

**Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings
Medicine Hat**

7:01

[Chairman: Chief Judge Edward R. Wachowich]

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to bring this meeting to order. Will you please be seated. I want to welcome you to the public hearings of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Alberta. 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 would like to introduce to you the other members of the commission. On my immediate left is Robert Grbavac of Raymond, on my immediate right is Joe Lehane of Innisfail, on my far right is John McCarthy of Calgary, and on my far left is Wally Worth of Edmonton. The five people you see before you make up the commission. 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.

The commission is holding public hearings in Medicine Hat to receive and to consider your arguments and points of view with respect to the areas, the boundaries, and the names of 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. 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 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 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 electoral divisions. We are required to give reasonable public notice of the times and 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 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 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.

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.

In respect to 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.

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

This is a very general overview of the legislation, but we must also turn to the guidance that has been provided by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Supreme Court of Alberta. 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 must guide our decisions and ultimately the proposals that we make to the Legislature.

Now I want to speak about a 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 areas, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions.

Having made these opening comments, I would like to now call upon our first presenter, and that is Wayne Heller.

7:11

MR. HELLER: Is this mike working?

THE CHAIRMAN: It is.

MR. HELLER: I'll just read my presentation. I believe you have a copy of it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine.

MR. HELLER: I and my family live approximately 30 miles east of Medicine Hat in the Walsh district, where we own and operate a cattle ranch. We are part of the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency. I am wondering why we are having this review of our electoral boundaries in Alberta when we are just getting used to the considerable changes made in the last review, just three years ago. I see no reason for a review, and I certainly see no reason for changing the boundaries created by the last review.

We do not have a new census nor do we have any other changes significant enough to warrant a review. Forgive me for being cynical, but it appears to me that Albertans are being treated like children and are being told we gave the wrong answer in the last review. We are being asked the question again with the answer in front of us for our benefit.

It discourages me that you are proposing to give more seats to cities which already have a disproportionate amount of power in this province. Rural residents in my area and I think throughout the province feel the past and proposed reductions in their representation are unjust and are simply a power grab. It seems ironic to us that in Alberta we can recognize the political problems in attempting to be heard nationally and then turn around and disenfranchise rural

Albertans in the same manner. Do we need a triple E provincial Senate for Alberta?

My community is only one of the many in this very large constituency, each with its own interests and distinctiveness. The task of effectively representing this region is, I'm sure, more than a challenge. Think of the limitations presented by the travel requirements when representing an electoral division like ours. We have a city as well as several towns, hamlets, three school divisions as well as a host of community, social, and business groups spread throughout the constituency. One day of meetings within the division would require several hours on the road. It is critical that sparsity, distribution, and number of community groups and authorities be considered and fairly balanced with population when determining electoral boundaries.

The Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency was formed with a balance of rural and urban voters. To date this arrangement has proved workable. I would caution, however, that an arbitrary shift to include more of the city in this division will be viewed as disenfranchising the rural areas in the division. The population in this constituency is increasing rapidly with considerable residential development in Medicine Hat and in the surrounding region, which indicates there is no basis to increase the population in this division. This trend is also supported by school enrollment in the new Prairie Rose regional division No. 8, which has increased by 5 percent over the past nine months, and by enrollment in the former Cypress school division, which increased by 27 percent in its Irvine and Seven Persons schools in the three-year period ending September 1, 1995.

I hope the correct answer is, as I request, that there be no change in this or any other electoral division in our province. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Heller. If you'll stay there, the commission will want to ask you some questions.

In respect to your question, we've delegated the responsibility of this answer to Mr. McCarthy from Calgary, because we're being asked this question at almost every set of hearings.

MR. McCARTHY: Well, first of all, I am from Calgary. We received a submission last night, a written submission – he wasn't there – from Mr. Eugene Kush, QC, of Hanna, and I'll read to you what he said in part.

It is a well known fact that larger centers create more crime and corruption than rural centers. We all know that a person's intelligence will be substantially reduced when he is crammed into an urban environment.

So I'll keep that in mind as I'm making my comments.

This question, as Chief Judge Wachowich has said, has come up in each of the hearings that we've had to date. By way of background, the Supreme Court of Canada looked at the issue of the disparity between urban voters and rural voters in the province of Saskatchewan and came up with a decision in 1991. If I could just briefly review with you what that decision came out with, it said basically:

The purpose of the right to vote enshrined in s. 3 of the Charter is not equality of voting power per se but the right to "effective representation". The right to vote therefore comprises many factors, of which equity is but one. The section does not guarantee equality of voting power.

