public input the work of the commission will be seriously impaired. We want to hear the arguments and the reasoning of all organizations and individuals in Alberta with respect to the area, the boundaries, and the names of all electoral divisions.

We now wish to call upon the first presenter, who is Molly Warring, representing the Edmonton-Roper Progressive Conservative Association.

10:10

MRS. WARRING: Good morning, sirs. I'm Molly Warring, and I am the president of the Edmonton-Roper PC Association. This morning I'm fortunate to have our very own legal adviser in our constituency who's on our board, Ihor Broda, and he'll be making the presentation on our behalf.

Thank you.

MR. BRODA: Your Honour, Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, we've submitted in writing to you a submission that has three main points that we want to deal with. The first point is with respect to our constituency boundaries. Our recommendation is that our constituency boundaries remain as is. They coincide with a subdivision within Edmonton known as Castle Downs. This subdivision has been in existence for over 20 years, and it's reached more or less a final point in growth.

With respect to the population of the constituency we have, I believe, something over 32,000 people residing in the constituency. I believe the average across the province that the commission has published is around 30,000 per constituency when you divided by 83. So we submit that we are within the range of reasonable deviation from the average to warrant the boundaries remaining the same.

Further, our constituency takes into its boundaries an entire area council within the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. All of the community leagues – and I believe there are some six of

them within our constituency – belong to area council 2 in the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. It's much easier for a Member of the Legislative Assembly to deal with one area council than to have to deal with more than one.

We also have another organization within our boundaries called the Castle Downs Recreation Society, which operates a recreational facility to which all of the community leagues in that area belong. Therefore, with area council, I believe, 2 and the Castle Downs Recreation Society, it's a convenient way for a Member of the Legislative Assembly to interact with his or her constituents.

The second submission we have is with respect to naming constituencies, and it's our recommendation that the names of prominent historical individuals should not be used to name electoral constituencies. They should be named using geographical names which identify the area encompassed by constituency boundaries. As the work of this commission verifies, electoral boundaries change between elections, so theoretically you could have significant changes of boundaries between elections or between every second or third election. Therefore, after you have named a constituency after a prominent historical figure, in fact that constituency could be significantly decreased or changed. It's our recommendation that prominent historical figures from within Alberta be honoured by naming parks, streets, or even communities after them but not political constituencies, which are fluid and which vary from time to time. Further, we believe that many individuals have difficulty remembering even what constituency they live in, so if you have it associated with a geographical boundary, it's much easier for them to identify with that area and to more easily identify their Member of the Legislative Assembly. The third point we wish to make – and again we submit that the name of our constituency should be changed to Castle Downs.

Again this should not be interpreted in any way as any kind of slight against the person that the constituency was named after. Our recommendation is that all the names should be dropped and identified by geographical location. The name Roper is confusing to people in Castle Downs simply because there's no community league or other geographical name within that constituency called Roper. On the contrary, there is in Mill Woods, which is in the southeast quadrant of the city, a Roper Road, which is well known in that area. In our area we have nothing called Roper. We're in the northwest quadrant of the city. So this is somewhat confusing, and therefore, because the constituents within Edmonton-Roper now all readily identify with the name of Castle Downs – they all know that they live in the subdivision of Castle Downs – it's our recommendation that you change the name of that particular constituency to Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Those are all of our submissions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to make a comment?

MRS. WARRING: No. I just wished to thank you, unless you have any questions of us.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Worth has a question.

MR. WORTH: In your written submission you refer to the fact that Castle Downs is still growing. In your submission this morning you suggested that it had perhaps reached its major growth size.

MR. BRODA: In terms of territory there's still quite a bit of vacant land. However, from the last election to now or even from the last census to now there has been only minimal growth because the area

has been more or less developed. There are only two areas where there's new construction, and each of them has only a few hundred houses that have been added. So that's not a significant increase, and the real estate market being what it is, we don't foresee a significant surge in growth within the next 10 years.

MR. WORTH: Thank you for that clarification.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

Well, I would like to thank you, Mrs. Warring, as president of the Edmonton-Roper PC Constituency Association and Mr. Broda, especially, for your very well-focused presentation. Thanks very kindly.

MR. BRODA: Thank you, Your Honour and members of the commission.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next person scheduled is Albert Opstad, past president of the Confederation of Regions Party of Alberta. Mr. Opstad.

MR. OPSTAD: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman and fellow members of the commission and also the public here who have come to listen. Of course, I have submitted a written brief, and as I think it over, I probably could have written it better, so I'll just sort of ad lib it today. I hope that we're fairly open. I want to say a few things which I hope are not out of context.

In looking at this, we have to look at it in the total context. My fundamental belief is that we have at this time too much government and too much bureaucracy. We start off with a number of 83. Now, if it's permissible, let me say that I think we have too many and that should be cut back. We can pick a number. It can be 65 or whatever number, but I feel that number should be cut back. Even in New Brunswick that was cut back to 55 from 58, roughly, and I understand it's been done in Saskatchewan. So I think that's my number one concept.

10:20

Then, of course, as I said, we hear we have a variation of, as I understood it, plus or minus 25 percent. I feel that's far too wide. We should be cutting that back to somewhere around plus or minus 5 percent.

Talking about overrepresentation – I think I've alluded to this in my report there. I'm talking now about a little different concept, but on the same concept as well. The U.S. has about 435 in their Congress, and federally we have 295. Alberta, of course, which is the concept we're talking about, is probably overrepresented as well.

Dealing with this New Brunswick one, if you follow the newspaper – I have the clipping here – it showed that they cut back their number.

I've talked to some MLAs here, and of course the MLAs are all quite busy, and that's a valid point.

We often talk about duplication. I think we've got a lot of duplication in this country. I don't want to deviate from our overall concept, but we have to look at this in the total concept. We've got far too much duplication, and we need more co-operation between all levels of government. That's perhaps one of the reasons why the federal government can step right into the province and do all kinds of things. We feel there's too much of this here duplication and not enough working together.

As far as the rules, you know, I listened to what you were saying there. That's sort of the first time I've heard all of those details, but I think we want to have our boundaries nonpolitical, based upon certain natural things, and not have our cities largely penalized, as has been the case in the past. I go by the concept of one person, one vote. In other words, I should have one vote whether I'm in the highly dense city of Edmonton or whether I choose to live in the bush way up north. I should still have one vote. There is the concept of distance, that people who have a lot of distance should have more representation. Well, I don't agree with that. If we feel that all the people in the north don't get enough representation, I think it's quite orderly to give that MLA four or five assistants so those ones can be traveling around and finding out what they want but still one person, one vote.

Dealing with some of the prior rules, I think most of them who looked at those prior rules – and I've talked to a few – realize that those were no rules at all. It was a case where people sat down and sliced up this province to maximize their own interests, and then some gobbledygook rules were made to try and fit what was decided upon.

You mentioned decennial censuses. Now we take a census every 10 years. My first point is that every 10 years – the next will be in 2001 – is plenty adequate. I don't think we need to go around and take some other census and say, "Oh, we think this is better." I would suggest that basically you stick with a 10-year census of Canada; '91 was the last one and the next one will be 2001.

I've already alluded that the plus or minus 25 percent is far too high, and these exceptions are far too high.

I think I've just about covered all of my main points, maybe a little out of context of what the rules we were put to, but that's my point: I think some of the concepts that are put to us are some of the things I would challenge and question and suggest some changes. That's largely my concept.

I just wanted to mention one little thing. This is probably not valid here, but I cut it out of the paper. It was by a British MP who said that he quit because he had no work. Well, that's apparently not the case here. Here we're overworked. We're duplicating things and we've got – what? – 10 guys doing the same thing, and we could probably end up having one do it. We don't need all these MLAs doing all these same rules in all the different provinces.

So I think that's about my five minutes. If there are any questions, I'll do my best to answer. Otherwise, that's my five minutes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Opstad.

Are there any questions? I guess nobody wants to ask you any questions. Thank you. You were quite concise as to what your complaints were.

MR. OPSTAD: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Mr. Vern Hartwell, the mayor of Strathcona county. I guess we should maybe congratulate Mr. Hartwell. He's the first mayor of Strathcona county, who has decided to use a new government format. Welcome, Mr. Hartwell.

MR. HARTWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the commission and ladies and gentlemen of the crowd. It's our pleasure to be here to do the presentation today. Our chief

commissioner, Mr. Eric McGhan, will give the presentation, and then we will answer any questions that you have when we're completed.

Thank you.

MR. MCGHAN: Good morning, Your Honour, Mr. Chairman, and members of the commission. Thank you for providing us this opportunity to present on behalf of the people of Strathcona county, Alberta's fourth largest municipality by population.

I've provided to your administrative assistant a document that I would in a minute or two like to ask you to review with me, but before we start doing that, I'd like to just share with you some of the activities that we've undertaken in preparation for our submission today. Firstly, we met with both Liberal MLAs, Muriel Abdurahman and Bruce Collingwood, for the two constituencies that represent the people of Strathcona county. We wanted to enquire of them the opportunities that currently exist in both of those constituencies and any problems or difficulties which they are currently encountering with respect to representing the area. We've also met with both local PC associations, and I understand that they are on your agenda to make presentations later today. We likewise contacted the city of Fort Saskatchewan, both the new mayor and also their bureaucracy, to determine whether or not they were going to make a submission or if there was an opportunity for a joint submission to make sure that anything that we'd be presenting to this commission was not out of context or somewhat detrimental to the representation of that good city. We've also reviewed this proposal with our newly elected county council and the mayor. Certainly we wanted to make sure that they were aware of this submission, being newly elected.

Mr. Chairman, we're really confident in the presentation that we're making this morning and the options that we're providing to you. Both were very well researched from a technical perspective, and also we have substantial public input with respect to the current MLAs and the public.

Now if I could refer you, please, to the document that we have presented, the first page is a letter that we've written to you. The first map is the existing electoral boundaries showing the Sherwood Park boundary and the population as of May 1, 1994. This is the municipal census, which has been registered with the Department of Municipal Affairs and does constitute the official population of that constituency and also Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

I would like to draw your attention to two things on this map. One is the blue area that we will chat about over the next couple of minutes, which is basically the hamlet of Sherwood Park, and presently the population is above the 25 percent of the provincial average. That suggests that there will need to be a change in the boundary to some degree for this constituency in order to get within the 25 percent.

Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, on the next page we develop the first of two options that we would like to put forward for your review and consideration. Option 1 takes the two existing constituencies and divides them into three. Certainly we acknowledge and recognize – and even in your opening comments, Your Honour, you stated 83 MLAs, and that will certainly be a challenge for you dealing with this recommendation. However, we wanted to share with you that the Sherwood Park area is growing very rapidly. The population statistics suggest as much as 5 percent a year over the last few years. So what we've done is break Sherwood Park into two: the hamlet down the middle, a line running

north to south, so we have an East Sherwood Park and a West Sherwood Park; and we've put the rest of the existing constituency of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan into its own. What we've resulted in here is three constituencies having about the same population. We do recognize and understand, though, that they're on the lower limits of the population plus/minus 25 percent.

10:30

On the next page is a vertical graph. What we've attempted to do here for each of the three proposed constituencies in this option is show you what the current population is, and that's the red line in each case. The gold line is the population that we're projecting for the next four years. So during the next Legislature the population thresholds of 26, 31, and 27 – that's thousands of people – in each one of those constituencies there is assured to be met.

The next page provides you with some assistance in the actual line as it goes through the hamlet of Sherwood Park, which alone is now nearing 40,000 people.

The following page is our second option and is potentially more feasible for the commission after you've received all the submissions throughout the province. What we've done again is split the hamlet of Sherwood Park east and west, but on the west we've included it with some country residential and some farm area to the south. We have developed a population base as of 1994 of 31,000, which is pretty well bang on the provincial average. We've taken East Sherwood Park along with the rest of the existing Clover Bar constituency and developed a population base of 29,000, which is very close to the provincial average.

What we have not done on this option, Mr. Chairman, is: at the north end of the Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan constituency there are still some 13,000 people, which includes the city of Fort Saskatchewan and north Strathcona, that we're suggesting this commission would have to redistribute. They would need to redistribute that to the north and to the east. Although it's not our place to comment on the Redwater-St. Paul constituency or on the Vegreville-Viking constituency, our quick review suggests that they could both stand some increase in population. They're not experiencing any significant growth in those areas, so it is possible to redistribute in those directions.

The next illustration shows the current population for both of those constituencies – now, when I say current, that's 1994 – and it's a red line. The gold line is the population growth to the year 2000, which again will be 34,000 and 35,000 during the next Legislature, which will be on the upper end of your provincial average if you maintain the 83 MLAs. We've added, for your convenience, the line through Sherwood Park again, and we've maintained the same boundary line for this option too.

Mr. Chairman, we've added some verbiage. If you happen to be reviewing this again in two or three months, when you're getting prepared for your draft report, it gives you some of the parameters and the logic, the rationale that we used for the calculations.

The final page, Mr. Chairman, is just the calculations of how we arrived at the numbers that we have provided to you in this presentation.

I wish you all the luck, and I thank you very much for listening.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I wish to thank Mayor Hartwell and you for attending here today. There may be some questions. I did have one question, but I think your chart now supplies me with that.

You're abandoning about 13,000 people from your county for redistribution; is that correct?

MR. McGHAN: Your Honour, did you say "abandoning?"

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I was just being facetious.

MR. McGHAN: Certainly not. We thought long and hard about this option. Before the last alignment of boundaries in the province that area was represented by Mr. Zarusky out of the St. Paul area, so the boundaries did come down to that township road. In the last boundary adjustment that entire area came into Strathcona.

The difficulty that we're experiencing right now is that Sherwood Park and the area immediately around Sherwood Park is growing so rapidly that it's busting at the seams, and it's resulted in a option of this nature to try and keep within the plus/minus 25.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions?

MR. GRBAVAC: I have one, Mr. Chairman. Eric, is it safe to assume, then, that option A is your preferred option?

MR. McGHAN: Yes.

MR. GRBAVAC: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, if there are no other questions, I want to thank you for coming. I liked the focus of your presentation. I dealt with what our problem is: the plus and minus 25. I was only being facetious about abandoning the 13,000.

MR. HARTWELL: Thank you very much, Your Honour and the commission.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Next is Jim Acton, representing the Edmonton-Mayfield Progressive Conservative Association.

MR. ACTON: I guess I can take any mike I want to here.

THE CHAIRMAN: You can have all three, Jim.

MR. ACTON: Good. Thank you very much. It's somewhat of a pleasure to be here this morning. I do not have a written presentation, as I indicated, for the simple reason that I'm a full-time volunteer, seven days a week, just about 24 hours a day. Coming in from Calgary, to make sure I made the football game, I started out at 5 o'clock in the morning, and my mental notes are prepared.

From the offset during the last distribution, we had a third, a third, and a third; in other words, we had three constituencies that were incorporated as one called Edmonton-Mayfield. I am the vice-president, incidentally, of the Mayfield constituency and have been involved as a volunteer for over 36 years now. As you know, Edmonton, Alberta, is the capital volunteer centre of North America. We are volunteers. I'm glad and proud to be a volunteer, and what I have to say here is reflective of my volunteer services.

It was devastating in a lot of ways in terms of the last . . . However, as volunteers we got together, we did what we had to, and we feel we did a tremendous job in getting the constituency back to what we call a productive and well-orchestrated constituency. Why

did we do that? When you look at the city of Edmonton, when you look at the Federation of Community Leagues, that encompasses 143 community leagues. We have area councils. Area councils are somewhat geographic. We all work together. When there's a task to be done, we don't ask questions; we just do it. We do it as volunteers with enthusiasm, and if there's anything I enjoy when I'm around, it's laughter in any kind of organization. Today there seems to be a little bit of gloom and doom here, and I don't know why. I'm happy. I started shoveling my sidewalks at 7 this morning.

There are some real, real important issues here, and I maintain the status quo as far as Edmonton-Mayfield. The reason: we have roads, 137th Avenue running east and west, we have Yellowhead, we have 118th Avenue, and we have 111th Avenue. There's no problem in going from one end of our constituency to the other; it's back and forth. As I indicated, we have the Federation of Community Leagues. We have the west district of the federation, to which we belong. The entire constituency is part of the west district. The facilities that we have, the two major facilities, are Coronation and Grand Trunk. Those are very major facilities in our constituency. That's very important. People congregate.

In addition, we have the northwest zone in sports. So there's no problem in terms of communicating from one end of the constituency to the other. We have the CAC elite hockey. Your Honour, you'll know that we are maybe a little better than the K of C, but on this occasion I'll say that we're equal. Facilities are very important and so is the competition amongst us in the community leagues, and that's why we're strong. We're very happy where we are at the present time. We have Ross Sheppard high school. It's very important because we have youngsters going from the east end of the constituency to the west end of the constituency. So there is what I call a lot of glue there. There's a lot of togetherness and so on.

10:40

We are primarily a blue-collar constituency. We are a hardworking bunch of people in the constituency. I beg that you people leave this constituency the way it is. I don't think we have to worry about some of the things that are in this brochure that was printed. I looked at it very carefully and so on. The people that are on our executive and the people that I can get in contact with in the community leagues are fairly happy with what we have.

With this, I would like to ask – and thank the commission here – that you maintain the status quo. It's important to us. We want to work, and we want to work in a positive atmosphere. We're looking to enhance the quality of life for the people in this constituency. With that, I will entertain any questions you have, and I thank you very much for the opportunity that you've given me.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Acton.

Any questions from the members?

Well, I wish to thank you for coming, and I hope the Knights of Columbus hockey can improve a bit and get to be equal to your community league hockey.

MR. ACTON: I'm sure they will. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Darlene Orsten.

MR. CYR: Excuse me. She won't be here today.

THE CHAIRMAN: She won't?

MR. CYR: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh. We will then go to the next one, and that's Lyle Mair.

Now, I don't know who you represent, Mr. Mair. Maybe you're just representing yourself.

MR. MAIR: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the commission. I am an individual representing myself and the opinion of a number of my friends, most of whom have come up the hard way and have been in various types of businesses and just have private opinions. I don't know the gentleman that spoke second, but his thoughts and my presentation are much along the same line.

In my letter of October 1 I mentioned that possibly we could reduce our amount of electoral districts below 83. I'll just follow the presentation I gave to you pretty well. Our landmass in Alberta was established in 1905, when we became a province, and it hasn't altered since. At that time our major towns and cities and a lot of our hamlets and villages were established, and they haven't moved in location. The only factor that has changed is the amount of our population.

Then in the 1940s and 50s, when we could kick over a rock and get some oil and gas, money started coming in, people started coming in, and things had to be set up in a hurry to accommodate them. Money was no object at that time. Hospitals, social services, tax benefits, schools, roads, and communications were all a gimme by the government at that point. As well, banks, mortgage companies, large industry, and private companies built many large structures on borrowed money. Our heritage trust fund was established, but it lent out money to almost anybody at fairly low rates.

During this time the size of our provincial government increased from 49 to the current 83, and our landmass wasn't increased. Today we're faced with a reduction of revenue in all fields of business and government. All are trying to downsize and become more efficient. Today our road network is far more complete and in better condition than ever. Telephone and cellular service is in almost every home, no matter what location that home is in. TV is into most homes and schools. Radio not only is in homes but all transportation, even when a person is walking. We have fax machines. We have computers. We have copiers. We have newspapers in great quantities throughout the whole province. This leads to a very thorough and complete method of communication. It is very possible that fewer MLAs can service with greater regularity a large population.

Alberta had a decline of representation from 56 to 52 in the 1921 election and again in the 1940 election from 58 to 49. Perhaps the time has arrived to do this again. If we make comparisons with other provinces – I believe your mandate now is to try and get a population for each electoral boundary somewhere between 30,000 and 31,000. If you look at B.C.'s present with 75 seats, they are up over 38,000 people. Ontario is up over 70,000 people per representation. Quebec is up over 52. By the same token, if we look at that, we see P.E.I. has 32 with a population of 21,000 per seat. I wonder why that happens. If we used the B.C. ratio, we would be down to 67 electoral seats. If we used the Ontario, we'd be down to 36. My question to myself is: do we get a higher percentage of eligible voters voting because of more electoral districts, or do we just vote the same anyway?

Another question. In using the electoral commission sheet – perhaps I'm reading it wrong. It gives me almost a slight indication that by using the landmass of the Indian reserves – are the Indians

represented in our vote? Maybe the federal and provincial statistics are confusing me there.

The two manuals that we have of the final report of the 1991 Electoral Boundaries Commission – I'm wondering why we're having these commissions so often. It seems that every three or four years we have a commission to study our electoral boundaries. Are things not settled or changing that rapidly that we have to have this so often? That's the question. You could maybe answer it.

In Canada we have four levels of government: municipal, provincial, federal, and the Senate. Our feeling is that for the amount of population we have, we're overrepresented; for our tax base and our national product, we're overrepresented.

The plus or minus 25 percent of the average population, and there are many other points used throughout this here – it seems to be very thorough and very complete. I think the commissions before have got to be complimented on the details they went into to try and establish these electoral districts. I feel there's no point that has been unturned.

I know your mandate is to just review these electoral boundaries and try to establish them. Could you also look at reducing the amount of electoral mandates?

That is my presentation. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any questions?

MR. McCARTHY: I have one question for information. On page 2 of your written submission you have these population figures and the seats for other jurisdictions. I just wondered where that population data was taken from.

MR. MAIR: That came from the electoral office, some brochures they have there. They gave me a photostatic copy of parts of the book.

MR. McCARTHY: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

MR. GRBAVAC: Just a comment, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mair, the reason we're holding this commission hearing again – as you said, it's fairly frequent – is because it was mandated by the courts that a thorough review be conducted as a consequence of legal challenges brought to the courts as a result of the last commission review findings.

10:50

MR. MAIR: If I understand your remark correctly, there were challenges to the court that these boundaries were not set up properly or there were conflicting things in them.

MR. GRBAVAC: That's correct.

MR. MAIR: Is there any possibility, as far as you know at this time, that this will be satisfied or eliminated?

THE CHAIRMAN: We're going to try and satisfy them one day. That is the answer. Normally in Alberta it would be once every 10 years, but because of challenges to the court on the last electoral boundaries commission, the court suggested it should be redone. That's why we're here. The government has responded to the court's request by redoing it.

I want to thank you, Mr. Mair, for your interest and also your research that you've done when you came here to make your presentation today. Thank you.

MR. MAIR: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Joan Duiker, president of Area 3 Council of Community Organizations. Mrs. Duiker.

MRS. DUIKER: First of all, I'm coming here today as Joan Duiker, community advocate, and I will tell you why. I have been involved in many aspects of community volunteer work and politics. I would like to say before I give my presentation that I did not know and was not informed of these hearings even though I did a presentation on behalf of area 3 council in 1993. I found out about these hearings last week from the *Beverly Page*, which is a local newspaper. By not having the information, I cannot represent an organization because of lack of time to bring this information forward to the proper groups and agencies, and this is completely unacceptable to me.

Now, on with my presentation. I would like to say that the boundaries of Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont and the boundaries of Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly seem to be working out as they now exist. They were changed in 1993. I certainly want the historical names of Beverly and Jasper Place to remain as constituency names. They were at one time a village, a town, and then annexed to the city of Edmonton in 1961.

Both Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont and Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly have a high number of social and economic problems. Most areas from 97th Street to 34th Street north of the river are high need and require more assistance than lots of constituencies in Alberta. There seems to be a concern that rural MLAs have to travel a lot to do their work. That may be so, but if you consider the amount of casework most of the city MLAs have to do, they are the ones that need more money to hire enough staff to cover the workload. I would also like to say that there have been people speaking here today about natural geographic boundaries. Natural geographic boundaries do not necessarily work, especially when you get areas with huge housing developments. These developments quite often tend to bring with them an abundance of social needs and create a huge caseload.

For your information, I have resubmitted my 1993 presentation. If you have any questions, I'll answer them. I didn't have time really to prepare anything because I didn't know about this meeting.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to explain why maybe you didn't hear about this. We had a leaflet dropped at every house in Edmonton, and we had various other notices go out. We regret that you didn't hear about it. It's been reported, I think, in the *Edmonton Journal* and the other Edmonton papers, but that report may have been too late. I guess the only consolation I can give you is that we'll have another round of hearings in March after we make our preliminary report, and that will give you more opportunity to prepare.

MRS. DUIKER: Will I get some information so that I can take it forward to my organizations?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MRS. DUIKER: Like I said, we've got a mandate that I cannot represent organizations unless it goes before the board for ratification.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you want your board approval before you speak here?

MRS. DUIKER: Yes, on their behalf. That's why I'm speaking today as Joan Duiker, community advocate, and not vice-chair of area 3 council.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, the secretary there will have your name and address, and you will be given notice when the hearings will be held in March.

MRS. DUIKER: Okay.

MR. LEHANE: Joan, the other thing you can do is if you send a written submission in from your community associations or from the groups you represent, those written submissions will be brought to our attention and looked at before the next set of hearings.

MRS. DUIKER: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to thank you for coming.

MRS. DUIKER: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Our next presenter is Ed Wrynn, president of the Edmonton-Rutherford Liberal association.

MR. WRYNN: Good morning, Your Honour and members of the committee. My name is Edward Wrynn. I'm president of the Edmonton-Rutherford Liberals. With me is MLA Percy Wickman. I make this submission specifically to the Edmonton-Rutherford area, which contains the largest population in Edmonton, with possibly – and I'm quite sure about this – the smallest geographic area in the city.

We have proposed two small areas to be removed from the riding map. That map is attached to the back page of the presentation I've given you. The first part would be to transfer polls 49 to 51 on the southwest corner of the riding, with a potential reduction of 1,530 in the population in that area. Also, with polls 58 to 65 in the northeast corner of the riding we have tried to preserve the design of the present riding as almost a complete square right now. A portion of Blue Quill, which is polls 49 to 51, we feel can be transferred to the Edmonton-Whitemud riding quite easily. It would just be joined to the north of the map and fall right into the other Blue Quill area.

We have quite a mix. We have almost an equal mix of high-density and residential areas. The object for us was to find the happy mix to reduce the greatest number of voters in the smallest geographical areas to bring us into the area of the means. My calculations on page 2 indicate that if these two portions were taken out of the existing riding, we would be within 3 percent of the mean population, whereas we presently sit at 24 percent, which is the highest mean population in Edmonton. This would have the effect of transferring 1,500 of the population to Edmonton-Whitemud, affecting their variance from the mean to 5 percent. The problem with our logic is that we're left with transferring approximately 5,000 individuals to the Strathcona riding, which is immediately north of the top northeast corner. We don't mean to spread that over there. We would suggest that with Strathcona and another riding, with the total number of voters there or population, you may have to look at possibly opening up three ridings instead of two. As you can see by

my calculations, Strathcona would be in the 40 percent above the mean.

11:00

In Edmonton-Rutherford there is limited growth right now. It's highly populated. There's not a lot of vacant land. It's almost a perfect square. It's an easy riding to handle. There are a lot of voters there. We do not take lightly carving out these little sections, but because of the mean population ratio we are quite concerned about that. We also assure you that these polls consistently voted with the rest of the riding, and there is no preferential side to that. We're not carving out areas that aren't supportive.

Unless there are other questions, I would . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions? Wally?

MR. WORTH: Mr. Wrynn, did you look at the prospect of transferring the Malmo Community League to another area in the sense that it and the one that you've taken out, or are proposing to take out, to the north are both on the other side of the Whitemud freeway?

MR. WRYNN: We did look at that, sir. The reason we took off the northeast corner is that the riding is almost an equal mix of multi-residential and single-family owned homes. There seems to be according to our figures – and we stand to be corrected – more of the multifamily residential population, and we thought that by taking that part out geographically, it would be easier than trying to cut out the other side. The answer to your question is: we did look at that, but we wanted to strike a balance between the residential and multi, which is almost, to my knowledge, very close to 50-50 right now.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

Mr. Wrynn, I'd like to thank MLA Wickman for attending our hearings today and yourself for the work you've done. You seem to know what our problem is, and you've given us a solution for your constituency. As you can see, when you solve your constituency problem, it moves it to another constituency. This is a problem we have with nine out of 10 solutions that have been recommended to us till now.

Thanks very much for coming.

MR. WRYNN: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Mike Hermansen from the village of Breton.

MR. HERMANSEN: I feel very fortunate to be here this morning. On my way from Breton I drove past several vehicles parked at odd angles in the median and in the ditches of the highway I had to travel. Imagine if this had been election time and our MLA or our candidates would have had to travel around to see voters in different areas of this constituency.

In any case, the village of Breton would like to take this opportunity to express their concerns regarding the current Electoral Boundaries Commission review. We are of the opinion that the electoral boundaries should remain as they are today. The only alternative would be the 25 percent option; that is, the boundaries in

large urban centres drawn to 25 percent above the average quotient and the rural boundaries drawn to 25 percent below the average quotient. An electoral boundaries review was conducted, and changes were made before the last election. Is it not true that these boundaries should remain stable for two provincial elections?

Equal representation and effective representation must both be given due consideration in a democracy. Population trends, numerous local authorities, and vast distances to be traveled by one MLA must be taken into consideration. People living in large urban centres by and large have easy access to their MLA; those in rural areas have to travel up to three hours or more for this contact. Surely no jurisdiction in the world with a unicameral Legislature and geography such as that of Alberta has electoral division boundaries based purely on representation by population. The Legislature of the Northwest Territories is a good illustration of this point.

With all the changes presently occurring and the downloading of responsibility from provincial to municipal authorities, it is essential that we have clear, constant, and effective communication with our provincial government through our Members of the Legislative Assembly. In rural areas such as the Drayton Valley-Calmar constituency our MLA must deal with many local authorities: nine municipal councils as compared to one municipal council in the city of Edmonton, which is represented by 18 MLAs. There have been references made to the possibility of including some rural areas with portions of large city centres in one constituency. It would be a tremendous burden for one MLA to deal with such diverse concerns and views. In such an arrangement we believe that rural concerns would not be given priority.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to express our concerns regarding the present electoral review. Due consideration must be given before any changes are made. Effective representation must not be jeopardized. We request the commission to ensure that both urban and rural residents continue to have an effective voice in the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Hermansen. Are there any questions?

MR. WORTH: I have an observation and a question. I gather from your submission that you would not be in favour of a mixed urban/rural riding.

MR. HERMANSEN: Right.

MR. WORTH: My question relates to the fact that your constituency is really bounded on three sides by other rural constituencies that have a relatively small population: Whitecourt-Ste. Anne, West Yellowhead, and Rocky Mountain House. In relation to any one of those three areas, is there one that has greater affinity with your constituency than another?

MR. HERMANSEN: I don't think there would be much difference. You know, if you are talking about jiggling boundaries, I don't think we would have any serious complaints if the boundaries were changed into one of those. I think we're all, shall we say, country folk. We all have the problem that, for example, when people go campaigning in the city for election, after they've finished talking to one voter and by the time they get to the front door of the next voter, they have consumed the same amount of time as our candidates

consume in just getting from their house to their car, let alone driving to the next place and then stopping the car and getting out at it.

I really think that rural legislators have a totally different job from city legislators. Of course, the argument that you are given quite often is that we now have telephones and fax machines and TV and so on and so forth, so rural voters don't need to be represented as well. Of course, people in the cities have got telephones and fax machines and TVs and so forth too. They still would have an advantage if things were done more as representation by population.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

11:10

THE CHAIRMAN: If I summarize, one of your arguments is you're saying that for equal and effective representation there's nothing wrong with urban being at plus 25 percent and rural being at minus 25 percent.

MR. HERMANSEN: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other comments?

Well, thank you, Mr. Hermansen, for coming and making your presentation.

MR. HERMANSEN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: We've now dealt with all of the people who have advised us in advance that they would be coming here and wishing to make presentations. Are there any people who are what we call walk-ons that would like to make a presentation here today? Anybody who would like to ask a question or make a comment that might be helpful to this commission, go ahead.

MR. HERMANSEN: To what extent are you restrained by the court ruling that has put you in business this time?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, that's not an easy question to answer. If you read the court rulings, there's some further guidance required. They said last time that the plus 25 and minus 25 is acceptable, but you have to give reasons. I think what they said in the last decision was that the Bogle special committee of the Legislature didn't give the reasons for their variance.

We have two lawyers on the commission here, John McCarthy and Joe Lehane. Maybe they would like to add to what the court has said.

MR. LEHANE: There's actually a lot of controversy and difference of opinion with respect to what exactly the Alberta Court of Appeal said. Essentially my reading of the case is that the court said that they felt they had insufficient information to determine whether or not the boundaries set by the select committee of the Legislature were boundaries that did not offend the Charter.

The court case was in fact a reference by the government of those boundaries to the Alberta Court of Appeal to determine whether or not they offended the right to vote under the Charter of Rights. The court said that they didn't find there was sufficient information given to them that they could make that decision. They did go on, however, and suggest that prior to the next general election there be a thorough review of those boundaries. That's essentially my

reading of the case. They did suggest that there appeared to be variance between the urban and rural centres, and certainly any variation in populations had to be justified by reasons. I think most people agree that their judgment says that you basically have to do almost a constituency-by-constituency justification with reasons for any variance from the provincial quotient.

MR. HERMANSEN: So basically were our reasons what you were looking for?

MR. LEHANE: I think you've been helpful today, sir, yes, in explaining your situation out there.

THE CHAIRMAN: The court might not accept those as valid reasons though. We don't know what's a valid reason.

MR. McCARTHY: I think, without getting into too much interpretation of the case – I just have the case in front of me now – the court indicated a summary of the constitutional rights held by all Albertans. They divided it into four areas with respect to this matter, and that is (a) the right to cast a ballot, (b) the right not to have the political force of one's vote unduly diluted, (c) the right to effective representation, and (d) the right to have the parity of the votes of others diluted, but not unduly, in order to gain effective representation or in the name of practical necessity.

MR. MAIR: Where can we obtain a copy of what you just read?

THE CHAIRMAN: If you ask the secretary at the back, she'll arrange it.

MR. GRBAVAC: Mr. Chairman, I think much of our work has to be dictated by what is, in essence, reasonable. I think it's fair to assume that the greater the deviance, the stronger the reasons would have to be. At least that's how I would interpret what the courts were saying. It is, as was mentioned earlier, quite open to interpretation, but if you're stretching the envelope, then I think you'd better have some pretty substantive, defensible reasons as to why your constituency is plus or minus 25 percent.

THE CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of *Hansard* I understand that they want us to have everybody who speaks identified. The only person, I think, who's spoken from the audience so far is Mr. Mike Hermansen. Is that correct?

MR. HERMANSEN: I'm sorry.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's fine. It's my oversight. I should have told them who was speaking. The person who wanted to know where he could get this court decision was Mr. Mair, who had spoken earlier.

Well, if that's all the difficult questions we have for this morning . . . I'm sorry. Your name?

MR. RAGSDALE: Jeremy Ragsdale. Why aren't you working on merging some of the urban ridings? Why are you only working on merging some of the rural ridings?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I guess the reason why we're not looking at merging some of the urban ridings is that if you look at the brochure that was sent out to everybody – and you can get one at the

back – you'll see that the urban ridings are all basically in the plus category.

MR. RAGSDALE: Some of them aren't in the plus category; Edmonton-Roper, for example.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just a quick look here. Edmonton-Mill Woods is minus 1, and Edmonton-Whitemud is minus 2.9. All the rest are plus. Minus 1 and minus 2.9 are very close. It's very difficult to get them any closer. I don't know if that answers your question.

Well, we'll now adjourn until 1:30 this afternoon.

[The hearing adjourned from 11:20 a.m. to 1:32 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: If I could have your attention, please. We would like to bring this afternoon's session to order. We would ask everybody to be seated. We would like to open the afternoon session with a few introductory remarks.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Edward Wachowich, and I am the chairman of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I am also the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta. I have a feeling that my other job will be much easier than this one, but I hope not.

Let me introduce you to the other members of the commission. On my far left is Robert Grbavac of Raymond, Alberta; on my immediate right is Joe Lehane of Innisfail, Alberta; on my far right is John McCarthy of Calgary; and on my immediate left is Walter (Wally) Worth of Edmonton. The five people you see before you make up the commission, and I want to say that we are very happy to be here to receive your comments and consider your thinking with respect to our duties.

Why are we here? The commission is holding public hearings here in Edmonton to receive and to consider your arguments and points of view with respect to the areas, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions in Alberta. We must do this according to a particular set of rules, which I will review in a moment.

I want to assure you that every member of the commission has reviewed the law and the literature which has been recently written concerning electoral boundaries in Alberta. So I want to tell you that our minds are open inasmuch as we have not reached any conclusions, but I need to remind you also that our minds are not empty. We have given this matter a lot of thought. We have reviewed the law. We have reviewed the work of previous commissions and committees who have studied the boundaries in Alberta, and we have reviewed what the courts have said about the electoral boundaries in this province and in Canada.

Summary of the electoral boundaries law. I would like to put before you for your consideration the following summary of the law of Alberta with respect to electoral boundaries. One, our function is to review the existing electoral boundaries and to make proposals to the Legislative Assembly about the areas, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions in Alberta. Two, we have very limited time to accomplish this task. We must submit a report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly setting out our recommendations with respect to the areas, boundaries, and names of any proposed electoral divisions with our reasons by the 31st day of January 1996. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall make the report public and publish the commission's proposals in the *Alberta Gazette* as soon as possible.

The commission is required to hold two sets of public hearings. This is the first set. These hearings are being held before we make any report or proposals to the Speaker. The second set of hearings will be held in 1996, probably in March, after our report to the Speaker has been made public. We are required to hold public hearings to enable representations to be made to us by any person or organization in Alberta about the areas, the boundaries, and the names of electoral divisions. We are required to give reasonable public notice of the times, places, and purposes of our public meetings, which we have done in this case.

Our report is published by the Speaker, and we will undertake a second set of public hearings, as required by the Act, and lay before the Speaker a final report by June 30, 1996. Again the Speaker shall make this report public and publish it in the *Alberta Gazette*.

If more than one report is submitted from among the members of the commission, the report of the majority is the report of the commission. If there is no majority, my report, or the report of the chairman, is the report of the commission. The final report of the commission is then laid at the earliest opportunity before the Legislative Assembly, immediately if it is then sitting or within seven days after the beginning of the next session.

New electoral divisions. Then it is up to the Legislative Assembly by resolution to approve or approve with alterations the proposals of the commission and to introduce a Bill to establish new electoral divisions in Alberta in accordance with the resolution. This law would come into force when proclaimed, before the holding of our next general election.

Redistribution rules. Population. Population means the most recent population set out in the most recent decennial census of the population of Alberta as provided by Statistics Canada. We are also required to add the population of Indian reserves that were not included in the census as provided by the federal department of Indian and northern affairs. But if the commission believes that there is another provincewide census more recent than the decennial census compiled by Statistics Canada which provides the population of proposed electoral divisions, then the commission may use this data.

Number of electoral divisions. The second rule is that the commission is required to divide Alberta into 83 proposed electoral divisions. The commission may take into consideration any factors it considers appropriate, but it must and shall take into consideration the following: one, the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; two, sparsity and density of population; three, common community interests and community organizations, including those of Indian reserves and Métis settlements; four, whenever possible, existing community boundaries within the cities of Edmonton and Calgary; five, the existing municipal boundaries; six, the number of municipalities and other local authorities; seven, geographical features, including existing road systems; eight, the desirability of understandable and clear boundaries.

Population of electoral divisions. The population rule is that a proposed electoral division must not be more than 25 percent above or below the average population for all 83 electoral divisions. There is an exception to the 25 percent rule. In the case of not more than four proposed electoral divisions the commission may have a population that is as much as 50 percent below the average population of the electoral divisions in Alberta if three of the following five criteria are met: one, the area exceeds 20,000 square kilometres or the surveyed area of the proposed electoral division

exceeds 15,000 square kilometres; two, the distance from the Legislature Building in Edmonton to the nearest boundary of any proposed electoral division by the most direct highway route is more than 150 kilometres; three, there is no town in the proposed electoral division that has a population exceeding 4,000 people; four, the area of the proposed electoral division contains an Indian reserve or a Métis settlement; five, the proposed electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the province of Alberta. In respect of the Crowsnest Pass, the boundaries Act instructs us that the municipality of Crowsnest Pass is not a town.