Relative parity of voting power is a prime condition of effective representation. Deviations from absolute voter parity, however, may be justified on the grounds of practical impossibility

or the provision of more effective representation. Factors like geography, community history, community interests and minority representation may need to be taken into account to ensure that our legislative assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic. Beyond this, dilution of one citizen's vote as compared with another's should not be countenanced. . . . Effective representation and good government in this country compel that factors other than voter parity, such as geography and community interests, be taken into account in setting electoral boundaries.

Now, that was in 1991, and since then – you've just referred to previous Alberta attempts to have the boundaries fixed. The last attempt occurred just a couple of years ago, which resulted in a fair bit of controversy in that, as I understand it, the commission was unable to agree on any unanimous basis. It had a series of minority reports. The Legislature then decided to deal with it by putting forward a legislative committee, which the opposition members refused to participate in, and then a committee of government members made a recommendation. Maybe I don't have the history quite right, but the result of this was that in 1994, I believe, the Court of Appeal was asked by the government of Alberta to determine whether or not the electoral boundaries as they were set were constitutionally valid, and the decision of the Alberta Court of Appeal came out on the 24th of October 1994.

Now, the Supreme Court of Canada decision – the Court of Appeal considered that. I'm going to give you the summary or the composition of what they came up with, and maybe that'll explain in part why we're here, although we do have sitting members of the Legislature here, at least one sitting member, and maybe they can comment too. What the court said in conclusion follows.

We again have decided to withhold any Charter condemnation.

Because that's what the government asked the court to determine.

We do, however, wish to say more precisely what we meant by "gradual and steady" change. We think that a new and proper review is essential before the constitutional mandate of the present government expires, and, we hope, before the next general election.

We reject any suggestion that the present divisions may rest until after the 2001 census.

The Act was amended. I believe the amendments came into force last spring, and as a result of those amendments I believe that this commission was put in place. So we're a creation of the Legislature of the province of Alberta, and that explains why we're here I hope.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally, do you have any questions?

MR. WORTH: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No, I don't think so.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe? John?

I have a question in view of your presentation. Last time there was quite a bit of controversy over what is called 'urban' constituencies; that's combining rural and urban people together. The constituency you come from now may be considered a 'urban' constituency because it's rural and part of Medicine Hat.

If I'm reading your presentation correctly – and this is what I want to know – if the commission was to say, "Well, we can solve the Cypress Hills figures to improve them a bit by giving them a bit more of Medicine Hat," you're against that. Am I correct?

7:21

MR. HELLER: You're correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And why?

MR. HELLER: Well, for the same reason that I described in my brief: it disenfranchises the rural voters. If the urban population gets to be disproportionately large relative to the rural population, we no longer have a say on many issues, at least with our elected representative. It becomes, also, that there's a risk of our elected representative being someone who represents a totally different perspective from our own on many issues, if not most.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, answer this question; it would help the commission. Are you happy with the extent of urbanization that you have now in the constituency, or would you like to kick out that Medicine Hat portion?

MR. HELLER: At the moment I'm happy. At the moment I'm very happy, but the thing is, that can change very quickly. It just depends on what individual happens to be elected, and quite frankly there are a lot of issues that are very different from an urban setting to a rural setting. It's just pretty much so.

THE CHAIRMAN: So what you're saying is you're happy subject to the MLA you get.

MR. HELLER: Exactly.

MR. GRBAVAC: Wayne, I'd like to ask a question. One of the problems that existed with the previous boundary review was the absence, if you will, or limited reasons given for the rationale behind the creation of the boundaries as they're now constituted. When I look at Cypress-Medicine Hat, I believe it's somewhere in the order of 24 percent variance from the electoral quotient, which is pushing the envelope almost to the extreme, if you will. So from my way of thinking, when we're getting to that extreme limit of the 25 percent variance, we need some good strong reasons as to why the status quo ought to be maintained. I'm just wondering what you would consider to be the strongest reason for maintaining that roughly 24 percent variance from the electoral quotient.

MR. HELLER: Well, I think I've described that in my submission. As well, my reason is the difficulty of representing the areas, given the distance factor throughout the constituency. It's several hours' drive from one corner of our constituency to another corner. I'm aware that there are urban constituencies that are five blocks in diameter. I think there's quite a bit of difference there in the ability of that person to represent those people in terms of travel time and the number of local governments that are dealt with. I mean, if you're in the city of Calgary – my statistics are weak, but I believe there are something like 21 MLAs from the city of Calgary.

THE CHAIRMAN: Twenty.

MR. HELLER: Twenty. There are 20 MLAs representing one civic government. Here you have one MLA representing I don't know how many civic governments. You've got the city, several towns, plus the rural government, the district government. Just that alone

tells you quite a story. I mean, that person locally has to be a bit of a magician to cover all that ground and to understand all those different positions that are taken by all those different local governments. In Calgary in the current situation where it's largely Conservative, they could form committees and have specializations. They can represent that one civic government so well. I don't mean to take the negative, but that's reality.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you, Mr. Heller, for coming and expressing your views.

MR. HELLER: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next speaker on our list is Lawrence R. Gordon, QC.

MR. GORDON: Thank you. You have a copy of my written submission. I am from the Medicine Hat constituency. I am appearing on behalf of the local Progressive Conservative association in that constituency. You will note that my submission doesn't deal a whole lot with Medicine Hat because we fall nicely within the guidelines. We're very close to the average in terms of numbers; everything sits nicely in our constituency.

What I do want to address, though, is a concern that we have over what I view as a bit of a domino effect. If you start adjusting one constituency, you have to adjust other ones naturally. Of course, the two that are adjoining Medicine Hat are Cypress-Medicine Hat and Bow Valley. I do think that careful consideration should be given to the effective representation for those constituencies, and I've listed specific concerns that I think the commission should take into account. They deal largely with physical size and the conflicts that develop as a result of divergent industries within those areas.

The most obvious problem with a large constituency is that the larger the constituency, the more difficult it is for the MLA to be in touch with his voters and, conversely, the more difficult it is for the voter to contact his MLA and have access to his elected representative. As was pointed out by Mr. Heller, there are numerous organizations, towns, hamlets, school authorities, regional health authorities that one MLA is expected to deal with. You have the reverse situation in cities, because you'll have 20 MLAs in Calgary dealing with one municipal government, 20 MLAs dealing with one regional health authority. It imposes a significant additional strain on a rural MLA to provide effective representation.

The other factor that I want to touch on is the potential for a conflict of interest, if you will, on various issues in a rural area. I'd like to use Lorne Taylor's riding. He represents people that are involved in dryland grain, irrigated grain, specialty crops, cow/calf operations, feedlots. The most obvious example, which I think would be acknowledged by most, is that ordinarily when cattle prices go down, grain prices go up, or the converse happens as well. Clearly, there are going to be instances where Lorne Taylor is left in a position where he has to do something that may benefit a grain farmer, and if he's doing that, it's at the expense of the rancher in his constituency or vice versa. I think that's a difficult position to put an MLA in, where he has to make the trade-offs and decide which industry he's going to try to support in his constituency, quite possibly to the detriment of another industry.

Two other factors I would like to point out; one deals specifically with Cypress-Medicine Hat. I believe that it meets the definition in section 17(2) of the Act. There are three out of five requirements

that have to be met. The first one is "15,000 square kilometres" if it's surveyed, and this area of the province is surveyed. When I looked at the map today, it appears to me that it's in excess of 17,000 square kilometres. Secondly, it's "more than 150 kilometres" to Edmonton. Thirdly, the electoral division "has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the Province of Alberta," and actually two boundaries from his point of view, the southern one and the eastern one. So I believe that his constituency would fall within one of the four exceptions, if necessary.

The other point that I want to make – and I think it deals directly with effective representation – is with respect to the town of Redcliff. That town was originally in the Medicine Hat constituency. It was moved to the Cypress constituency during the 1980s, and it's now in the Bow Valley constituency and represented by Lyle Oberg. Of course, the problem is that you have to wonder if those people feel that they're being left out. Their MLA really has a difficult proposition, I think, to get to know them. He doesn't know whether they're going to be there or not. They've just happened to be one of the ones that get shuffled back and forth in the numbers game. I think that it's essential that at least for another four years there should be every effort made to maintain some continuity for those people.

Thank you.

7:31

MR. McCARTHY: Lawrence, you referred to 17 of the Act, and that provides for special areas, no more than four. The problem that we have right now is that we already have four special areas, which are Athabasca-Wabasca, Cardston-Chief Mountain, Chinook, and Lesser Slave Lake. Do you have any ideas as to which one you'd like bumped?