This is a very general overview of the legislation, but we must now also turn to the guidance that has been provided by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Supreme Court of Alberta.

What the Supreme Courts have said. The Supreme Court of Canada and the Alberta Court of Appeal have agreed that the right to vote under the Charter includes: one, the right to vote; two, the right to have the political strength or value or force of the vote an elector casts not unduly diluted; three, the right to effective representation; four, the right to have the parity of the votes of others diluted, but not unduly, in order to gain effective representation or as a matter of practical necessity. The rulings of the Supreme Courts as well as the electoral boundaries Act must guide our decisions and ultimately the proposals that we make to the Legislature.

The focus. The commission in its public advertising has clearly stated that it is considering after preliminary deliberation: one, the merging of a number of rural electoral divisions into contiguous, or neighbouring, divisions; two, adding a number of urban electoral divisions to Edmonton and Calgary; three, any other revisions necessary to achieve one and two.

We have set forth our focus after preliminary deliberations. We have not reached any final conclusions. The commission wishes to hear the views of Albertans with respect to this focus. Please let me assure you that our preliminary deliberations are preliminary and that no final conclusions have been drawn. The commission will not move to the consideration of proposals without the benefit of input from individuals and organizations in Alberta. Indeed, this is the purpose of the public hearings. I also want to say that without public input the work of the commission will be seriously impaired. We want to hear the arguments and the reasoning of all organizations and individuals in Alberta with respect to the areas, the boundaries, and the names of their electoral divisions.

We'll now hear from our first representatives. They are Paul Hendricks, Roy Maxwell, and Wayne Inkpen. I think the three of them are making one presentation. May I ask whom you represent?

MR. HENDRICKS: The Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Association.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

1:42

MR. HENDRICKS: I'll start by reading a letter on our position, and then Roy and Wayne can follow up with some elaboration.

On behalf of the Clover Bar/Fort Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Association, I would like to state that our assessment of the boundaries supports the retention of the current alignment. In support of this position, the following points must be considered:

The constituency has had two changes over the last two elections. The current boundaries have considerable support with the constituents because of the social and economic values that are shared amongst the residents of Fort Saskatchewan and the rural residents of the County of Strathcona.

The current boundaries encompass two major municipal governments that have historic links and who have evolved a constructive and cooperative means of working together with their MLA for the delivery of high quality services to their constituents.

The number of constituents within the constituency falls well within the acceptable range of variability. At a time when the government is downsizing and merging administrative services, there is no justification for reducing the size of this constituency.

Changes to the boundaries of this constituency would have a domino effect. The boundaries of all adjacent constituencies would also have to change. Again I must reiterate that at a time of consolidation and down sizing, reducing constituency sizes seems totally inappropriate.

The current constituency boundaries follow the County of Strathcona and City of Fort Saskatchewan municipal boundaries. These boundaries are logical to the residents and are easily understood. Changing these sensible boundaries would cause unnecessary confusion.

If the impetus for the boundary changes is to achieve more equal representation in Edmonton and Calgary, then the changes required should be made in those cities. This constituency association recognizes that rural constituencies will have fewer people than the larger urban areas and we support this difference. We would not like to see the consolidation of rural constituencies just to increase the population base. The increased area that a MLA would have to represent would diminish their effectiveness.

Roy Maxwell, would you like to elaborate on some of these points?

MR. MAXWELL: Yeah, I think just quickly, Mr. Chairman, members of the commission. I'm just looking over actually the paper that was circulated on the review of the electoral boundaries and the considerations directed by the Legislature as far as it concerns our riding as it exists today. Effective representation: we're within 7 and a half percent of the average.

Common community interests and organizations: we represent now only two municipalities, the city of Fort Saskatchewan and the county of Strathcona, with considerable interaction between the two communities.

Wherever possible the existing community boundaries with the cities of Edmonton and Calgary be maintained: well, of course, we do butt up against the city of Edmonton, and we have no intention of changing that. So we would fit with that consideration as well. We propose no change to the city boundary.

Wherever possible fit the existing municipal boundaries: we fit that perfectly. We fit the exact boundaries of the city of Fort Saskatchewan, the exact boundaries of the county of Strathcona at this point in time. At other times we did not fit those boundaries. This is the best we have ever been.

The number of municipalities and other local authorities. The last time, before this last redraw, there were five municipalities involved. There was Beaver, Leduc, Lamont, Fort Saskatchewan, and Strathcona. Now there are just two. So, again, in item 6 we're restricted to only two municipalities.

Geographical features, including existing road systems. Two major geographical features: firstly, the North Saskatchewan River on the north side, and Elk Island park and the Blackfoot grazing reserve, which makes up a major portion of the east side of our constituency.

The desirability of understandable and clear boundaries. It's very clear the way it is right now: again, as I said earlier, the North Saskatchewan River on the north side, Elk Island park and Blackfoot on the east side, the cities of Edmonton and Sherwood Park on the west side, and the correction line road on the south side, which is also the same boundary as the county of Strathcona. That's really all I have to say.

In summary, I've been involved with three different redrawings of our constituency, and this is the best I've ever seen it, and I'd hate to change it. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Maxwell.

MR. INKPEN: I just have one point to add, and that is with respect to socially, which I think is very important. The constituency is fairly unique. Somebody called it 'rurban', in that it's a rural/urban mix. There are a significant number of acreages throughout the constituency, as a result a little different value set than some of the urban settings such as Sherwood Park. There's some agriculture in there, but it's a different blend of agriculture. We have some large farms, but for the most part it's hobby farming in the area.

So I think we have to take that into consideration if the constituency boundaries are redrawn. I think the cultural blend here – it's a unique area, but it fits very well. I think that if it were to change, it would have significant difficulty for an MLA to represent reasonably well.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Inkpen. Any questions from any of the commission members?

MR. WORTH: Gentlemen, I just have an observation. I think that your presentation this afternoon highlights the difficulty that our commission faces. We have this submission from your group saying: let's leave things the way they are. This morning we had a submission from the county of Strathcona which suggested the addition of a constituency out in that area as one option and putting Fort Saskatchewan and that area into another constituency. Later this afternoon we will be receiving yet a further submission from the city of Fort Saskatchewan calling for a change in the boundaries.

We appreciate the logic of your position very much. On the other hand, we also have two other positions now that we're going to have to consider. But we thank you for offering us a solution that we can consider with the other two.

MR. HENDRICKS: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other questions? Were you aware of the county of Strathcona submission?

MR. HENDRICKS: We just received that information within the last day.

THE CHAIRMAN: They said that they had spoken to the people in the constituency. I don't know to what extent. So you're aware of it then?

MR. HENDRICKS: Very recently.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine. Well, I want to thank you for coming.

If there are no other questions, the next presenter is Terry Johnson. Can you tell us who you represent, Mr. Johnson, if anybody?

MR. JOHNSON: Myself and basically my pocketbook. Your preamble to this meeting kind of gave me a feeling that perhaps my showing up here is wasting my time, but I will pass on the thoughts that I have.

My major concern is with the number 83. Everybody out there has downsized, reduced, become leaner and meaner, more efficient, and the number of MLAs is still sitting at 83. I'd prefer to see a much lower number than that. Is this within your powers to bring into effect?

The previous group mentioned the downsizing as well of government and everything else involved. Everybody's pocketbook these days is getting smaller; paycheques are getting smaller. Yet the number of people who represent us stays the same, and as far as I'm concerned, it's not necessary. There are many other provinces that have much higher numbers for each MLA that they have voted in. Why can't Alberta get in line with them and/or even set an example by going below their numbers?

Therefore, I think the government themselves would get a great pat on the back from people if they said: well, look; you know, we are not only cutting back on what you're taking home and what services are available. I have run into a problem trying to contact services in a rip-off that occurred in my home renovation, but of course the departments that are involved, one, don't have the manpower; two, don't have the time; or three, don't even exist. You know, I'm saying: well, if there's no department in existence anymore, what's the sense of having MLAs sitting around as backbenchers doing nothing?

As it is, by the look of things the caucus is what runs all of Alberta. The rest of the members that sit as backbenchers kind of sit there as yes-men and say: yes, sure; okay; fine. If it's in your power to reduce the numbers, that is something I'd be very much in favour of. I realize it would mean a major disaster in the drawing of the maps and would probably go against everybody's grain, but what else is new? Everything that's happening these days is going against everybody's grain. You know, you've got the Safeway lockout occurring right now, where Safeway has said: well, we're canceling your contract, cutting your wages, and extending your hours. I think the government representatives should also be made fully aware of this by perhaps some of their constituencies being eliminated. You can say: well, you see, it's happening all over the place, not just in the private sector.

Basically that's all I have to say.

1:52

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have any suggestions as to how many constituencies you would like to see?

MR. JOHNSON: That's a really leading question. I don't know what the effective number would be. Preferably right off the top I'd like to say, "Yeah, about half," but, you know, we have to be reasonable. I really haven't gotten into that to say that we should be at 40 or we should be at 50 or some other number or even lower than that. I really don't know. That would be something that obviously some thought would have to be put into as to which direction and how far down you can go, I mean, perhaps in some proportion that's proportional to the government cutbacks. Perhaps that would be a fair way of going. In other words, if the government has cut back about 75 percent, then cut back 75 percent of the members.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, Mr. Johnson, on my behalf – and I don't know about the other members of the commission – I'm glad that my opening remarks didn't intimidate you too much and that you were still willing to come forth and make your viewpoint. We do have a problem with respect to cutting the number of constituencies. The Act says that the number of constituencies shall be 83, so we're obliged to follow the Act with respect to this matter.

We do not have legislative power to change the Act, but it appears from all preliminary indications that we're going to have quite a few people appearing before us with respect to the number of constituencies, and we are going to hear these people and hear what they have to say. Then it'll be a matter of the commission deciding how it will deal with these representations when making its report. It's clearly out of our jurisdiction at this time to change the number of electoral constituencies that Alberta is divided into. I don't know whether it's proper for me to say this, but I'm going to say it anyway: your representations that you're making to the Electoral Boundaries Commission probably would be more effective if made to your MLA or all the MLAs.

MR. JOHNSON: Except that you know the conflict there. I'm telling the guy to resign his job.

THE CHAIRMAN: But they're the people who pass the legislation, not us.

MR. JOHNSON: I realize that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm just trying to point out to you our dilemma with respect to your presentation.

MR. JOHNSON: I assume that you can make comments, however, to that effect to them, that there have been submissions.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that we will do that, depending upon how many people appear before us. As I said, all preliminary indications are that there are going to be quite a few people appearing on that basis.

Now, I don't know; maybe there are some other questions or comments of other members.

Well, I want to thank you for coming.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenters are Emil van der Poorten and Don Ronaghan. Can you gentlemen tell us who you represent, please?

DR. RONAGHAN: Certainly. I'm Dr. Don Ronaghan, and this is Emil van der Poorten. We represent the Forum Party of Alberta. Our leader, Bill Finn, who was on the initial agenda to see you today, has been called away and is unable to be present. We will try to be brief today. It's not our intention to read the submission which we had previously given the commission but rather to highlight some of the points that we have brought before you.

We certainly agree with the Electoral Boundaries Commission that there are some inequities and inequalities in the existing method of selecting the MLAs in Alberta. We would like to highlight three areas today for you. One, the variance of plus or minus 25 percent in population is an exceedingly large variation. We think that certainly in this day and age with the technology available to us, a

variation considerably less than that should be possible, perhaps – and this is as a suggestion – plus or minus 10 percent. The reasons, of course, for doing this are obvious, such that a voter in Calgary should be roughly equivalent to a voter in Cardston or any other area that you want to choose in the province, and their variation, plus or minus 25 percent, is exceedingly large.

The second inequality that we see in the existing method of doing things is that the gross population is used from the census figures. We believe it may be desirable, instead of using population as the quotient, to have the number of voters, as opposed to the number of residents, used. This would better reflect in a democratic way the number of electors rather than simply the men, women, and children who live in an area. Again, with the resources available in this day and age and the census figures and the election lists, it should be possible to achieve that.

Probably the major difficulty we have with the current method of doing things has not to do with the number of voters or electors or their variation between constituencies but rather has to do with the method of electing Members of the Legislative Assembly. At the present time we have a winner-take-all system, whereby the one candidate with the largest number of ballots cast is declared the winner. In many instances this person was not truly the choice of the majority of the electors but rather in the winner-take-all system that we have has been declared the winner.

In the mandate of the commission you are directed to address effective representation. By effective representation we think that each person's vote should count towards electing the government of Alberta and that the only effective way to do that is to change from the existing system of winner take all towards one that incorporates proportional representation. To that end, we have recommended that the commission consider that a balanced system, roughly a 50-50 system between proportional representation and the existing constituency appointments, be adopted, whereby roughly half of these 83 seats would be elected on the existing system, whereby the winner-take-all candidate from each area is elected, and roughly the other half would be elected by proportional representation, whereby the number of voters voting for a party would be represented in the seats in the Legislature. We think this is a compromised system between geographical responsibility of the MLAs and also it gives a reasonable balance at least to the views or the wishes of the population, whereby the population would vote for the platform or the policies of a party and each voter would have a possibility of his intentions forming part of the makeup of the government.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Dr. Ronaghan.

MR. VAN DER POORTEN: I have nothing really to add to the sentiments that Dr. Ronaghan has expressed except to reinforce, if reinforcement is necessary, the fact that we believe the present system, the winner-take-all system, is not appropriate. It's not adequate. It's something that seems to be confined only to a few countries now, what used to be the British Empire, the British Commonwealth, but there has been a historical movement towards something akin to the model that we have suggested.

2:02

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine.

Are there any questions?

MR. McCARTHY: Yeah, I do.

THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

MR. McCARTHY: I've looked at your submission here, and you indicate that many jurisdictions around the world use a system of – I don't know whether I'm understanding it right – proportional representation. It's my understanding that that's the system we're with right now, or is there a difference?

DR. RONAGHAN: No. The existing system that is in place in Alberta, you could call a plurality system.

MR. McCARTHY: All right.

DR. RONAGHAN: Whichever one candidate has the most votes, but not necessarily the majority, becomes the elected MLA.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay.

Now, what jurisdictions use, then, the proportional system that's different than our system?

DR. RONAGHAN: Much of continental Europe uses proportional representation. The system that we have recommended, the 50-50 system, is currently used in New Zealand and Germany.

MR. McCARTHY: That's kind of a hybrid system.

DR. RONAGHAN: That's kind of a hybrid system. We recognize that in a large province such as Alberta geographical representation may be desirable and that it may be quite a broad jump for the population to move from geographical representation to proportional representation and that there may be benefits of both systems that we could use.

MR. McCARTHY: So in your 50-50 scenario, where you've got it divided between plurality and proportional representation, as you describe it, how would you suggest the proportional representation be divided up vis-à-vis the two large urban areas and the rest of the province?

DR. RONAGHAN: Well, I guess when you consider the proportional representation, it's important to understand that a Member of the Legislative Assembly is a member for all of Alberta, not merely just for that particular geographical area. This is very evident in the case of the cabinet ministers. The Minister of Health is my Minister of Health as an Albertan in addition to being the member for a certain geographical area.

It would be our intention in the 50-50 split that there should be perhaps 42 geographical areas and 41 members who would be chosen on the basis of published party lists. In essence, each voter would vote twice: once on a geographical basis and once for the party whose policies that person supports. So you'd have two groups of MLAs: one would be strictly a geographical MLA and the other person would be elected from the published party lists. Our feeling is that the MLAs represent all of Alberta in addition to just geographical areas.

MR. McCARTHY: Yes. But my question was: when you're dealing strictly with the geographic areas that you've described, how would you suggest they be divided up between the urban and rural areas?

DR. RONAGHAN: Okay. What I would say is that the guidelines in a certain way have got community interest, geographical boundaries such as rivers, highways, and that type of thing, probably understandable and practical considerations, but the geographical distribution – in essence those boundaries would be doubled. Instead of having perhaps 10 members from Edmonton or Calgary, you would have five. Broadening the geographical base by moving a boundary one mile this way or a mile that way is not as large a consideration.

MR. McCARTHY: Thank you.

MR. GRBAVAC: Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. GRBAVAC: Dr. Ronaghan, you represent the Forum Party, as I understand it. Could you tell me a little bit more about the Forum Party? I assume you're a registered political party in the province of Alberta. Do you have representation from across the province? What is the magnitude or the size of the party?

DR. RONAGHAN: Yes, we are a registered party. The party has been registered just this year. We are establishing our contacts throughout the province. At the present time we have a base in Edmonton. We're extending it throughout the province. We have representatives from Calgary and some of the rural areas as well. It's a very young party. We think it's time that we had some new ideas in this province and this is a recommendation that we should be looking at, proportional representation, to make effective representation of each voter more important in Alberta.

MR. GRBAVAC: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Dr. Ronaghan, you did mention population versus voters. It's my understanding from reading the Act and trying to find it that we're restricted to deciding this on the basis of population and not on the basis of voters.

DR. RONAGHAN: Indeed.

THE CHAIRMAN: But we will look into it more closely.

Do you have any further questions?

Well, I want to thank you, Dr. Ronaghan and Mr. van der Poorten, for coming here today and making your views known to us. We need as much help as we can get. Thank you.

DR. RONAGHAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The next submission is that of Ken Hodgins and Greg Scerbak. Could you tell us who you're representing, please?

MR. HODGINS: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'm Ken Hodgins, the mayor of the city of Fort Saskatchewan, and with me is Greg Scerbak, the manager of corporate affairs for the city of Fort Saskatchewan.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine. Proceed.

MR. HODGINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, members of the committee. To start with, I assume that you have

our submission and have had the opportunity to read the submission that was sent in to you.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have.

MR. HODGINS: Thank you.

The city of Fort Saskatchewan has a long history in the province of Alberta, well over 200 years since it was established, and the trading area around Fort Saskatchewan was established way back then. This afternoon I'd just like to sort of highlight our submission instead of reading this through. I'm sure that if you had the opportunity to read it, you don't want me to read the thing back to you.

In 1952 Sherritt Gordon Mines established a multimillion dollar nickel refinery in Fort Saskatchewan, and since then other petrochemical industries, such as Dow Chemical and Inland Chemical and Chevron and Guardian Chemical, have also established in Fort Saskatchewan. These are global industries.

Today the city of Fort Saskatchewan is an innovative, dynamic, and growth-oriented community with a population of about 13,000 people, and the city is an active participant in both district and provincial issues through our commitment to partnering.

Now, the city of Fort Saskatchewan in 1991-92 made a submission to the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and basically that is the same submission that we're presenting today. On October 26, 1995, the council of the city of Fort Saskatchewan reviewed the previous council recommendation made to this Electoral Boundaries Commission, and it was felt that the recommendation was still valid today.

The council of the city of Fort Saskatchewan recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission resolve that the boundaries shown on the attached map that was presented to you be established as the boundaries of the Fort Saskatchewan electoral district. City council took a number of factors into consideration in preparing the recommended electoral boundaries. Those factors included the population, the historical boundaries of the district, the historical constituency boundaries, the existing municipal boundaries, and some of the natural barriers.

I'd like to refer to the map, and I want to question if the map did come through clearly when it was faxed to you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The copy you gave me has come through clearly.

MR. HODGINS: Yeah. I'm sure it did.

I highlighted the area, and I don't know how that came through in the fax to the other members of the commission.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm just showing the map.

MR. HODGINS: Yeah. That's fine.

THE CHAIRMAN: The other map didn't come through that well. Go ahead.