MR. GORDON: It appears you now have a fifth one. No, I don't. There's no easy answer, but I simply want to point out that it appears to me that Cypress-Medicine Hat does fall within that definition.

MR. WORTH: Mr. Gordon, I have two questions. I was interested in your comments about Redcliff. By implication are you suggesting that more of MD 1 be included in Cypress-Medicine Hat?

MR. GORDON: Not necessarily. I was simply suggesting to you that to continue to move a town like that back and forth makes it very difficult for those people to feel like they're being effectively represented within our system.

MR. WORTH: Okay. Thank you. My second question. One of the things we heard yesterday in St. Paul and in Wainwright was that the problems of representing a rural constituency, particularly those relating to time and to distance, can only be met in part by population adjustments. To make too massive a population adjustment would in fact dilute the force of the vote of others in other constituencies.

The suggestion we received in both St. Paul and Wainwright from some presenters was that perhaps rather than concerning ourselves so much with population adjustments, one of the ways that we can provide for more effective representation is to provide more resources to the MLAs from the constituencies some distance from the Legislative Assembly so that they would have some help in dealing with the matters of concern to their constituents. This might include, for example, support to provide more than one office in the

constituency, perhaps to provide an executive assistant, perhaps to encourage airplane travel and things of that sort. How do you react to that kind of suggestion?

MR. GORDON: I think those are useful suggestions. I don't have a problem with that. I think anything that does assist the rural MLA, if you will, to more effectively represent his electorate is something that should be looked at.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

MR. LEHANE: Just one question, Lawrence. We received a lot of written submissions that suggested that in this time of government cutbacks, one of the cutbacks that hasn't occurred is the number of MLAs. We've had some suggestions from the wild ones of cutting them back to 10 all the way up to cutting them back to 76 or 80. Now, when we were in Wainwright last night, for the first time we heard the opposite suggestion. The suggestion there was that if you cut back on the MLAs, it's particularly going to impact on the rural areas as far as the ability of the MLA to effectively represent his rural constituents. So if it becomes necessary because of the court decisions and because of the position of the urban constituents that in fact there have to be more constituencies in Edmonton and Calgary, the better solution would be to add to those constituencies rather than to take them from the rural area and add them to the city. Could I have your comment on that, Lawrence?

MR. GORDON: Again, I don't disagree with that. I think the point I'm making is that to try to make rural constituencies larger compounds the problem and reduces the effectiveness of the representation, and I think it's a very difficult problem that a rural MLA faces now. So I don't disagree with you when you say that if more MLAs have to be added, they should be added in an urban area without reducing the rural representation. I don't know whether that's required. I have some concerns in my own mind that large urban areas do not have the complex and divergent problems that are faced in many of the rural areas, so I'm not sure that adding another two or three MLAs to Calgary brings anything new to the Legislature.

MR. LEHANE: I should probably add that section 13 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act would prevent that from happening at this point. Our mandate is restricted in terms of 83 constituencies, but there are perhaps certain ideas or recommendations that could come out of these hearings that might go back to the government in terms of future legislation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gordon, you talked about Redcliff being kicked around like a football. I was just wondering: what is roughly the population of Redcliff or the immediate area?

MR. GORDON: My recollection is that Redcliff has about 2,700, I believe. Am I correct on that? I think it's around 2,000 to 2,500. There are people here that may know a lot better than I do.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Over 3,000 at present.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. If you moved Redcliff back into Cypress-Medicine Hat, where you tell us it came from – I appreciate your saying that you'd like to see them at least be in the same

constituency for two elections – they would be in the same constituency for two out of three elections. What are your comments with respect to that?

MR. GORDON: Well, again it's the domino effect. I'm not sure where you leave Lyle Oberg's constituency at that stage. If you take 3,000 out of one and put them in another, you may get them over the hurdle or closer to the parity.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not asking you to solve that problem.

MR. GORDON: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: I just want to know: what do you feel the reaction of the people would be?

MR. GORDON: The people in Redcliff?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MR. GORDON: I really don't know. I don't live there. I don't know whether they've developed a relationship with Lyle Oberg from Brooks that's sufficient that they would feel like they're starting over. I don't think they'd be particularly upset, because Lorne Taylor is in Medicine Hat and much closer to them quite frankly. They'd probably feel like they're represented more by their Medicine Hat and Cypress-Medicine Hat MLAs than by their current MLA in any event simply because of proximity.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. GRBAVAC: I have just a comment, Mr. Gordon, in passing. I'm one of the rural representatives on this commission, and I happen to make my living from one of the industries you alluded to in your example earlier. I just want to make a suggestion to you, although you may not see it as being particularly relevant, and that is: if the MLA wants to do himself a favour, the grain industry a favour, and the cattle industry a favour, maybe he ought not to concern himself with the economics of either one. Those market trends are very predictable. The actions of the political powers to be in Edmonton are sometimes a little tough to predict.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think those are all the questions. We want to thank you for coming, Mr. Gordon.