MR. HODGINS: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Basically the map, as is highlighted in the submission I presented this afternoon, tends to show the natural trading area of not only the residents of that area right up to Redwater and Gibbons – historically the residents have considered Fort Saskatchewan as their natural trading area, right, as I say, from Redwater south to highway 16 and over to

the Elk Island boundaries – but also the industries that have developed in that area. With the recent purchase of the Redwater fertilizer plant by Sherritt Gordon, there's that close relationship with the industries on the northeast portion of the boundary map that we're showing you. Other industries on the north side of the river, the Lamoureux settlement across the river from Fort Saskatchewan have very close ties with Fort Saskatchewan. So the area that we're presenting seems to have a very logical approach to the electoral boundaries that will be used in the next provincial election.

2:12

I guess as an aside from the presentation, as I personally view it, there's a trend in the province, if not across this country, to less government. So if the committee is looking at more elected officials, personally I'm not in favour of more elected officials. Representation by population, I believe, is not always the most logical way of representation and doesn't take a commonsense approach to representation. I think some of the important issues like natural trading areas, as we're suggesting, some of the physical and the historical influences that exist in an area should play a prominent role in the governance of that area and also in the representation of that area.

So I guess, in closing, I think our report goes a long way to addressing the sensible, commonsense approach to representation, and I would hope that our submission is given serious consideration by the committee and ultimately by the province when they're setting out the electoral boundaries.

MR. SCERBAK: Mayor Hodgins has expressed our submission very clearly.

THE CHAIRMAN: You're not going to offer to help him at all then?

MR. SCERBAK: I was here in case you asked a question that I needed to be here for.

THE CHAIRMAN: I just want to know what census figures you were using. You come up with a figure of 26,000 for this constituency that you . . .

MR. SCERBAK: We used the '91 census, but we adjusted it from some of the more recent municipal ones that were available. So it's approximately 26,000; it's not exact.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you say that Fort Saskatchewan has 2,000 or 3,000 more people since '91?

MR. SCERBAK: Well, close to a thousand more.

MR. HODGINS: So a guesstimated, updated figure of 1991 is what it was.

THE CHAIRMAN: This morning we had the county of Strathcona appear, and they said, in respect to their presentation, that they had discussed their presentation with the city of Fort Saskatchewan. Were you aware of it?

MR. HODGINS: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Because yours and theirs are a little different. You're moving across the river, including Redwater, and I appreciate

that that area trades with you people, that there's a good road connection. Well, one of their proposals to equalize the constituencies was to give up that portion south of the river more or less like that, you see, and that would give Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan roughly 30,000 in each area, as they propose.

MR. HODGINS: My understanding, Mr. Chairman, was that their proposal was to divide Sherwood Park into two, so we'd end up with three MLAs in that area versus the two that we have now.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's correct. That's their first option.

MR. HODGINS: Well, that's the only one that I've seen, that I'm aware of.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm sorry that you haven't seen the second.

MR. HODGINS: I'm not surprised.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would appreciate it if you would familiarize with their second option, because, as you know, we're going to be holding hearings again in March. They had an option A and an option B. Option A had all three constituencies in a minus position, while option B, with two constituencies, got the constituencies very close to an electoral quotient that had some appeal to us.

MR. SCERBAK: We'll review it as soon as we can.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are there any other questions of these gentlemen? Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally?

MR. WORTH: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: We'll give them a copy of the Strathcona brief.

MR. HODGINS: I'd appreciate that.

MR. GRBAVAC: My only comment, Mr. Chairman, is that these three presentations certainly don't make our job any easier.

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. SCERBAK: So we can have this one too?

MR. LEHANE: Yes. We have other copies of that. You'll note that has two maps.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to thank you for coming.

MR. HODGINS: It's our pleasure. Thank you.

MR. GRBAVAC: I assume that's not classified information.

MR. HODGINS: No.
Good luck in your deliberation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We'll need it. Maybe some prayers too. Okay. The next presentation is that of Brian Stecyk from the Stony Plain Progressive Conservative Association. Proceed.

MR. STECYK: Good afternoon, gentlemen. We're pleased to be here today. I can tell you, from what I've heard over the last few minutes, that I don't envy your task. I'm glad it's you and not me. It's certainly an onerous job you have.

Today on behalf of the Stony Plain PC Association I want to deliver a few specific points and provide some general observations about electoral boundaries. Our constituency, the Stony Plain constituency, is large. It's immediately adjacent to the west boundary of the city of Edmonton. Except for a small portion of land, the boundaries essentially coincide with the boundaries of the county of Parkland. The excluded area involves a small strip of land between the city of Spruce Grove and the MD of Sturgeon. This strip permits Spruce Grove to be part of the constituency of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert without being an island in the Stony Plain constituency. Our constituency includes three urban municipalities, the village of Wabamun, the village of Entwistle, the town of Stony Plain, 12 summer villages, two Indian reserves, and a diverse population scattered over 1,000 square miles.

We are happy with the current boundaries. Some of our residents who live near Muir Lake have been part of three different constituencies in the past 25 years while living in the same subdivision and the same house. They are very vocal about wanting to stay in one constituency for longer than two election periods.

Our municipality is growing. Estimates are that our rural population has increased by about 3,000 since the last census. With additional growth in the urban communities our population is likely about 35,000 to 36,000, which means we could be over the provincial average by about 15 percent.

A strong point we wish to make is that we do not begrudge those constituencies that have smaller population quotients. Each constituency has a unique character, and each MLA has a different challenge. In an urban constituency it is possible for an MLA to walk from one side of his constituency to the other. In the old Smoky River constituency, where you're going to be one of these days I understand, a round trip through every urban municipality was 500 miles.

The vastness of the north combined with sparse population places a tremendous burden upon an MLA. Athabasca-Wabasca has one-half the population of the Stony Plain constituency and over 76 times the area. Compare that to Edmonton-Glengarry with about 30 blocks by 50 blocks. Just think about attending a high school graduation at each end of a constituency. It's impossible in some of the rural ones. Many city politicians knock on every door during an election campaign. Can you imagine trying that in a rural constituency? One rural MLA, Marvin Moore, did it. It took almost three years of constant effort. He did it prior to a nomination meeting, and there were still many isolated properties that he didn't get to visit.

2:22

Every Albertan knows what it means to be disenfranchised. Before many of us get off work to vote in a federal election, the decision has already been made. The large population areas in Ontario and Quebec decide which party is to govern and how they will govern. There are some Albertans who would like to extend that philosophy to our province, where the voters of Edmonton and Calgary would form the government and decide how the rest of the

province should live. I hope it doesn't happen. Representation by population is desirable if you live in an area of high population, but as we have seen for generations on the federal/political landscape, it certainly restricts access to government by those living in sparsely populated areas.

Our current system and current boundary situation provides a sense of balance. The major economic influence of the two major cities is partially offset by differences in electoral representation at the provincial level. We hope that as you go through your deliberations, you will recognize the uniqueness of our province and have a respect for the unique needs of rural Albertans. I'm sure that as you travel around, you'll receive far more representations from rural Albertans than you will from urban ones. The reason is that in rural areas politics is serious business, and we're proud of the constituencies we belong to.

So on behalf of the Stony Plain Progressive Conservative Association I urge you to leave the boundaries as they are. As my mother once said, being fair does not have to be equal. The greatest strength of a democracy is its ability to recognize the rights of the majority while at the same time recognizing and protecting the rights of the minority. I think our current electoral boundaries do that.

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine. Are there any questions of Mr. Stecyk?

What do you do, as a matter of interest?

MR. STECYK: I own an advertising business.

THE CHAIRMAN: I see. Well, you made a very good brief and a good presentation. You've made your point well, but it's a point that causes us a lot of problems.

MR. STECYK: I can appreciate that. Just one observation. Those numbers that I used were approximations I received from the municipal offices.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Well, the next presenters that we have are Brian Austram of the city of Camrose and Jack Lyle, the reeve of the city.

MR. LYLE: That's the county of Camrose. We have our offices in the city, but we are . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, you'll have to blame that mistake on my secretary.

MR. LYLE: You have a copy of our submission, I believe.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, we have. Pardon me. It says "County of Camrose" here. Go ahead.

MR. LYLE: Okay. We thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving us the opportunity to provide some input into the review of the electoral boundaries in Alberta. We've got two main concerns, and I guess they're not a lot different than the presenter ahead of us either: effective and fair representation for all Alberta residents, including rural Alberta, and, two, effective and fair representation for municipal governments. I know our submission is fairly brief. I'll

probably just read through it rather than try and highlight it because it is fairly brief.

We recognize the importance of maintaining an equitable distribution of population in the 83 provincial electoral divisions. However, we also believe that population density and sparseness and electoral division size should be taken into consideration. The commission must carefully examine the responsibilities and demands that would be placed on a rural MLA. While an MLA in a larger urban centre will represent an area consisting of a few square miles with one city council and possibly two school boards, a rural MLA will represent a vast area that can extend over 100 kilometres with several municipality and school jurisdictions. The time required for a rural MLA to effectively represent his or her constituents is far greater than the time required in a large city. To provide effective and fair representation to rural Albertans, the population of some rural electoral divisions will have to be less than in urban areas.

We would encourage the commission to look at trading patterns and community interests when drafting electoral boundaries. The county of Camrose is currently divided between three electoral divisions, which take in the Ponoka-Rimbey riding, Wetaskiwin-Camrose riding, and the Leduc riding. Although our three MLAs have done an admirable job in representing our interests, we believe that the county of Camrose should ideally be in one constituency.

We would propose that the Camrose riding consist of the county of Camrose and the urban centres within the county. Together these places make up a real community of interest, sharing trading and travel patterns, school and social services. These municipalities are the city of Camrose, the town of Bashaw, the villages of Bawlf, Bittern Lake, Edberg, Ferintosh, Hay Lakes, New Norway, Rose Lynn, and of course the county of Camrose, for a total population of just about 24,000.

We realize that some additional areas might have to be included in the constituency to increase the populations, but we find it unacceptable that the county of Camrose has been divided into three constituencies. To provide fair representation, where possible rural municipalities should be contained within one electoral division. Our council believes that a balance must be maintained in the provincial Legislature to ensure that the interests of all Albertans are represented. We do not believe that the representation from rural Alberta should be sacrificed for the sake of providing increased representation in Calgary and Edmonton. Rural Albertans are entitled to fair and equitable representation in the provincial Legislature.

I guess, just further to that, Mr. Chairman, that when you look at the MLAs in the cities – I believe there are 18 in Edmonton, 20 in Calgary – and you look at the ones representing the rural areas, it just doesn't add up for the areas they have to cover.

In closing, I would just like to say that we hope you consider our submission when making your recommendations. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Lyle.

How about you, Mr. Austram, do you wish to . . .

MR. AUSTRAM: Not much further to add. Just that the population statistics that we've used are from the 1991 census with the exception of the city of Camrose, which was based on the census they completed during 1995.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, in a nutshell your presentation is that you want the county of Camrose to be one electoral district and you don't

like the fact that the county of Camrose now is in a total of three electoral districts.

MR. LYLE: Right. That's certainly part of it, yeah, and fair representation, I think, in the rural areas. As the former speaker had said, too, it's a lot easier for an MLA to cover a square block area in the city of Edmonton or Calgary than several hundred miles out in the rural area.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we've heard that an MLA in Edmonton or Calgary can be in his high-rise apartment and look at his whole constituency.

MR. LYLE: Yeah, we've heard that too, and we believe it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think Mr. Worth wants to ask you a question.

MR. WORTH: Well, I just want to build on the comment that the chairman made. The key building block in your submission has to do with keeping the county intact in terms of an electoral district, but you do acknowledge that you might have to extend the boundaries somewhere. As I remember the map, if you go into Wetaskiwin, that's too big. It's almost as big as your county. If you go north into Leduc, you've got a large area there, so you couldn't keep the Leduc municipality boundaries intact. So here's the \$64,000 question: if you had to add 5,000 or 6,000 people to your constituency, based on your logic which way would you go? Would you go to the east end or to the south?

MR. LYLE: I guess if I had the opportunity to do that, I would go east and include the county of Flagstaff, which would pretty well take care of the 5,000 or 6,000 that you suggested.

MR. WORTH: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LYLE: Not only is ours divided, I guess Wetaskiwin county is probably divided too and also Ponoka. I'm not sure if Ponoka is divided, but I know that Wetaskiwin is divided.

MR. AUSTRAM: Historically the county of Flagstaff has been included in a portion of what was the old Camrose riding. At that time the southern part of the county was in the Stettler riding, but there is a very common trading pattern when you go out Highway 13 east of Camrose, and a good portion of that does do their shopping and trading in the city of Camrose.

MR. LYLE: I guess the particular part of the county that I represent myself is the south end of the county. I'm in the corner of four municipalities there. I guess it's Stettler county, Lacombe county, Ponoka county, and Camrose county. We've been shuffled around in that area off and on. We were, as Brian has said, at one time in the Camrose riding, we were in the Stettler riding, and now we're in the Ponoka-Rimbeby riding.

2:32

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, for variety's sake, can we get you in another riding?

MR. LYLE: The Camrose riding would be good, yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: You're happy with Camrose.

MR. LYLE: Yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: You must be around the Bashaw area.

MR. LYLE: I am, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you for coming and making your viewpoints known. I don't know to what extent this commission will be able to accommodate your request, but we understand your request.

MR. LYLE: Good. I thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The next presentation will be that of Henry Harder.

MR. HARDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Harder, I understand you're a former returning officer. Is that correct?

MR. HARDER: That is correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you're appearing here on your own behalf?

MR. HARDER: On my own behalf. I am not a returning officer, but I was at one time. We're always out of a job four months after the election.

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll let you proceed.

MR. HARDER: Thank you very much, Judge Wachowich and distinguished panel, gentlemen of the panel. There are no ladies here. There's no message there, I hope.

THE CHAIRMAN: We didn't appoint the panel.

MR. HARDER: Good.

As you mentioned, my name is Henry Harder, and I have had the privilege of acting as returning officer during the last general provincial election for the electoral subdivision of Edmonton-Gold Bar. I have made a written submission and handed it in, but on rereading the rationale this morning, I thought you might be more confused by the rationale than enlightened. So I thought if I had the opportunity, I would like to elaborate on that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

MR. HARDER: My concern is a very small portion of Edmonton-Gold Bar, the northernmost tip. My request is to have this portion written into the boundaries of Edmonton-Strathcona, which is immediately to the south. The area is bounded on the south by Edmonton-Strathcona, on the west and northwest by the Saskatchewan River, and on the east by a four-lane divided highway. There's no pedestrian or vehicular access to this area except by means of roads through Edmonton-Strathcona. It is like an island. It is cut off from the remaining 99 percent of Edmonton-Gold Bar.

This dilemma was brought to light at the time of the last general election. It was left off the enumeration list because enumerators, using their collective heads I presume, surmised that as there was no

access, it couldn't possibly be part of their responsibility. I enumerated the area myself at the time of the election campaign but not before some unfriendly candidates had reported that huge numbers of electors were about to be disenfranchised.

My research, done in a very discreet manner of course, revealed no politically prominent personages living there. There are also no high-density buildings there, no high-rises. There are single-family dwellings, and there are about 22 of them. For the life of me I cannot understand why the boundary was drawn in the fashion it was except that maybe when the draftsman was drawing the boundary, someone came and jostled his elbow and it went over like that. You can tell by the drawing that there's a squiggly line existing where there could be a straight line going north.

Your attention to my request is respectfully submitted, and I am hopeful that you might sympathize with my concern in your deliberations.

THE CHAIRMAN: Has anybody got any questions of Mr. Harder?

MR. LEHANE: I have a question.

THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

MR. LEHANE: Sir, you're indicating that that area should be attached to Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. HARDER: Right.

MR. LEHANE: Edmonton-Strathcona presently has a population, based on these '91 figures, of 37,961, which is a plus variance of 23.3 percent, which is probably right in the top three in terms of plus variances. Have you any suggestions or recommendations to us about how we would deal with that problem?

MR. HARDER: Well, in numbers it only adds maybe 30 names, 30 electors. There are 22 residences there now. Some of them are even abandoned. I mean, the grass is this high. There are empty houses there. So I know it would add – and that is not a positive – more to the already large Edmonton-Strathcona, but I think it would be worth while.

MR. LEHANE: So the addition in terms of numbers is very minimal.

MR. HARDER: That is correct.

MR. LEHANE: You think it's justified because it fits.

MR. HARDER: Yes. Yes.

MR. LEHANE: Thank you, sir.

MR. HARDER: You would be doing a service to this island that's there. Those electors now, when they go to the poll, you know, have to go through the district of Edmonton-Strathcona and then take a road to the poll. They're really being inconvenienced. They have much farther to go to the poll than anyone else in the constituency, maybe 10 times as far.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for coming, Mr. Harder, and for pointing out that this little lost island, so to speak,

would fit into Strathcona better than where it is today, and from what I know of the area, I agree with your comments. It probably doesn't represent more than 50 people living in that area with 22 residences. It's not a big item, but it logically belongs in Strathcona is what you're telling us.

MR. HARDER: Right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. HARDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: One of the walk-ons is Mrs. Eileen Belanger. Is she present? Would you come forward, please?

MRS. BELANGER: Good afternoon, gentlemen and Your Honour. I am a walk-on. I was home shoveling, and I realized this was happening today, so I thought I'd better come to represent the urban voters. I've heard quite a few comments from Fort Saskatchewan, Camrose, et cetera. I'm amazed that there are not more city people here.

Right now, whether my knowledge is correct or not, we feel that four rural votes – it's one to four. Our vote is only worth one as a city voter as opposed to what's happening rurally. The whole province has been turned upside down by the gerrymandering that took place. I, too, have worked elections. I've been doing it for about 35 or 40 years. My dad was a Tory way back when, but what's been going on in this province – Edmonton as the capital city has been ignored, and everything is rural. We hear of Medicine Hat reps; we hear of all the reps. We had one here in the city who has gone over, Mr. Beniuk. He was our member, and we have yet to see him. They're talking about an MLA standing in a high-rise looking down on his constituency. They become invisible. They don't do a thing for the people of the city.

I don't have that much to say except that I am very concerned. I wish these hearings had taken place when this first happened because I was very incensed. I have a large family, and we have about 24 voters just in our own group.

So we come to gerrymandering. Divide and conquer seems to be the name of this province lately. There doesn't seem to be any voice heard for the normal, everyday voter. Like the gentleman previously, I have worked elections, and I've heard people be irate, be angry because everything was changed, but nobody listens to them.

I won't take any more of your time; I've got to get back home. Thank you for listening to me.

2:42

THE CHAIRMAN: You don't want to answer any questions we may have?

MRS. BELANGER: No. I'm going to hear it on the radio or read it in the paper.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh. Somebody might have offered to shovel your walks.

MRS. BELANGER: I don't think so.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Well, we have scheduled for 3 o'clock Mr. Yost van Schaik of the city of Edmonton. Is he here yet? Are you ready to proceed? I'm sorry; I may not have got your name correct.

MR. VAN SCHAIK: It's van Schaik, but that's all right. Actually, after the last speaker, maybe I should just not say anything.

THE CHAIRMAN: This will give you all the time you want.

MR. VAN SCHAIK: Mr. Chairman, members of the commission, on behalf of the city manager I wish to thank the commission for the opportunity to present the city of Edmonton's preliminary position on the 1995-96 review on electoral boundaries.

As highlighted in the city's submission, we are pleased that the commission is considering adding a number of electoral divisions to Edmonton and Calgary. An examination of the population by electoral divisions continues to show that the citizens of the two big cities are underrepresented in the Legislative Assembly when compared to the levels of representation afforded other Albertans. Although this inequity has been somewhat corrected since 1971, it is time to finally establish equity of representation between electoral divisions where no justification exists to warrant inequity.

As presented in previous submissions, the city also continues to have concern with the long time period between reviews of the electoral boundaries as directed by the Act.

The continuing trends towards urbanization result in significant variants from the electoral quotient by the time the commission begins its review process. Reducing the time period between reviews will reduce both the magnitude and the impacts of future redistributions of electoral divisions in Alberta.

I just want to close by saying that due to the proximity of this hearing to the recent municipal election, the members of Edmonton city council have not had an opportunity to really consider this matter. Therefore, a council-endorsed position on electoral boundaries will be submitted in response to your interim report.