MR. GORDON: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Clint Henrickson.

MR. HENRICKSON: I live on an irrigation farm and ranch at Patricia, which is northeast of Brooks in the Bow Valley constituency. To start with, I can comment on the Redcliff situation and the problem of getting through to those people who are so totally alienated from the system now that it's even hard to get their attention let alone find out what they think and need.

The issues are the same as when we were here in Medicine Hat in 1991 for the previous boundaries commission hearings. The fact that the courts in their interpretation of constituents' rights under the Constitution saw fit to declare that the numerical imbalance of voters between many rural ridings and many Calgary and Edmonton ridings

is an unfair discrepancy and must be addressed does not tell me that these adjudicators had any appreciation for the relative problems that a typical rural MLA has in attempting to provide each constituent, business, school and hospital board, each municipal administration with effective representation, which I believe to be at least as important.

One could equate a rural riding and its complexity to a schoolteacher in a small rural school teaching, say, 25 students as opposed to a teacher in a crowded urban school teaching 35 students. It could be said that the students in the urban school are disadvantaged because in numbers they are 28 percent under-represented in individual attention from the teacher. Now, this could evoke some sympathy until it is pointed out that the teacher in the rural school is likely teaching from two to four or more grades, severely dividing the teacher's time, attention, and resources in attending to any student's individual needs. Should that rural teacher in the interests of equal numerical representation for the students be forced to teach 35?

7:41

Most rural constituencies, as has been suggested in your flyer, have been built around boundaries defined by geography and municipal boundaries. People over the years have co-ordinated their trading, recreation, and banking around usually the larger centre in the riding, where probably the MLA has located his or her office. This gives them a somewhat convenient access to the MLA's office on a more regular basis even if the distance from their home is very great.

Carving up several rural ridings to make fewer superridings in the interests of numerical equality tends to severely disrupt the life patterns of a great many rural constituents as they would be forced to centre their attention around a different riding centre if they wish reasonably convenient contact with their MLA. As well, this process will work in only a few of the rural ridings in question. Most of the rest would present such problems as to make doing it ridiculous to say the least.

I believe that some of these anomalies in numbers have to be accepted in the name of ultimate fairness, which I contend goes beyond equal representation itself. I don't think anyone is single-minded enough to contend that this problem could be solved at all by this process for the four special consideration ridings.

There's been some comment and, I believe, not unfounded that there are too many MLAs in this province. I've stated here I've heard it said that there's a possibility that Calgary and Edmonton could eventually have more MLAs than aldermen. I understand now that this is far in excess the fact. It would seem to me that where aldermen are concerned, individual voter representation is even more important than from an MLA.

I believe there is another option which to me seems more plausible than creating rural superridings in addressing this perceived inequity if indeed it must be addressed. Many rural ridings could be redivided in size to, say, 20,000, and an area of a city of roughly equal population could be declared part of the same riding, or vice versa, giving a riding population of around 40,000. There would be equality of numbers and a balance of common-interest populations. There will be in many cases many miles of separation from the riding centre, whether it be rural or urban, but that is only the reality many rural constituents face today.

The MLA's attention to both sectors of the riding would likely be ensured because of voter reaction at nomination and election times

if they don't. For instance, Red Deer has about 59,000 total population, and surrounding districts such as Ponoka, Rimbey, Innisfail, Sylvan Lake could be divided and combined with parts of Red Deer. Various districts of Calgary and Edmonton could flesh out the numbers in a great many rural areas to about 40,000 or more each.

The net MLAs in Alberta could be reduced in this way to around 65, addressing the population of too many MLAs. This may not be too practical a solution, but I believe it deserves as much consideration as trying to amalgamate rural ridings so as to equate with urban ones as to population. Simply absorbing some rural areas into adjacent urban ridings will go only a small way toward overall numerical equality and would have the undesirable effect of trivializing the different concerns of the minority of rural residents that are brought into any riding.

Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Henrickson.

Do you have any questions, Wally?