That is really all I have to say at this point, gentlemen. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions?

MR. GRBAVAC: Yes, I have one.

THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

MR. GRBAVAC: In your submission you refer to a 1995 census. Could you expand on that? Is that a city census?

MR. VAN SCHAIK: No. I believe that in the submission – and correct me if I'm wrong – I indicated that if we looked at the 1995 numbers of population figures by electoral divisions, especially in two cases, which I believe are Edmonton-Rutherford and Edmonton-Strathcona, they well may equal or be above the plus 25 percent limit as stipulated by the Act.

MR. GRBAVAC: I'm curious on how that number's arrived at, because you refer to it as population statistics.

MR. VAN SCHAIK: I believe I was taking a generality position. If you look at the 1995 statistics, they may show that. If there was a misunderstanding there, my apologies.

MR. GRBAVAC: Oh, I see. Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: One of the comments I'd like to make is that I read the city of Edmonton's submission with the covering letter from Mr. Richard Picherack, and I thought it was an excellent submission. I don't know whether you wrote it or he wrote it.

MR. VAN SCHAIK: I had the opportunity of writing it.

THE CHAIRMAN: You can tell him that if you wish.

We do have a problem. The city of Edmonton's submission is quite clear. I think it says that the pluses in the electoral constituencies in Edmonton are too high and should be reduced and that there should be constituencies added to Edmonton. I don't know how long you've been here, but you may have heard some of the arguments of the other people stating that the MLAs in Edmonton, 18 of them versus 20 in Calgary right now, really have an easier job and can more effectively represent their constituents than a member from a rural constituency.

MR. VAN SCHAIK: On behalf of the city of Edmonton, I mean, we can empathize with their position, but I believe that both the Canadian Charter of Rights and the appellate court determined that unless there's justification for inequities in the weight of the votes, then there really shouldn't be any inequities. I guess in a democratic society you have to take both the pluses and minuses, and the city refers to that in its submission. Unless we increase the level of representation, which I don't think anybody would agree to, there are going to be pluses and minuses in your deliberations. We don't envy you your task, but our position is really that the two big cities should be better represented.

MR. WORTH: You note in your submission that the notion of mixing urban and nonurban populations and constituencies was unacceptable in the past. Do you deem it to still be unacceptable?

MR. VAN SCHAIK: Well, I think the city of Edmonton's position – again, we don't have a council-endorsed position, but I would think that their position would still be that there are too many variances in the priorities of the respective agendas between agrarian and nonagrarian peoples, so I don't know whether one person could effectively represent both sides.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

Well, we want to thank you very much. We look forward to the city appearing at our March sittings.

MR. VAN SCHAIK: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we've covered everybody here today. Is there anybody in the audience who wants to make any comments or make a submission or solve our problems for us? I guess if there's nobody else who wishes to speak to us today, we'll adjourn for this afternoon. These hearings are starting again at 7 o'clock tonight. This afternoon's session is now adjourned.

Thank you.

[The hearing adjourned from 2:50 p.m. to 7:02 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like your attention. We're going to start this portion of the public hearings of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. We were scheduled to start at 7 o'clock, and it appears to be 7:02. There are not too many people here. I don't know whether it was because of the weather, but for those who did brave the weather, we want to congratulate you for coming.

I'd like to start with some introductory remarks. My name is Edward Wachowich, and I am the chairman of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I am also the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta. I have a feeling that my other job will be much easier than this one, but I hope not.

Let me introduce you to the other members of the commission. On my far left is Robert Grbavac of Raymond, Alberta, and on my immediate right is Joseph Lehane of Innisfail, Alberta. On my far right is John McCarthy of Calgary, and on my immediate left is Wally Worth of Edmonton. The five people you see before you make up the commission, and I want to say that we are very happy to be here to receive your comments and consider your thinking with respect to our duties.

Why are we here? The commission is holding public hearings here in Edmonton to receive and to consider your arguments and points of view with respect to the areas, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions in Alberta. We must do this according to a particular set of rules, which I will review in a moment.

I want to assure you that every member of the commission has reviewed the law and the literature which has been recently written concerning electoral boundaries in Alberta. So I want to tell you that our minds are open inasmuch as we have not reached any conclusions, but I need to remind you also that our minds are not empty. We have given this matter a lot of thought, we have reviewed the law, we have reviewed the work of previous commissions and committees who have studied boundaries in Alberta, and we have reviewed what the courts have said about electoral boundaries in this province and in Canada.

I would like to put before you for your consideration the following summary of the law of Alberta with respect to electoral boundaries. Our function is to review the existing electoral boundaries and to make proposals to the Legislative Assembly about the areas, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions in Alberta.

We have very limited time to accomplish this task. We must submit a report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly setting out our recommendations with respect to areas, boundaries, and names of the proposed electoral divisions, with our reasons, by the 31st of January 1996. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall make the report public and publish the commission's proposals in the *Alberta Gazette* as soon as possible.

The commission is required to hold two sets of public hearings. This is the first set. These hearings are being held before we make any report or proposal to the Speaker. The second set of hearings will be held in 1996, probably in March, after our report to the Speaker has been made public. We are required to hold public hearings to enable representations to be made to us by any person or organization in Alberta about the areas, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions. We are required to give reasonable public notice of the times, places, and purposes of our public meetings, which we have done in this case.

After our report is published by the Speaker, we will undertake a second set of public hearings, as is required by the Act, and lay

before the Speaker a final report by June 30, 1996. Again, the Speaker will make this report public and publish it in the *Alberta Gazette*.

If more than one report is submitted from among the members of the commission, the report of the majority is the report of the commission, but if there is no majority, my report, or the report of the chair, is the report of the commission.

The final report of the commission is then laid at the earliest opportunity before the Legislative Assembly, immediately if it is then sitting or within seven days after the beginning of the next sitting.

New electoral divisions. Then it is up to the Legislative Assembly by resolution to approve or approve with alterations the proposals of the commission and to introduce a Bill to establish new electoral divisions for Alberta in accordance with the resolution. This law would come into force when proclaimed before the holding of the next general election.

Redistribution rules. Population. Population means the most recent population set out in the most recent decennial census of the population of Alberta as provided by Statistics Canada. We are also required to add the population of Indian reserves which were not included in the census as provided by the federal department of Indian and northern affairs. But if the commission believes there is another provincewide census more recent than the decennial census compiled by Statistics Canada which provides the population for proposed electoral divisions, then the commission may use this data.

Number of electoral divisions. The second rule is that the commission is required to divide Alberta into 83 proposed electoral divisions. The commission may take into consideration any factors it considers appropriate, but it must and shall take into consideration the following.

One, the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; two, sparsity and density of population; three, common community interests and community organizations, including those of Indian reserves and Métis settlements; four, whenever possible existing community boundaries within the cities of Edmonton and Calgary; five, the existing municipal boundaries; six, the number of municipalities and other local authorities; seven, geographical features, including existing road systems; eight, the desirability of understandable and clear boundaries.

Population of electoral divisions. The population rule is that a proposed electoral division must not be more than 25 percent above or below the average population for all 83 electoral divisions. There is an exception to the 25 percent rule. In the case of not more than four proposed electoral divisions the commission may have a population that is as much as 50 percent below the average population of the electoral divisions in Alberta if three of the following five criteria are met: one, the area exceeds 20,000 square kilometres or the surveyed area of the proposed electoral division exceeds 15,000 square kilometres; two, the distance from the Legislature Building in Edmonton to the nearest boundary of any proposed electoral division by the most direct highway route is more than 150 kilometres; three, there is no town in the proposed electoral division that has a population exceeding 4,000 people; four, the area of the proposed electoral division contains an Indian reserve or a Métis settlement; five, the proposed electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the province of Alberta.

In respect of the Crowsnest Pass, for our purposes the boundaries Act instructs us that the municipality of Crowsnest Pass is not a town.

This is a very general overview of the legislation, but we must now also turn to the guidance that has been provided by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Supreme Court of Alberta.

What have the Supreme Courts said? The Supreme Court of Canada and the Alberta Court of Appeal have agreed that the right to vote under the Charter includes, one, the right to vote; two, the right to have the political strength or value or force of the vote an elector casts not unduly diluted; three, the right to effective representation; four, the right to have the parity of the votes of others diluted, but not unduly, in order to gain effective representation or as a matter of practical necessity. The rulings of the Supreme Courts as well as the electoral boundaries Act must guide our decisions and ultimately the proposals that we make to the Legislature.

In respect of the focus, the commission in its public advertising has clearly stated that it is considering after its preliminary deliberations, one, merging a number of rural electoral divisions into contiguous or neighbouring divisions; two, adding a number of urban electoral divisions to Edmonton and Calgary; three, any other revisions necessary to achieve one and two.

We have set forth our focus after preliminary deliberations. We have not reached any final conclusions. The commission wishes to hear the views of all Albertans with respect to this focus. Please let me assure you that our preliminary deliberations are preliminary and that no final conclusions have been drawn. The commission will not move to the consideration of proposals without the benefit of input from individuals and organizations in Alberta. Indeed, this is the purpose of the public hearings.

I also want to say that without the public input the work of the commission will be seriously impaired. We want to hear the arguments and the reasoning of all organizations and individuals in Alberta with respect to the areas, the boundaries, and the names of all electoral divisions.

Those are my opening remarks. We will start the evening hearings by hearing from Lesley Gronow of the St. Albert PC Association.

7:12

MS GRONOW: Your Honour Chief Judge Wachowich, members of the commission, thank you for this opportunity to address the commission this evening. I'm joined by our constituency president, Harm Smid.

For at least the last 20 years the issue of electoral boundaries in St. Albert has been a very contentious topic with both those who are always politically active on a regular basis and those who only vote when they feel very strongly about a particular issue. The most recent boundary change moved the northwest quadrant of our city into the constituency of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, a cumbersome combination, which alienated many members of our community. These people now feel as if they're inadequately represented and improperly aligned in a constituency which has Spruce Grove as its major centre.

In this present review of electoral boundaries we would ask the commission to recognize the strong community sense of history and achievement of St. Albertans through a culturally sensitive electoral boundary. We would ask that you consider a realistic demographic reflection of the city of St. Albert for future change to electoral boundaries.

The current 1995 population of the city of St. Albert is 45,895. A very low estimate of approximately 2 percent to 2.5 percent growth would give St. Albert's population an increase to 50,000 by 1998, 57,000 by 2003, and a predicted 70,000 by the year 2013. The largest predicted areas of growth are in the northwest and in the southeast sectors. St. Albert's population is extremely stable in that over 45 percent of people changing addresses in St. Albert were residents moving within St. Albert. This suggests an extremely strong sense of community pride and a high degree of satisfaction with their city.

Our recommendation to the commission is that the city of St. Albert be recognized as such in legislation through the creation of two new distinct St. Albert constituencies. We have three options which we raise for the consideration of the commission.

Our first option would be to divide the city using the St. Albert Trail as a naturally occurring boundary and create an east/west split. The 1995 census demonstrates that this would result in two virtually equal constituencies: east with a population of 21,975, and west with a population of 23,920. Given future growth predictions, this split would permit further expansion without the disruption of future electoral boundary changes to accommodate an increased population.

The second option which we raise for your consideration is that you use the Sturgeon River as the natural boundary to create a north/south split. The population distribution according to the 1995 census would then be north 16,951 and south 28,944.

Our third option is that if you use the above option, or option 2, of creating the natural north/south division using the Sturgeon River as the boundary, we could address the population disparity by incorporating the area north of St. Albert up to and including Morinville.

Archeologists can trace the earliest signs of community in historic St. Albert back to 5000 BP. All my efforts today fail to reveal a definition as to the meaning of BP, but I understand it's politically correct and replaced BC some time ago amongst archeologists.

St. Albert as we now know it was founded and settled by Father Lacombe and 20 Métis families in 1861. The people of St. Albert take great pride in the history of our community, from the fact that we survived a major smallpox outbreak in 1870 to the fact that we had our own police force from 1909 to 1944 to the establishment of St. Albert as a city in 1977 and our successful resistance to annexation to Edmonton in 1980.

St. Albertans also take great pride in the community itself and are prepared to commit thousands of volunteer hours each year to a wide variety of activities. These activities have included the Winter Games, support for the Arden Theatre and the heritage museum, some of whom, unfortunately, were unable to define BP for me today, and many other annual events and activities. With this strong commitment to the community, it is understandable that those who presently live in the northwest sector feel that their elected representative should be familiar with and reside in St. Albert. It is this situation that we would ask the commission to review and rectify through the creation of two new St. Albert constituencies.

In addition to this brief presentation I brought you quite an amount of census information to which you can refer in your future research.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms Gronow.

Mr. Smid, is there anything you wish to add?

MR. SMID: No. I just wondered whether they had a copy of this.

MS GRONOW: No, it's just a separate page.

MR. SMID: Oh, it's a separate page. Okay. I just referred to this. I've got it loose, and you've got it. Great.

THE CHAIRMAN: I wish to apologize for the music in the background.

MS GRONOW: Sir, I'd love to join in.

THE CHAIRMAN: Despite that, we were able to hear you. If anything is possible, we'll see what we can do about it.

MS GRONOW: When I saw your arrows pointing this way, I thought it was truly divine guidance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, are there any questions from any of the members of the panel?

MR. WORTH: Yes, I have a question. I don't know whether I should sing it out or just speak in my normal voice.

You've provided us with three options. I wonder what your reaction would be to a fourth one. As you know, in other parts of the province, such as Grande Prairie and Medicine Hat in particular, there exist constituencies that consist of half of the city and the surrounding rural area. Now, you implied in a sense that one of the constituencies in option 3 could have a rural component.

MS GRONOW: Exactly.

MR. WORTH: What would your reaction be to an option 4 in which you split east/west but had, if you like, a rural/urban constituency?

MS GRONOW: Certainly that would not be a problem. The only reason we haven't included that in here is because we were unable to obtain a lot of the census information from those areas. The people who live on acreages in particular, both to the west and to the east of St. Albert, view St. Albert as their major centre, commute to St. Albert, do their shopping in St. Albert, send their children to schools in St. Albert. So that would be a perfectly acceptable split in that it still recognizes that St. Albert is the major centre and the city.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert.

MR. GRBAVAC: No. I was only going to comment that the split in option 1 was below the 25 percent, at variance from the mean, and I think my concern has been addressed by your recognition of the possibility of a 'rurban,' if you will, riding.

MS GRONOW: I think, too, if you're looking at the electoral quotient of 30,000, both the east/west split – if you look at our predicted demographic growth, certainly by the year 2001, 2003 we will have achieved that 30,000.

THE CHAIRMAN: Our problem is that we're not allowed to do that. Nice try.

Joe, have you got any questions?

MR. LEHANE: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: John?

MR. McCARTHY: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for coming and for your fine presentation. I again wish to apologize for the competition that we're giving you.

MS GRONOW: And it's tough competition. Thank you, sir.

MR. SMID: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presentation is by David Hancock and Gary Sciur of the Edmonton-Whitemud PC Association.

MR. SCIUR: Your Honour Judge Wachowich, members of the commission, it's indeed a pleasure to make a presentation today on behalf of the Edmonton-Whitemud PC Association. We corresponded with you on November 5 and set out our general position that the current boundaries within the city of Edmonton and certainly Edmonton-Whitemud should remain as they are. If we use the 1991 census data, we believe it can be argued that the status quo can be maintained notwithstanding that the commission may choose to add one or two additional seats to Edmonton if that is found to be appropriate. If additional seats are added in Edmonton and it has an impact on Edmonton-Whitemud, we would only ask that we consider community boundaries and community leagues, which are primary factors at least within the city of Edmonton and certainly within Edmonton-Whitemud.

Mr. Hancock has prepared a written submission, which has been distributed to your clerk, and I would ask Mr. Hancock to introduce the written submission.

7:22

MR. HANCOCK: I won't go through in detail what's in the written submission but summarize it briefly for you, reiterating that we think that the status quo is sustainable not only in Edmonton but across the province. We think that the current boundaries and the number of people per riding are not unfair and that there's a greater need to ensure stability and continuity, which would override the desire to change the boundaries. The more appropriate time for a revision of boundaries would be after the completion of the next census and the next election.

It is our view that our constituents should have at least two elections on any given set of boundaries. We've just had the one election, and there has been considerable confusion with the change in boundaries. Nonetheless, we do recognize that there have been major changes in the legislation and that you may see those major changes as requiring you to make some change. Indeed your preliminary report or circulation to the public indicated that there was some suggestion that there may be more seats for Edmonton or Calgary.

If that was the case, then we believe that in drawing the boundaries within the city of Edmonton, you should have concern for the fact that certain areas are growing and expanding and that other areas are pretty much static and have filled out to the extent that they're going to. That in fact was taken into account on the last redistribution so that the central constituencies have a much larger population than the periphery constituencies. Edmonton-Whitemud would be a periphery constituency in that we have in the communities of Whitemud Creek, Brookview, Carter Crest, Eagle

Ridge, River Ridge, Falconer Heights, et cetera, a number of communities which are expanding fairly rapidly. In fact, city of Edmonton numbers would tell us that since the 1991 census, our constituency has expanded by 6,000 people and is expanding at a rate of 1,400 people per year.

Under the last redistribution numbers our riding at 29,885 was 2.9 percent below average. On the current population figures it would be 16.6 percent above average. While we recognize that you have to draw the boundaries using the 1991 numbers, we believe that the variances should take into account those ridings which are growing as compared to those ridings which are static. In arguing that you should maintain the status quo, we would say – and most of the arguments that have been made in the past I think still hold true – that some form of variance is necessary to ensure equitable representation. The principles of representation by population come into conflict with the principles of equitable representation when you deal with redistribution.

Some would argue that modern technology has eliminated the problem of distance and transportation routes or the problems of communicating with multiple boards, but we would concur with the arguments that have been made by a number of our rural counterparts which indicate that it is still a lot more difficult to represent a rural riding than it is to represent an urban riding, that population numbers are not the key factors. The key factor is the ability of the MLA to consult with the people he or she represents, not just electronically but face to face, in order to be informed and effective as a member. There's no question that even with new technology, the farther you are away from the capital city and the larger the geographical area you represent, the more difficult it is for an MLA to provide access and representation necessary and desirable for their constituency and still maintain a quality family life.

Some would argue that it's important for the power of each vote to be equal. These same people are heard arguing that we need an equal, effective, and elected Senate in order to balance representation by population with the interests of the regions in our country. We would contend that similar factors should be taken into account in drawing our electoral boundaries in Alberta. We don't have a Senate, and we don't want one. So in drawing the boundaries for our unicameral House, we should take into account the fact that the regions need to be equitably represented.

In terms of effectiveness of representation we would argue that with the numbers of representatives we have in the cities now, 20 in Calgary and 18 in Edmonton, we have more in each city than we have municipal councillors. To add more will not necessarily create better and more effective representation in the urban areas. There needs to be a balance. The current boundaries provide some of that balance. They may not be the best boundaries – certainly with any of the boundaries you could argue that they should be changed in various spots – but change at this point for the sake of change is not necessary, and we would argue that you should maintain the status quo.

Having said that, we recognize that you have a difficult problem with the numbers and the arguments that have been made that there should be more adherence to a strict representation by population and less variance. If you make the decision that you should add one or two seats to the city of Edmonton, then we believe that community boundaries are extremely important. Insofar as adding those two seats would affect Edmonton-Whitemud, we would recommend that the Riverbend/Terwillegar area as a homogeneous unit be maintained and that if there's any reduction in the size of Edmonton-Whitemud, that it come by removing the areas east of

119th Street and south of 23rd Avenue, which would be the Yellowbird/Twin Brooks areas.

We would believe that the Riverbend portion, even though it would be a small constituency, could be sustained as a small constituency because it has approximately eight growing new community areas encompassed in its area. We would believe that the constituency which would be made out of a portion of the old Rutherford constituency and by adding Twin Brooks and Yellowbird should as well be a smaller constituency but not as small as the Riverbend portion, again because it has three growing communities in its southern area. The balance of the area could be taken up into a third constituency, the Strathcona constituency moving south and the new constituency inserted in the more central area drawing from Strathcona and Gold Bar.

I have not provided you with proposed maps because it's a lot of work to do, and until knowing whether they would be either warranted or appreciated and knowing whether or not there would be one seat or two seats, it would be an exercise in frustration. But we'd be happy to do so if you were to indicate that you thought that would be a useful submission.

In summary, with respect to the changes, if you felt it necessary to make changes, the numbers would suggest that there should be two new seats in Edmonton. If there were two new seats in Edmonton, we would suggest that you maintain the concept of the larger central constituencies as was done in the last redistribution with the periphery constituencies of Whitemud, McClung, Meadowlark, Roper, Glengarry, Manning, Avonmore, and Ellerslie, the ones which have growing communities. Not all of those on the edge of the city do have growing communities. Those ones should be marginally smaller than the central constituencies, and the realignment on natural boundaries using the Whitemud Creek and the Whitemud freeway as boundaries in the south along with Calgary Trail would be the important distinctions.

That would be a summary of what I've provided to you in the written submission.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Hancock. Are there any questions of either Mr. Sciur or Mr. Hancock?

MR. WORTH: I have sort of a comment, and I'll conclude with a question as well. I think the logic of your presentation, of allowing for some additional population in the inner-city ridings in which there will probably not be the kind of growth there will be in the constituencies around the periphery, certainly makes good sense. The question I have to ask you is: could you sort of define for me what you see as the characteristics or criteria by which one would judge effective representation or, to use your term, equitable representation? Do you have certain criteria that you could suggest that one would use to define that?

7:32

MR. HANCOCK: Well, I think there are fair limits, and I think the Act sets out a 25 percent limit. I don't think you necessarily want to go to that limit, but you could. More importantly, in my view it's the ability of an MLA to meet with the people they represent to find out what their views are and bring them back to the Legislature to represent them which puts transportation corridors to be very important, which puts the number of diverse groups within the constituency to be important, community of interest to be important, and economic and training units to be important. Those break down in the city. Some of those are still there, but they're not nearly as

important as they are when you get outside of the urban areas. When you are defining a city constituency, I think you do want to pay attention primarily to communities and to natural boundaries and large transportation corridors which segregate communities.

MR. SCIUR: Just a further comment on communities. Community leagues seem to work rather well in defining community boundaries within various sectors of the city, and certainly our recommendation focuses to some degree on the Yellowbird community league and the area it serves in the southeastern portion of Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. LEHANE: I take it, then, Mr. Hancock, that the thrust of your presentation is that the present boundaries with the population variances that are there are justifiable in terms of equitable representation to all Albertans.

MR. HANCOCK: Yes. Although we may have come to them by a difficult route, I think the present boundaries are certainly equitable at the present time and could be sustained until the time of the next census.

THE CHAIRMAN: John, do you have any questions?

MR. McCARTHY: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for coming. I appreciate what you have said. One comment I would like to make is that you're the first of what I would call urban representatives to say that you concur with the argument of the rural people. Most of the urban people that have come before us so far are saying that they want more equal representation.
Thanks for coming.

MR. SCIUR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next person to make a presentation is Dave Quest from the Sherwood Park PC Association. Mr. Quest, you can take Mr. Hancock's sign down just in case you get confused.

MR. QUEST: Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Sherwood Park PC Association we would like to thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Sherwood Park's current population is approximately 39,000, so it does definitely make us, I suppose, a little large for the 31,000 average that we're looking for. But Sherwood Park is very much like a small community. The clubs and so on all centre around that very closely knit community. We don't want to have a situation where we end up like St. Albert, for example, where a small section of it is sectioned out and the rest of the community is basically left intact where it comes to how we're represented.

A number of arguments for maintaining the status quo in certain communities have been made this evening already. I think the best was a submission made by St. Albert. We have a lot in common with that community as far as size, population, interests, community, and so on. So that is our option A, if you like. Our preference would be to maintain the status quo. Again at 39,000 we know we're somewhat larger than we should be, but, again, we do have very strong common community interests. We believe that it would be

in the best interests of Sherwood Park as a community to be represented as one community.

Now, if the decision is that there has to be some sort of split, then our second option, option B, would be that Sherwood Park be split evenly into two new constituencies, a Sherwood Park-North and a Sherwood Park-South that include the entire county of Strathcona. Again, we think there would still be some common community interest in the county in maintaining our provincial representation within our municipal boundaries.

The population of Sherwood Park South would run roughly through the municipality of Sherwood Park itself and would encompass the bottom half of the county of Strathcona running east to west along Baseline Road, going south at Broadmoor Boulevard to roughly halfway through the Broadmoor golf course, then running east through the golf course along Granada Boulevard, south to Wye Road, and then using Wye Road as the division, running east to the eastern boundary of the county. The population of the new Sherwood Park-South constituency would be approximately 32,000, and the Sherwood Park-North constituency, including the urban and rural, would be approximately 31,000.

The idea here is to have even urban and rural representation in the new constituencies. This would raise some questions on what the future of some of the neighbouring constituencies would be, especially Clover Bar. Again, if it's something that you deem as absolutely necessary, then that's how our association would like to see it done: evenly as opposed to a situation where one small section of urban Sherwood Park is sectioned out and placed into a neighbouring rural constituency.

This concludes our submission.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine.

Mr. Fulford, do you wish to add to this?

MR. FULFORD: No. I think that's fair.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions? Go ahead.

MR. WORTH: You're the fourth group now that we have heard from your particular area, and we're getting a number of proposals advanced to us. Certainly one of the very strong and obvious impressions we have is that there is concern in that area with respect to the nature of the constituencies and their boundaries. So we're going to have to I think look at the various options that have been presented and obviously make a decision. My question is: what do you see as the relationship, if any, between what you're talking about and the community in Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan? Fort Saskatchewan is part of that area that we've been receiving submissions about. Do you see any way of incorporating or establishing a relationship with that particular unit?

MR. QUEST: Fort Saskatchewan is very much a close community of its own. I would think there would be some difference in the goals and interests in the two communities. Now, this is just my personal feeling at this point, but I would suggest that it would be preferable for Fort Saskatchewan to perhaps be linked or merged with maybe something in the Redwater area. Currently, of course, it's outside our municipal boundaries, outside the county of Strathcona. The population of the county is about 63,500, so ideally if we can maintain the constituencies within the municipal boundaries, we would have just about bang on the right number.

7:42

MR. WORTH: Well, your perception of the way Fort Saskatchewan should be constituted squares with theirs.

MR. QUEST: Oh, is that right? Good.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have some maps? We'd appreciate receiving them, because your north-south division, for the purposes of the committee, will help. Thanks very much.

Joe, do you have any comments?

MR. LEHANE: Perhaps you could just comment with respect to what the growth has been in the Sherwood Park area. You used the figure of 63,500. Is that a present population figure or a '91 census figure?

MR. QUEST: It's a 1994 estimate is what it is.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I wish to thank you for coming.

MR. QUEST: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presentation is that of Sara Peacock, Edmonton-Gold Bar PC Association.

MS PEACOCK: Your Honour, members of the commission, my name is Sara Peacock, and I'm a member of the board of directors of the Edmonton-Gold Bar Progressive Conservative Association. The members of the Edmonton-Gold Bar Progressive Conservative Association respectfully submit that the boundaries of the constituency should remain as they presently exist. In making this submission, it is our belief that a fair, equal, effective, and democratic representation of all Albertans, including those who live in Edmonton-Gold Bar, should be the goal of this commission.

We have considered a number of matters. Firstly, effective representation. Although Edmonton-Gold Bar has one of the largest populations of any of the constituencies across Alberta, it is geographically small and has a community of interest which allows for effective representation. This requires good communication between constituents and their elected representative, an identification of shared goals and needs, the ability of an elected representative to actively participate in their constituency and also to communicate the needs and the goals of the constituency to other elected representatives.

Communication is a key element. Clearly, urban ridings have an advantage in this regard. The number of methods and the ease of communication is great. The ability to identify shared goals and needs within a geographically small, if populous, urban riding is much easier than to identify the goals and needs of a multifaceted rural riding, which may include farm, small town, and even urban centres. For example, interests such as personal safety and crime, infrastructure, delivery of health services, and education concerns may differ in both substance and in priority in a rural riding. In Edmonton-Gold Bar these interests are more likely to be of equal concern and priority to all constituents. In Edmonton-Gold Bar effective representation can be maintained despite the significant population because of the ease of communication and community of interests.

Clearly density of population is a consideration, and while it is an important consideration, it is only one of several matters to be addressed. The density of the population, whether high or low,

brings with it advantages and disadvantages. Density of population is only valuable if it is considered within the context of effective and fair representation. In Edmonton-Gold Bar there's a variance of 20.6 percent, less than the acceptable limit which has been established. However, boundaries cannot and should not be based on arbitrary numbers. We have included common community interests and organizations, existing community boundaries, municipal boundaries, municipalities, and local authorities as one unit because for Edmonton-Gold Bar these are really very similar considerations.

It is essential that electoral boundaries respect the boundaries of member community leagues established by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. These boundaries are based on the traditional concept of community, including geographical and demographic considerations. People should be able to participate in all matters which affect their person, their property, and their community within their own community. This includes participating in political activities in their own community. Splitting communities is not acceptable. Respecting the existing community or municipal boundaries also aids an elected representative in meeting the needs of the citizens of the constituency as they share common interests and needs which are more easily identified and can be addressed in a more focused fashion. In Edmonton-Gold Bar we have 10 community leagues, all of which are established long-term communities. They are static, and they are not likely to grow or to diminish.

Another consideration is geographical features. Geographical features such as rivers, roadways, and topography are relevant only to the extent that they impact communication and definition of communities. I have an interesting story about how they affect communities from my own youth. I grew up on a small farm outside of a community called Flatbush. We were on the other side of the river, which was west of the Pembina. The federal ridings were established based on east and west of the Pembina River, so our very small community, which was linked only to the town of Flatbush by a bridge across the river and to the major trading centre of Westlock, was in fact cut off from our natural community and put in with a constituency with a trading centre in Barrhead, which we had no direct link to. It may have made a lot of sense when they were looking at the map, but it didn't make any sense whatsoever when considering the point of view of a community.

A final consideration is the desirability of clear and understandable boundaries. If we wish to promote involvement in provincial politics and government, people need to know where they may participate. The first step is in ensuring that each Albertan can easily identify their home constituency. We need to establish boundaries which take into consideration future growth potential which can be maintained for a significant period of time.

This is the fourth time in six years that the provincial electoral boundaries have been officially reviewed. The ongoing revision is frustrating, confusing, and off-putting. Just prior to our last provincial election we implemented the present boundary changes. Our riding association held a founding meeting, created a new constitution, elected a new board of directors, sold new memberships, welcomed new constituents, and filed all that paperwork with the Chief Electoral Officer, and now it's being suggested that we should repeat that process when it will be required in any event in 2001, which is only six years away.

In Edmonton-Gold Bar we believe that any disadvantage which may arise from the significant population is more than offset by the ease of communication, the community of interest, the respect for community boundaries, and the small geographical size of the

constituency. The density of the population in this constituency should not be the overriding consideration in determining boundaries. The present boundaries are justified and reasonable. We submit that they are right.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That was a very pointed, concise presentation. Well done.

Are there any questions?

MR. GRBAVAC: Just a hypothetical question, if you will. Assuming that a constituency were added to Edmonton or conceivably two constituencies were added to Edmonton, would your position change with respect to your current boundaries?

7:52

MS PEACOCK: No.

MR. GRBAVAC: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe or John?

I guess there are no further questions. Thank you for coming.

MS PEACOCK: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Reeve George Visser, the reeve of the city of Barrhead. The county of Barrhead. I'm sorry. I promoted the town of Barrhead a little too fast.

MR. VISSER: It sounded pretty good there, Your Honour.

THE CHAIRMAN: I just don't understand the abbreviations that they've given.

MR. VISSER: Your Honour, members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to make a presentation to you. With me is Les Zylinski, deputy reeve of the county of Barrhead, and our county manager, Doug Tymchysyn. I understand, sir, that you have copies of our submission. Is that correct?

THE CHAIRMAN: Correct.

MR. VISSER: We sent them to the clerk. I'm not sure if I'm going to read from it but perhaps make some comments. The constituency of Barrhead-Westlock was established in 1992. Previous to that we were aligned with the south of Barrhead and the district of Onoway. We've got used to the idea now of working and being tied in with Westlock, so I guess the logical conclusion of that is that we would really like to leave that as it is.

The gist, though, of our submission is that we would like to address the provincial issue more than the specific boundaries of Barrhead-Westlock. To that extent, I guess, I would just like to say that we have been really heartened to hear the submissions from Edmonton-Whitemud and Edmonton-Gold Bar, which just preceded ours, and hearing from an urban setting or urban people who have basically concurred with our conclusions that we would like to leave the situation at the status quo.

Our submission basically is saying a number of things, and one of them is that there have been a number of changes recently. We hoped there would be some stability. We think we can leave

everything pretty well the way it is, and we can look at it again in six years. There's been a number of changes on the provincial scene, as you all are aware, and to again change boundaries and look at electoral changes we think is counterproductive. That's basically the gist of our submission.

We heard Edmonton-Whitemud saying things like the status quo can be sustained, and also they said that recent changes have created instability. So, Mr. Chairman, rather than just read from our submission – you have a copy. We believe it is self-explanatory. We would like to maintain the status quo. We have quoted extensively in our document from other particular people who have gone before us and made submissions.

I would draw your attention to the paragraph that we put in from our submission in 1991 where we said that “the matter of population density or sparsity makes a big difference to MLAs when serving their constituents.” To illustrate our point, we would compare vast areas such as Lesser Slave Lake, Fort McMurray, Peace River, Dunvegan, Athabasca, Lac La Biche, or West Yellowhead to some of the more densely populated areas within the province. Rural areas are at a great disadvantage in this regard. Population therefore cannot be the only criterion used in establishing electoral boundaries.

A formula could be adopted wherein a combination of factors could be used to determine boundaries such as the local boundaries, population density, geography, distance from major centres, road network, and even a factor to address the extreme remote communities where air access may be the only means of transportation. We made that submission in 1991, and we believe that some of those things have been incorporated.

We've also included in there a quotation from the AAMDC. Robert knows who I'm talking about when I talk about them. That's our provincial body that all our counties and municipal districts are represented through. They also made a submission in 1992, and the quotes that are in that document are in ours as well. Also, we said that the decision made by the Supreme Court of Canada, by Madam Justice Beverley McLachlin, said:

Before examining the electoral boundaries to determine if they are justified, it may be useful to mention some of the factors other than equality of voting power which figure in the analysis. One of the most important is the fact that it is more difficult to represent rural ridings than urban. The material before us suggests that not only are rural ridings harder to serve because of difficulty in transport and communications, but that rural voters make greater demands on their elected representatives, whether because of the absence of alternative resources to be found in urban centres or for other reasons. Thus the goal of effective representation may justify somewhat lower voter populations in rural areas.

So those are some of the things we have included in our document.

We have concluded by saying that we in the county of Barrhead feel strongly about these issues. We have chosen to come to an urban setting to make the views of the rural people known. Representation by population does not always mean adequate representation of all people.

Please keep these issues before you as you make your decision regarding any changes that may be forthcoming. Again, to summarize, I think we were very happy to hear some of those same ideas expressed by our urban cousins, and we are grateful for that.

Mr. Chairman, Your Honour, this basically is our submission.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Visser. I'd like to get Mr. Zylinski's first name, please.

MR. ZYLINSKI: Les.

THE CHAIRMAN: Les Zylinski?

MR. ZYLINSKI: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is for the *Hansard* reporter. Do you wish to say anything?

MR. ZYLINSKI: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: And the other gentleman, I didn't get your name.

MR. TYMCHYSHYN: Doug Tymchyshyn.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Do you wish to say anything?

MR. TYMCHYSHYN: No. That's fine.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions? Robert.

MR. GRBAVAC: George, the only comment I would make is that we are not here by our own choice. We are here because the previous boundary configuration was challenged before the courts, and the courts mandated that this process take place. So it is certainly not our desire to have frequent boundary commission reviews. Unfortunately, the status quo precipitated what we have before us today.

Now, that can be addressed in a number of ways. One is to maybe alter the existing boundaries. The other may be in fact to give supportive reasons as to why the status quo ought to in fact be maintained.

I'm just curious as to what you would feel would be appropriate variances in terms of urban versus rural ridings from a population perspective.

MR. VISSER: Well, we had said in our submission, Robert, that we can live with the decision that was made in the Saskatchewan court case regarding a 25 percent variation and in extreme cases up to 50 percent. We think that's fair. That makes some sense.

I just want to say, too, that we understand very correctly that you have no choice but to hold this hearing, but we think you do have something to say about the outcome of the hearing, if you like. I think you have a unique opportunity to say: we've heard a lot of people say that the status quo makes some sense. You've even heard from urban people who say: we understand the issues as they relate to the rural population. By hearing those things, I think you would have the opportunity to make your submission based on those findings, and then you would still follow the legality of the law, I would hope.

8:02

THE CHAIRMAN: It's unfortunate that you weren't here to hear the city of Edmonton's presentation this afternoon.

MR. VISSER: I suppose they were against what we've said.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is correct. They're saying that urban people are underrepresented and that things should be changed to bring something closer to equality.

MR. VISSER: Well, I guess, sir, I expected that, and that's why we were very pleasantly surprised to hear two submissions from urban areas basically agreeing with what we are saying. So I would also suggest probably that there are differences of opinion in the two major cities.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was only mentioning that so you wouldn't get the wrong impression of today's hearings. What you say about what you've heard tonight is correct, but that wasn't all of the presentations that we had today.

Are there any other questions?

MR. WORTH: I have just a brief question so that you can help educate me. You quoted from Justice McLachlin's judgment, and in that she said that "rural voters make greater demands on their elected representatives." Could you tell me about a couple of those demands that perhaps urban people don't understand or don't make?

MR. VISSER: Rural people tend to be very well educated about who is representing them, so what they tend to do is ask for help in many areas. Most rural MLAs, as I understand it, maintain offices in either one or two towns, and those offices are staffed by a staff that usually is fairly busy because there's a constant demand – from soup to nuts, just about, the issues that people ask. So I believe that she is correct when she says that rural people make more demands. I can't be more specific. I can't off the top of my head think of demands that they make. I'm not aware of how they operate in urban areas, but I'm quoting from her. She's made this statement, and I defer to her judgment.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: If there are no further questions, we want to thank you for coming and making your fine presentation.

The next presentation is that of Austin Mardon. Could you tell us whom you represent, Mr. Mardon?

MR. A. MARDON: The public.

THE CHAIRMAN: The public. That's fine. We thought that if you were representing some organization, we just wanted to know.

MR. A. MARDON: Sorry; we aren't.

THE CHAIRMAN: You're entitled to represent yourself or the public. Go ahead.

MR. A. MARDON: Our first recommendation is that the number of Alberta electoral divisions be reduced from the current 83 to 78 – this is a reduction of 5 electoral divisions – that each of the 26 new electoral divisions are three-member constituencies, that the new Legislature will consist of 78 members: 26 elected as assemblymen, 26 elected as councillors, and 26 as legislators. The 26 new electoral divisions will have contiguous boundaries as in the present 26 Alberta federal ridings.

Our recommendation 2: that the woman candidate with the highest number of votes will be retained as the councillor, that the male candidate with the highest number of votes will be returned as the assemblyman, and the rest of the candidates, female or male, would

be returned as legislators in each of the 26 electoral divisions in the 78-seat Legislature.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which was the female again?

MR. A. MARDON: Councillor.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

DR. E. MARDON: It is our opinion that a lot of money is being wasted . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Pardon me. Can we get your name, please?

DR. E. MARDON: Ernest Mardon. We're together.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh. Okay.

DR. E. MARDON: It is being wasted by duplication of effort at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. The idea of having the same area would assist rather than producing three distinctive things.

We are concerned that there's no woman on your commission, and we feel that there should be an effort made in order to give fair and reasonable representation of both men and women. We have recently seen in Calgary where only women were elected to the school board with an adverse effect. Therefore, under this suggestion you will get 33 percent at least women and 33 percent at least men. This is a departure, but it's looking at the whole thing from a different point of view. If we want to cut government, this is certainly one way to do it.

If you go to the second brief, we feel that 83 members for a population our size is too much. There are two ways of eliminating it. You can eliminate it in the urban areas or in the rural areas. One suggestion is to eliminate three ridings in the rural areas. The three ridings we would eliminate would be Chinook, Lesser Slave Lake, and Taber-Warner.

Chinook is in an area of the province that is part of the Palliser Triangle and has had problems with the boundaries bouncing around. The public of Alberta wants some kind of stability. We feel that by bringing south the border of Wainwright and pushing Drumheller over to the Saskatchewan border, we would eliminate it.

The second point is that Lesser Slave Lake has the real problem of having a very small population. It could be joined with Athabasca, but then it would be too large. We feel that historical and cultural and religious factors should be taken into consideration in your deliberations.

This brings us to the third riding that we would eliminate. Cardston at the present moment is extremely small, but it has a distinct cultural, historical, and religious makeup. If you put the Lethbridge-Coutts highway into the Cardston riding, you would have more or less the same type of group; that is, the Mormon country of southern Alberta. If the highway east from Lethbridge to Medicine Hat was pushed into the Chinook riding, it would mean that you would have two ridings of . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you mean Cypress Hills.

8:12

DR. E. MARDON: Cypress Hills, yes.

We just have concern. One expression, by the way, that they use in the European Economic Community elections – they say “topping

up.” It is presently being used in the Edmonton separate school board. They elect people in six ridings, and then they add the seventh man, the also-ran with the highest votes. To prevent changes in the large metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary, we would submit to the commission that you use a topping-up method, the candidate that is among the also-rans that has the highest vote, be it one, two, or three, to enable them to stay the same. That would not change the boundaries at this time, which we really feel would be undesirable, as many of the other submissions have said.

The final recommendation of the two of us who are representing the public would be to take much more care in the naming of ridings. I am ridiculed by my friends from eastern Canada when they say that on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains we have West Yellowhead. They say: “Yellowhead. What does Yellowhead mean? Have you mixed up your geography to give a west to the eastern slopes?” West Yellowhead should be the West Yellowhead Pass. It is one of the three important passes over the Rocky Mountains, and it has a historical background in the name.

Also I do not know why we take the name of a geographical feature from the United States such as in Cardston-Chief Mountain. That's ridiculous. We are in Canada. We have no need to identify a provincial riding by referring to a geographical feature outside it.

With all due respect to the founders of the Barr colonists, who came out as a block settlement, they named the western section of their settlement Alexandria, and unfortunately in 1971 they changed it to Lloydminster. Lloydminster is split in half anyway in the two provinces. By and large, I think the best kinds of names for a constituency are of a geographical nature rather than an individual.

I've been asking my friends in Edmonton for the last two years: where is Roper? Calder had a meaning. It was a thing. They changed it to Roper. The idea of using politicians' names I think is undesirable. You have Manning. Who are you referring to? Preston Manning or Ernest Manning? You have McClung. Is it Nellie McClung, who had a sharp tongue? Is it Mr. Justice McClung, who's sitting on the bench? Then you have the slang expression used in the United States, the worst kind of American jargon: Varsity. That is used usually to indicate a sporting event, a football varsity team, and we have, unfortunately, a riding in Calgary.

Then we have also the feelings of minority groups. I have been associated ever since teaching in Morinville with the French-Canadian Alberta community, and they were highly offended at the present use – it's Lac Ste. Anne; it's not just Ste. Anne. There's no such thing as Ste. Anne.

There's Pincher Creek. We know at one time that Pincher Creek was the largest settlement between Winnipeg and Vancouver. What happened? They crossed the prairies on horseback with no shoes, and they had to put shoes on their horses to go over the pass. They dropped their pincers, their tweezers, into the creek, into the stream, and they had to stay there. That was one of the reasons why it happened.

I feel that part of your mandate is to describe or give a definition of every single constituency name. I think that it will help us in getting an identification of the voters with the riding they represent.

Thank you for your indulgence.

THE CHAIRMAN: I just want to make one comment. We had scheduled as two separate presentations Dr. Ernest George Mardon

and Austin Mardon. I gather we've got the two presentations in one; is that correct?

DR. E. MARDON: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's fine. I just wanted to clear up that point. Any questions?

MR. McCARTHY: I've got a question. You've indicated that you would like the number of seats reduced from 83 to 78. In the event of a tie vote in the House, how would you break the tie vote if it was 39 each? Now, the reason why I'm asking the question is because it would seem to me to make more sense to have an odd number.

DR. E. MARDON: The Speaker only casts a vote if it is a tie. There never would be a tie. The Speaker does not vote. So if you have 39 and 39, the people actually voting on an issue would be an odd number. If the vote is tied, it is not passed by *Robert's Rules* of parliamentary order.

MR. McCARTHY: What if there was a tie vote to appoint the Speaker?

DR. E. MARDON: That has happened on occasions, and they've tossed a coin.

MR. McCARTHY: Thank you.

DR. E. MARDON: That's a problem that various parliaments have always had. If you look back in the history of this province, you've had just as many times even members in the Legislature as odd members.

MR. LEHANE: Dr. Mardon, what do you think of the present population variances between the rural ridings and the urban ridings?

DR. E. MARDON: I feel that they should eliminate two or three rural ridings. In my submission we actually suggested tinkering or band-aiding. I feel that is not the problem. I see no problem with it. I come from Scotland. The Orkneys and Shetlands have been sending somebody to Parliament, and you only have 20,000 votes. In the London districts you have 100,000. This obsession with numbers is strictly 19th century. In the 20th century or the 21st century it might be more important to consider the Mormon country as a unit than just going by strict numbers. I am not appalled by the variances in this map. Minor changes can be, but I don't think it is out of place. Again if you start looking at Australia or the Parliament of Europe, they have a real problem electing people. They are suffering from this problem. There seems to be no problem with the variance of this. I would suggest that Lesser Slave Lake – because it's a long way from Lesser Slave Lake to Fort Chipewyan – should remain as a distinct riding.

No, I see no problem with the present distribution. Like other speakers, I really feel that we have to be able to identify with the name of a member. When you mention Calgary-West, we usually think of former Premier Lougheed, or with Drumheller we think of highway minister Gordon Taylor. Certain names pop up in our

minds and give a feeling of identity. I would stay with your present list by and large.

8:22

MR. McCARTHY: I see in your submission that you are or have been a professor of medieval English literature at the university, and I presume that in that capacity you've come across in your research or whatever, in your studies the dates that you refer to in your submission, the early English dates regarding the two-member constituencies.

DR. E. MARDON: Yes.

MR. McCARTHY: I am just curious. You referred to some very large discrepancies or variances between ridings, if they're described as that, in Britain. Do you have any further information about these discrepancies in Britain currently or historically?

DR. E. MARDON: Historically, yes. You had Old Sarum, which was three oak trees in the middle of a field and an abandoned cathedral, that was abandoned in 1260, and in 1832 was still sending two members to Parliament. The original idea was always, by the way, to send two members, like Prince Edward Island does today. If we adopted our scheme of using federal boundaries, we would be going to the Prince Edward Island model that they use today. I notice that there are six federal ridings at the present moment in Edmonton, and there are six two-member wards; aren't there?

So we have actually the two-member wards at the present time. By using this topping-up by having the next man down as elected, as they do in the separate schools in Edmonton, I feel it would do it. Even the differences in the United Kingdom now are far over the 50 percent mark but for historical reasons. When England had to vote to go and join the English Common Market, they had 474 seats. The Orkneys and Shetlands were the only people who voted to remain out of Europe, so they said that the no side of the ballot never reached the shores of continental Britain itself.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, if there are no further questions, I want to thank you, Dr. Mardon, and Austin Mardon for coming. I just want to make one comment. I know Mr. Justice McClung, and I'm sure that he will say the constituency is not named after him.

DR. E. MARDON: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is David Hughes.

MR. HUGHES: Your Honour, gentlemen, I basically thought about coming here and doing this – fortunately or unfortunately, I went and got the Court of Appeal report because I was a little concerned about what happened, the way the electoral boundaries were set last time. I'm not an historian, and I'm not a lawyer. I don't have any big bias as to who's on the committee, who's on the whatever. I didn't come representing any riding associations or political groups, which makes me kind of unbiased and sort of a flash in the pan here.

I also didn't write up a big submission, because I'm sure by the time you're done, you will be buried in paper and will have had enough tap-dancing done around your table that you will not want to hear or see it ever again. I might add that you'll probably hear a lot of bull back and forth about which way that things should go, how many people should be in one, and how high or how scarce the

density of population blah, blah, blah is, and why it should remain one way or the other.

I come from a rural background. I'll tell you one thing: it would be insulting if you were to tell anybody from the country that they couldn't get hold of anyone. I can guarantee you that someone who lives in a rural riding can get hold of anyone they want faster or as fast, whatever you want to say, as in an urban riding. They know where you are, and if you grow up in a rural setting, you happen to be a little more resourceful about doing that because you know you have to be able to do it.

I picked up this report, and I went down and actually paid to have it photocopied, not knowing I could get it for free. The thing I discovered about most of this in here is that the main reason that nothing was thrown out or there were no big changes made on the boundaries is it seems they didn't really want to upset the political scene that had happened. Those aren't really my words; they're written down here. I don't know how much weight is given to them.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which court decision are you looking at?

MR. HUGHES: Alberta Court of Appeal 9303-0228-AC; I think that's what it is. It basically says that there are no reasons given for the way the boundaries were set up. So if you don't have any reasons why they were set up that way, it's pretty hard to ask that they be changed. It's sort of like: if no money changes hands, nobody does anything wrong.

Anyway, I'm kind of interested to hear what Edmonton-Whitemud and Gold-Bar have to say. I wonder what some of the people who live in that riding would have to say about their having so many more people in it as compared to another riding. I think I might actually go down there and ask.

MR. GUNDERMAN: I'm right here. I'm from Whitemud.

MR. HUGHES: Well, at any rate, what I'm saying is: you know, it's kind of an interesting thing that the variations, although I understand they have to be there because reality says so, seem to be so well defended for such very shabby reasons on occasion. Unfortunately, you know, it's like you said: I don't think you do the country and rural ridings much justice by saying that it's so much harder for them to get hold of anyone. When I've been out there, I can use the RITE line or I can get hold of my MLA a lot faster sometimes than I can in a constituency in the city here. Okay; I might not be able to drop in to the office, but I can get hold of somebody who I actually might know. All right?

I've heard, just walking in here, the last bit. I guess I'm out of sync. I've heard how many urban constituencies say, "Oh, well, we're perfectly happy with the way it is," yet I notice that these people tend to be – how can I say? – connected with the Tory party, which doesn't mean they're bad and evil people. It just seems that they wish to keep the status quo, which I might add was implemented not by an agreement but was imposed by, if I'm not mistaken, three or four provincial Tory ministers, which had a direct result in their getting elected this time. All right? I don't think anyone would really go for that in business. You'd have a hard time selling it to your shareholders.

Now, like I said, I don't have a big speech, and I'm sure by the time you're done, you're going to have all the paperwork you ever want to read and a dozen stories and are set to go to your grandkids about how you'll never do this again. But I intend to watch this. I'm quite sure that if something interesting happens this way, that

nothing changes or we don't come up with some kind of reasonable – reasonable is all I'm saying – answer to the way the boundaries are set and how it's done, the next time it goes to court, I'm sure that it'll go a lot further. This time, like you said, the only reason it says that they didn't go any further is because they couldn't get anybody to give them a reason why the boundaries had been set up the way they were. Okay? That's about all they say as to why they didn't throw it out: no one had any reasons, so they had to sit with it. At the end they say: "But we have a problem with this continuing because it seems we're diluting our representation. We're playing games with the people as to how we're electing everyone."

Now, I have no idea in some regards how big some of the electoral boundaries are. Some of them are quite big. This I can see is a problem also, but there must be some way to get around it. Other countries, I'm sure, have the same problems, and I think they either give their MLAs that are in there more money or they do something to balance it out. They don't say, "Well, the population is worth more here and less there." I defy anyone to come up and say that in public during an election: the population of so-and-so is worth more than this population.

Anyway, I'm not going to take a bunch more time. I have to go and fight my way home through the blizzard, and I'll just leave it at that. I grew up in this province believing that the balance of justice is that: a balance of justice. All right? I would like to one day sit down and say to my kids, "This was the time we sat down and were fair to everyone about what we're doing," not "This is the time a bunch of people sat down again and decided to cut the cards their own way."

Thank you, gentlemen, and enjoy St. Paul. I grew up around there. You'll find the saucer pad very entertaining.

8:32

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you prepared to stay for any questions if there are any?

MR. HUGHES: If you want.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any questions?

MR. GRBAVAC: David, I would just ask you to quantify what you would see as a reasonable deviance from a mean population. I mean, I think you can appreciate that it's not practical . . .

MR. HUGHES: One to one will not work. There's a funny thing; after the election I picked up – I forget what they call it – the enumerators' list. The enumerators' list gives a different variation of how many people actually sort of did anything than the population list. I haven't seen any kids vote yet, yet we use population as the way we go. Okay. Let's do it this way. I can live with the 25 percent variation; that's realistic. The 50 percent variation in certain regards I can also understand, but if you're going to use this kind of system, you don't have people that are directly connected to the system doing anything with it. That's like asking someone who designed and built something that killed and/or caused monetary loss to a company to stand in judgment and say whether that was right or wrong.

I mean, the gentleman who was on before me is telling me that over in England you can have a riding, et cetera, that has no people in it yet sends elected officials to vote on something. Then you can have another riding that has 100,000 people, and they get to send two people. Would you like to live in a riding that has 100,000 people in it, or would you like to live in a riding that has two or

none? The 25 percent variation in that is fine. The 50 percent variation is possibly fine also, but to have the people who are going to get elected decide how much variation is allowable per se kind of asks – I don't know how to say it other than it just doesn't feel very right to me. Okay? I don't have all of the gray that we have in the legal profession on occasion where someone can commit the crime and get away with it because the technicalities allow him to.

Anyway, I'm sorry. I know you have lots to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: No. We don't want to rush you. Are there any other questions?

I want to thank you for coming.

MR. HUGHES: Okay. Have a good trip.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter that we would like to hear from is Dr. Ian Reid.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman – and I'll address you as that rather than your other career – I'm here as an individual who now lives in Edmonton-Whitemud but not as a member of the PC Association of Edmonton-Whitemud. I'd like to put my remarks in the context that Canada is a parliamentary-type representative democracy, and I would emphasize the word "representative." There has to be some concept of fairness and equity in the representation part of the basic principles of our particular democracy.

I sympathize with all of you in your current exercise. I've had probably more experience than most in this type of exercise. I was involved in rewriting the Election Act in 1979-80. I also was involved, along with the late Neil Crawford, in rewriting the Legislative Assembly Act in the mid-1980s. I was on traveling committees on the workers' compensation system, the environment, forestry, the labour laws, and across the whole of Canada on the Constitution, and I know how tired you get listening to one representation after another and trying to give them equal weight.

In those exercises, especially in the province of Alberta, I learned a lot about this province. One of the outstanding features of it is the differences between areas: large communities, medium communities, and rural areas. They are much greater than one finds in my own home country of Scotland, where first of all everybody is a Scot and then they argue about their relatively minor differences thereafter.

The eight largest communities, the seven cities and Sherwood Park, each of them is very different from the other, but within those communities there is a much greater degree of homogeneity than there is in the rural areas. The cities of Edmonton and Calgary, if you look at the constituencies as they exist currently, they are much more homogeneous within those constituencies than they are even in the cities as a whole.

It is therefore quite a bit – I don't know if the word is easier – more straightforward to be a representative of an Edmonton or Calgary constituency or even a representative for the city of Red Deer than it is to be, say, the representative for Wainwright or the constituency that I represented. It's for that reason that there is the provision for the 25 percent plus or minus from the average population density, or numbers. It's to allow a commission such as yours to make decisions that on the surface may appear to be unfair but however are equitable.

The main difficulty is that recently there has been a tremendous push – and I don't know if it's egalitarianism or what it is – to say that every voter shall be as equal as possible. What is forgotten in

that statement – and it's been made many times by different people – is that you have to have, in addition to that, some ability to have fairness and equity in representation. That cannot be achieved with equality in voter numbers. The closer you get to equality, the less you will have true representation.

Albertans recognize fully the importance of equity. In any survey or poll since the idea of the triple E Senate came up, there has been massive support in Alberta for the concept of the triple E Senate. The reason is that it would balance the inequity of the two central large provinces really controlling the House of Commons and the Parliament of Canada. Now, that's possible in the bicameral federal system because they have a House of Commons, and hopefully we could have a triple E Senate. Within the province God forbid that we go to the bicameral system, but we have to put into the unicameral provincial parliament some provision and capability to provide for equity and fairness and the crucial part which is representation.

8:42

To try and put it in some kind of context, I'd like to compare the constituency that I represented for 10 years with any of the big city constituencies in Edmonton or Calgary. During the 10 years I was there, I represented the park townsite of Jasper, with railway, tourism, federal parks people, and of course the environmental concerns in the park. Although it's a federal park, there's a tremendous interest in the constituency as a whole and the environmental impacts upon that park. Grande Cache was a community of people working in coal mines, later the provincial jail, and also a sawmill. Hinton had the first pulp mill in the province, again coal mines, and a very significant tourism part in it, as did Jasper. When you got to Edson, you had the railway, the coal mines, but then you also brought in agriculture.

I had to deal with – and I tallied them up – six school boards, now three; four hospital boards, now two; three town councils; and the townsite advisory committee in Jasper, which is now the interim council in Jasper. As well as that, I had to deal with two improvement district councils. If you compare that to 18 MLAs in Edmonton dealing with one city council, two school boards, and now one hospital authority, or 20 in Calgary dealing with the same numbers, you can see how absolute equality in numbers would be very unfair. There would be no equity between constituencies that have the numbers of differences that I had to deal with compared to the big cities.

It's unfortunate that this has become to some extent a divisive issue in the province in that various people for various purposes have said that there should be as near equality of numbers as possible. What they are saying is the exact opposite of fairness and equity in representation, and we are a representative democracy. The only possible alternative is to go back to the original Athenian concept of one person, one vote, and everybody votes on everything. Even in Athens they had to give that up when the population exceeded the capacity of their biggest auditorium. That was a long time ago. Since then we have developed a representative democracy. I think we have to keep it, but we have to keep it with fairness and some equity for the people of the province of Alberta.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Dr. Ian Reid. Are there any questions? John? Joe? Wally.

MR. WORTH: Not a question; just a comment. Thank you for your eloquent presentation.

DR. REID: Thank you.

MR. GRBAVAC: I have a comment. It's been proposed to us that the land, in essence, requires representation, and I would like to hear your comment with respect to that. Who do you see as responsible for representing the vast geographical unique features of this province? Do you see that as a common representative responsibility of every member of the House, do you see that as a responsibility of the elected member from that particular constituency, or do you subscribe to the concept at all?

DR. REID: It's odd that you should say that. I have ridden on horseback in Willmore park, way up on the Muddywater. I have hiked around the back of Mount Robson. I've been over Shovel Pass. I've probably seen more of the bushland of Alberta and the national park than most people born in Alberta. As I said, I've traveled this province quite a bit. It's impossible for any one person to represent all of the varied nature of Alberta. I had enough trouble dealing with the north end of Banff national park, actually down to the North Saskatchewan crossing. I represented the national park, the foothills, the forest interests, the agricultural interests around Edson. That's a big bucket for anybody. To have to also represent the north country or the beautiful Cypress Hills – because they have to be represented, otherwise they're not protected. It's important that there are people in that Legislature who have an interest in those issues. The constituents were represented because most of the population lived in the four centres. We had a population base that was indeed larger than some of the constituencies in Edmonton and Calgary, which I always thought was a little bit unfair considering my constituency was a third the size of Scotland.

I think there is a requirement to represent the land, the entity of the land, to make sure that there are people there who have got an interest in maintaining the value of that land as it exists and to make sure that it isn't spoiled too much. The member for, say, Drayton Valley, where there's a tremendous number of oil wells and seismic lines and roads, has to also equate the value of that development against the value of that area around the Big Horn dam as a provincial resource, other than just the oil there. A lot of that goes on in the province. It's impossible for the legislative members as a whole, the 83 of them, to do it in a unified form. I have raised a little ruckus on occasion about the carelessness of development by forestry and oil companies in putting roads beside creeks that I used to fish in, and I think you have to have the local knowledge in order to do that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any further questions?
Well, we want to thank you, Dr. Reid, for showing up.

DR. REID: Thank you, Your Honour.

THE CHAIRMAN: I had forgotten about you.

DR. REID: I hope some people have forgotten.

THE CHAIRMAN: I heard quite a bit of you years ago. Thanks for coming.

We have two additional people, and I don't know whether they're together or separate. One is Cliff Gunderman and the other is Alan Murray. Are they separate?

We'll call on Cliff Gunderman first.

MR. GUNDERMAN: Thank you, gentlemen. I don't represent any particular party or affiliation. I'm just an ordinary citizen. I heard Dr. Reid and I respect him very much, but when he concerns himself about an elected Senate, I think the truth of it really is that we won't have to worry about that if they keep going the way they are because we won't have a Senate of any kind.

The truth of it is that Canadians as a people are far overgoverned. We are the most overgoverned people in the entire world. Reality being reality, we have government that is such a burden on the average taxpaying individual in this country that we can no longer support the structure of government. I understand it's very important that without representation you really don't have an obligation to pay tax, but the reality of it is that the way we have evolved in Canada, in the large cities that we have, our populations are concentrated primarily in large centres. This has been natural evolution, if you care to call it that. Simply, our farming industry has gotten far bigger and we're able to farm many sections of land, as compared to my grandfather's day when in fact they farmed a half section or a section of land. That was a great amount of land. Now 20 sections of land, 30, 40, 50, 100 is not uncommon; it's a very common thing.

The reality of it is, gentlemen, that if you're going to try and divide this thing up by population per se, in order to achieve any kind of equity as far as the rural population – I'm not trying to say that the rural population shouldn't be involved. The truth of it is that they're concentrated in smaller communities, but the vast majority of our people are probably concentrated in about six different cities in Alberta, for example. That's where the vast majority of your population is. It's just been a natural thing. Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Medicine Hat. You go up north: Fort McMurray. What they've done in Fort McMurray, for example, where I've had occasion to work, is incorporate a very large area. Their town council, which in fact they had as Fort McMurray proper – at one point in time I worked up there when you had Waterways and you had Fort McMurray as two different identities. Well, when they formed a city, then they incorporated their councils.

8:52

This is basically what we have to do with our situation in Alberta. We have to recognize that we're not going to be able to have every constituency with the same number of people. We just are not able to do it because we are a vast land. We are a big area, and in order to incorporate the people in the area, we're going to have to get much larger constituencies. Believe me, I can tell you that we have to lop off a lot.

Like I said initially in my opening statement, we are the most overgoverned people in the entire world and we no longer have the tax structure to buoy up this horrendous – and when I say horrendous, it's just unbelievable, really, the structure that we're holding up as government, and we no longer have the ability to be able to do that. So we either recognize it in one form, or we'll actually have a collapsing. That's exactly what's going to happen. We see that already with our federal government to a great extent.

Now, the truth is that we can do this voluntarily or it's going to be done for us economically. I would much prefer to see us do it in a voluntary manner, where we have some control, than to do it in an economic manner. This is my genuine concern. How we're able to achieve this and still have a perception of fairness to all the people, I really don't know. You know, I think that's going to be the million dollar question for you folks. I don't envy you for a moment, but I can tell you this: it's absolutely imperative that we get our government structure into something that we can honestly manage. We no longer have the tax structure there to buoy this whole system

up. Like I said, we can either do it voluntarily or it will be done for us economically.

Thank you.

MR. McCARTHY: There are 83 now.

MR. GUNDERMAN: That's correct.

MR. McCARTHY: How many do you think there should be?

MR. GUNDERMAN: Well, because of the vastness of the area you're talking about, I would say that you'd have to go – and I haven't got an exact figure; okay? I would say probably anywhere from 25 to 30 seats have to be incorporated. That's my personal opinion. If we can go 40, even better. You know, the reality of it is that I don't think it's possible. But I think probably we could go 25 to 30 seats and incorporate them, very much like we did up in Fort McMurray. We cover a big area. That town council which incorporates Fort McMurray, if you use that as an example, really is an excellent example of how they were able to incorporate a humongous area. They go all the way to Fort Chipewyan and beyond, which is a tremendous area. You're talking 100 and some miles. Although there's not a whole lot in between, the reality of it is that they still incorporated that massive area. You know, this is something that I think we really have to give some consideration to.

MR. McCARTHY: Just so that I clearly understand you, you're saying that there should be 25 to 30 seats less than the present.

MR. GUNDERMAN: Absolutely. Absolutely.

MR. McCARTHY: Thank you.

MR. GUNDERMAN: I can tell you: we can either do it voluntarily with a little bit of input or it's going to be done for us economically. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: There may be some more questions.

MR. GUNDERMAN: Sure

MR. LEHANE: Sir, the present Act provides that except for special areas the allowable variances are plus or minus 25 percent in population. Do you feel that those are reasonable variances?

MR. GUNDERMAN: You know, that's a real difficult thing to answer just right off the top of your head. The truth is that you have to look again at the population you have in that particular area. Now, I think what we have to do is we have to not concern ourselves so much about the vastness of the population but about the vastness of the area that we have to cover. The number of people representing a particular constituency: I don't think we should really hone in on that number – okay? – the millions that are in Edmonton and the millions that are in Calgary or the half a million that are in the Red Deer area.

We have to look at the idea of the province itself so everyone in the province can have an individual that they at least can get ahold of. They may be a long ways from their particular area – for example, up in Manning or something of that nature – but at least

they would have an individual they could contact if they were not able to get ahold of their minister.

You know, the truth is that we have ministers in government who have their specific jobs, and even though I have a representative in my area, who right now is Mr. Percy Wickman, who happens to be a Liberal – he's not even part of the government – it doesn't stop me if I want to get ahold of my representative, to get on that phone and phone the individual that I wish to speak to. I can sometimes get it taken care of on the phone. Sometimes I have to go down and I have to make an appointment to speak to him directly. But the reality of it is that I'm still able to get ahold of my representative in that area or the individual that is responsible for the particular concern I should happen to have. So I'm not really concerned about that. That's not a major thing.

Don't get into these numbers. I'll tell you right now that if you're going to get into numbers, you're never going to have equity and you're never going to be able to keep everybody happy. The important thing is to have representation for the vast – for all the people really. Whether you have 10,000 in one constituency and you've got a million in the other, the reality of it is that they've all been represented. The truth is that you've got your structure set up anyway, because you've got all of your cabinet ministers. They have their separate expertise. I don't really see that as a big problem. So 25, 50, yeah, I could live with that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you, Mr. Gunderman, for coming.

MR. GUNDERMAN: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: We couldn't read your sign.

MR. GUNDERMAN: Oh, I had it the wrong way. I'm sorry.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's okay. We remembered who you were.

MR. GUNDERMAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Mr. Alan Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you. I read over the pamphlet that came in the mail. I'd like to say that I'm basically in agreement with the direction you're heading in. I'm fortunate to be in one of the, I would consider, nearly perfect ridings, Edmonton-Ellerslie, in terms that it represents three community leagues and rural acreage dwellers and is neatly confined geographically south of 23rd Avenue, east of 91st Street. It works really well. I wish everybody could have a riding like that, which is so, I consider, neat and clean.

I've heard some comments tonight about how rural areas may be underrepresented and it would be unfair to them if they had fewer MLAs. Maybe somebody said it earlier tonight, but I would like to say it again: the current system is unfair to cities in that they are way underrepresented in the Legislature.

That's really all I have to say, gentlemen.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine.

Are there any questions? I think your point is quite simple and clear.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Well, we've covered all of the people who've told us that they want to talk to us tonight, but we've still got some time. If there's anybody in the audience who would like to come forward and make any kind of a presentation, they're welcome to come.

You're going to have to give us your name for the *Hansard* report.

9:02

MR. BROOKS: Yes. My name is Duncan Brooks. I live in Edmonton-Gold Bar. My interest and reason for being here twice today was that in my opinion there was a fair amount of gerrymandering that went on with the last set of electoral boundaries. It was purely of an interest and not one that I came prepared to speak about but rather to view what was going on, and I must comment, for those who weren't here this afternoon, about your fairness in listening to people.

What I haven't heard said at any time is the purpose of the government, and the government surely is there for the governance of the people, for the people. In a province such as ours there must be disparity between the city dweller and the rural dweller because some parts of our country are vast. There is no other way to describe it. Not many Albertans realize the north end of our province is as far away as Vancouver is from Edmonton, and that is just a dimension for us. The reality comes down to: if we examine the balances we have, the balance of about four to five people – that's four votes in the rural area to five in the city – seems to give you a reasonable number for representation.

I'd only like to voice the other opinion that has been stated tonight, that probably our province is totally overgoverned. If you take the city of Edmonton, we have 12 councillors and one mayor looking after approximately 700,000 people. If we take the rural ridings, while it is true to say there is one MLA with a vast area to cover, he undoubtedly will have many communities, cities, towns, and villages, and each one of those will have its own council and its own management board of one type or another, plus hospitals, school boards, et cetera. The level of management within the rural constituency is far, far greater and a great deal less efficient than that in the major cities, and I think this has to be borne in mind.

I would also like to encourage you to recommend a reduction in the number of ridings within the province of Alberta. I have no idea of the real number, but I believe it to be something like 65 to 70 seats, instead of the 83. If you're just playing with numbers – and I'm sure you're tired of it. If you take each MLA being worth half a million dollars a year – when you take into consideration his travel, his salary, his support staff, and his office space, that wouldn't seem to be an unreasonable number – such a reduction in staff would give you \$10 million and allow this government to at least cover the cost for the lack of hospital care that is being created through funding from the federal government.

I can just finish off by saying that I really would ask you to consider that the purpose of government is to look after the people, and almost every comment we've heard has been one of retaining the levels of government we presently have. I rather suspect that your task should be reviewed from the reverse.

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Brooks. Just a second. Somebody may have some intelligent questions.

MR. BROOKS: Maybe you didn't get an intelligent comment.

MR. LEHANE: I have a question, Mr. Chairman. We'll determine afterwards whether it was intelligent or not. I just want to be sure, sir, of what you're saying. I understood you to say that you acknowledged that for effective representation there would have to be some variances between the rural areas with vast geography and the urban ridings.

MR. BROOKS: Yes. I believe I said to you that the ratio of four to five seems to work out as a rational balance.

MR. LEHANE: So in terms of population variances or in terms of the present variances, what are your thoughts on that, sir?

MR. BROOKS: I believe, looking at the levels of government, that in some instances there is an imbalance in favour of the rural vote. With that fact and what I have already stated, I believe there was some gerrymandering going on in the last go-round of boundary limits. That is really the cause of the dissatisfaction that you're hearing coming from the cities.

THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Robert.

MR. GRBAVAC: Yes, I'd like to make a comment. This was a proposition that was put to me by a member of the opposition, the sole member in virtually an entire quadrant of this province, who suggested that the reality of the situation was – and I heard an earlier presenter speak about realities – that in the absence of proportionate representation, being the sole voice in that quadrant of the province in opposition, he felt it incumbent upon him to represent anyone from that region of the province who would call him expressing some dissatisfaction or a lack of response that they had received from contacting their particular member who was an MLA of the governing party. I appreciate that this may be a bit of a divergence from your position. How would you address that kind of a concern, if you did in fact reduce the number of ridings in the province, whereby maybe an opposition member may be the only one in a third or maybe a half of the geographic area of the province?

MR. BROOKS: I can't quickly see any way that you would wish to or could stop a person doing that.

MR. GRBAVAC: Do you recognize that as a legitimate concern for representation?

MR. BROOKS: I think that it is my freedom to do that presently. I would hope that that would always be the case, that if I believed the person representing High Level would be the person who would get me what I wanted, it would be my privilege to phone that person and say: "Hey, how do I do this? How can you help me?" If I understand your question properly, I don't see a way of stopping it. I don't think we should stop it.

MR. GRBAVAC: Do you think it's a legitimate concern with respect to representation?

MR. BROOKS: No, I don't. I don't think that's a concern at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, fine, Mr. Brooks.

MR. BROOKS: Thank you for your patience.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that for an unprepared presentation that was very good. Thank you.

MR. GUNDERMAN: If I may.

THE CHAIRMAN: You can return, please.

MR. GUNDERMAN: Thank you. Perhaps I was wrong, but your question that you presented to this last gentleman – now, understanding the way that the structure of our government is, we have, for example, individuals that are ministers of various portfolios they have a particular expertise in. Okay? Now, because I live in Manning, Alberta, or I live down in the Cypress Hills area, Medicine Hat, regardless of what your concern is, then I don't see how that would even be a problem. If I have a particular problem that that individual has an expertise to be able to deal with, then I would get ahold of him regardless of where. I mean, he may be representing Whitemud, but I don't really give a darn at that point in time. What I'm doing is getting ahold of my representative, who in fact is in charge of a particular expertise. That's who I'm getting ahold of. It makes no difference where that individual is. He can be from Whitemud and I can be living in Manning or wherever. There shouldn't be absolutely any reason in the world why we as individuals can't get ahold of that particular person. So I don't see how that would be effective, but maybe I'm understanding what you asked wrongly.

MR. GRBAVAC: No. The representation that was made to me was that in the absence of any other opposition MLA in virtually all of southern Alberta, this particular opposition MLA felt it was incumbent upon him to field any concern that people would have in terms of expressing their problem or the issue that they had taken with a member of the government. They felt, "Well, if I can't get satisfaction from my member of government, I will go to the opposition member." There only being one in this instance in all of southern Alberta, that individual is suggesting to me that that puts a fairly onerous demand on his time and that he feels he is not in a position to say, "You are not a member of my riding; therefore I'm not going to field your concern." So as a result, there's a suggestion there that depending on the makeup, the party mix so to speak, that has in reality, to use your term, an effect on the member's time. That's all I'm suggesting. I'm just wondering if from your perspective or anyone else's perspective that is a legitimate concern.

9:12

MR. GUNDERMAN: Yeah. We had a situation very much like that when Grant Notley was the only one that was sitting in our opposition for many years. The reality of it is that Mr. Grant Notley had the opportunity – and he was afforded that by our system – to have people feeding into him, if you'd care to call it that. They weren't elected representatives, but they were actually part of his network that he had.

One individual of course cannot represent an opposition for a vast area like Alberta, for example. It's a big area we're talking about. I appreciate what you're saying, but even in that particular instance we have an opportunity for these people that are in a position like that where they actually are given extra allowances, for example, given privileges to have more people working, feeding into them. So I don't really see that as a major problem myself. I really don't. I mean, we have to go by democracy anyway, and as you know, if the people don't elect an opposition, well, hey, that's the way it is. You've got to take the good with the bad, so long as you don't get ugly at times.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Is there anybody else who would like to make a presentation? Two more people.

You go ahead first. You've got the place.

MRS. HINCH: Thank you. I beat the lineup. My name is Teresa Hinch. I'm not here to speak; I came here just to listen. I didn't know what this was about. I'm a professional working mother, a taxpayer, and I'm also suffering from the cutbacks in our economy and that the Alberta government is putting on us.

The thing that strikes me about these discussions this evening is that the Alberta government, to me, is trying to say: "Let's tighten our belts. It's time that we clean up the mess that we've gotten ourselves into, and this is a sacrifice we have to make." I as a taxpayer am willing to take that sacrifice for my children's sake. I don't want to pass on a large debt to them, but my question is: I don't understand why there is so much duplication. It appears like there is a lot of duplication within the government, a lot of paperwork.

I'm a recent graduate of NAIT. I work with the second largest engineering consulting company in Canada, and I'm not going to mention the name. I'm overwhelmed at the amount of paper flow that goes through this company. I know I'm naive and I'm young, but I can see that it's not organized. That's what I see the government as being today. It's not organized, swimming in paper.

I know there's never a simple answer. There never is. Everything has to be discussed, and everyone's considerations do have to be taken into consideration, but I do not understand why there's duplication of authority in the government when the government is telling us, "Okay; we have to stop the duplication in the health care system." That's my only point. I'm not creating any type of boundaries, and I'm not very opinionated. This is just a question that perhaps you can ask yourselves this evening or over the next couple of weeks when you're trying to decide what is to be had of this: is this duplication? Is there some way that we can streamline? The businesses in Canada are successful because of streamlining. That's what my business, my company, is trying to do. We're trying to get out of the duplication of authority. We're trying to get out of the duplication of paper shuffling from this to that to this and that. It's overwhelming. That's what I would like to see the government attempt to do: streamline. That's what I see they're asking me to do.

That's all I have to say.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for coming. I think your remarks basically are that there's a lot of duplication and that we should be getting rid of it and that there's too much of a paper flow.

It's really not part of our mandate, but we will take into consideration your remarks in coming up with our decision. I don't know if anybody else has any questions.

MR. McCARTHY: I have one just further to your remarks. Our mandate, I guess, is to consider the seats in the Legislature. There are 83 representatives here for the province of Alberta. Do you think that's too many, that it should be reduced?

MRS. HINCH: I think it should be reduced, and I don't think they should be paid as much as they are.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. And with respect to the reduction, do you have any idea or any comments as to what kind of a reduction there should be?

MRS. HINCH: I know that there should be equal – well, you're trying to keep within this 25 to 50 percent margin, it appears. I'm in east Edmonton. I don't know where my areas are. I've never heard of my MLA. I have no idea, and a lot of the people don't know. That's the thing. There's a lot of animosity there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any further questions. Joe? Wally? Robert? Well, thank you for coming.

MRS. HINCH: Thank you.

MR. TOMILSON: Good evening. Thomas Tomilson. I was a ward 4 candidate in Edmonton during the last municipal election. I look at things a little bit differently, and I just have a few points to make. I put in six letters of proposal to Ralph Klein during the municipal election, one of which tried to outline the sale of the hospital services.

I have an opposing point of view from the previous speakers in that I believe there's a shortfall in representation, especially in the municipalities. Now with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association the municipalities have taken on a designation whereby they've taken on the identity of a person. So I feel there's less representation for the larger population, especially in about 12 areas here, I've found, with your variance under your electoral division population variance.

9:22

We also think more in terms of regional disparity for population

as well as representation for the hospital areas. In the city we've looked at vital cities, healthier cities, and I believe we often start looking at regions thinking corporately within a region or civic thinking within a region, that perhaps this region should be represented. And I don't see anything with regard to economics here, just geographical location and road systems. So perhaps the sparsity should be represented as well. Fort McMurray is a plus 12.8 disparity variation. Perhaps they should be represented with more because of their input in the economy of the northern region. Calgary and Edmonton as well: there are about 12 different variants, with the average over plus 19 percent. The northern region is very grossly underrepresented here: Lesser Slave Lake, negative 35.9 percent; Chinook, 48.6 percent; Cardston-Chief Mountain, negative 38.5 percent; and Athabasca-Wabasca, negative 45.9 percent.

Perhaps with the new technology in communications – fibre optics, the Net – representation could be done through video communication, a communications network system, and then perhaps the boundaries could be brought down to size. We're getting into global economies. Perhaps the communication problem could be handled through communications.

Anyway, that's all.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does anybody have any questions of Mr. Tomilson? Joe?

Thank you for coming.

Are there any other people who would like to make a presentation here tonight? Well, if that's it, we're going to adjourn the Edmonton hearings, and we're going to try and enjoy St. Paul tomorrow afternoon. Thanks for coming.

[The hearing adjourned at 9:24 p.m.]