MR. WORTH: Well, I just would like to observe, before making my comment, that there must be something in the air in southeastern Alberta that breeds creativity, because last night in Wainwright we had a similar, but not identical, proposal from a gentleman there based on a similar principle to what you are proposing here with respect to exposing MLAs to both urban and rural problems.

This gentleman's point of view was that one of our problems in the Legislature is that the rural representatives don't understand the urban problems and the urban representatives don't understand the rural problems. His solution was that you would set up twin constituencies, and the MLA would spend one year representing one and one year representing the other and so forth in a four-year term. The principle is not dissimilar.

I don't want to pass judgment on the suitability of these, but I do think that I want to commend you for your creativity in thinking about alternative ways of organizing our governance to ensure that we get the right kind of effective representation.

MR. HENRICKSON: Thank you. I understand there would be great problems in trying to do this, but I have the feeling that it would go quite a distance toward addressing this voter apathy that we have in this province when it comes to interest in the political aspect of life.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert, do you have any questions?

MR. GRBAVAC: No. I think, though, that it was explained that the proximity to the Saskatchewan border had more to do with the creativity than the air, Wally. I'm not going to pass judgment on that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe, any questions? John?

Well, I want to thank you, Mr. Henrickson, for coming and making your views known.

MR. HENRICKSON: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Mrs. Cathy Smith.

MRS. SMITH: Good evening. I believe you have a copy of my submission. I am a resident of Medicine Hat in the constituency of

Cypress-Medicine Hat. I live in the Ross Glen area. I thank the committee for the opportunity to speak about the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency.

I realize the necessity for these hearings in light of the 1994 Alberta Court of Appeal recommendations. I understand that the court refused to find the presently constituted boundaries unconstitutional. The court was mindful of the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada permitting a variation of 25 percent above and below the average provincial population of 30,780. Bearing this in mind, I wish to recommend the continuance of the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency as it exists.

You will note that the variance is minus 23.8 percent with the population listed at 23,442. The population of Ross Glen according to the June 1994 census is 10,592, and the population of South Ridge is 3,586. These figures are not too relevant today, as I will point out later. The rural part of this constituency is a three-hour drive from one end to the other. To expect an MLA to represent a larger geographical area than this is not reasonable considering weather, road conditions, the sparsity of population between towns, and the variety of agricultural industries.

In light of what happened in the recent Quebec referendum, I cannot help but think that we are lucky to have a constituency with a mix of rural and urban population. We can better understand the issues of the rural voters when we belong to the same constituency. This leads to a more tolerant and understanding electorate. We would not see the division of rural against urban which occurred in Quebec. The urban voter benefits also from the more serene outlook of our rural neighbour. It also reminds the urbanite that we are very dependent on nature, something that is sometimes taken for granted when we buy everything at the store. This mix of urban and rural also mirrors the federal riding of Medicine Hat, which is also an urban/rural split and therefore not foreign to us who live in Medicine Hat.

I might also add that the Medicine Hat Catholic separate regional division No. 20 also includes St. Michael's school in Bow Island, which is in the constituency of Cypress-Medicine Hat. It's another advantage: having the same MLA. Prairie Rose regional division No. 8 also includes the public school of Bow Island. Prairie Rose is located in the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency.

7:51

Our MLA, Lorne Taylor, feels that he can adequately and effectively represent the people of Cypress-Medicine Hat, so I do not see the need for the drawing of new boundaries in this area.

The area of Dunmore, just east of Medicine Hat, is growing rapidly, as Mr. Heller pointed out, as well as the Taylor area of Medicine Hat and also the South Ridge area. It will not be long before the variance of minus 23.8 will be at zero percent. As a matter of fact, in the last year the Ross Glen and South Ridge areas have experienced tremendous growth. For example, St. Patrick's school in South Ridge had a population of 106 students less than two years ago; that is now at 250 students. We added four portables to that school in the last two years.

My recommendation is to leave this Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency as it is. We have only had one election with these present boundaries, and it would only anger people to move them into another constituency in so short a time.

Having said that, should this present arrangement not be possible, I could see the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency taking on Redcliff since it is also more rural – many farms, ranches,

greenhouses – than urban. There has always been resentment by Redcliff in not having an MLA closer to them, and this would certainly accommodate that concern and lessen the variance. Redcliff at one time was part of the Medicine Hat constituency, and then as the city of Medicine Hat grew, Redcliff was joined to Bow Valley. The Redcliff school district is also part of the new Prairie Rose regional division, which, as I mentioned, is in the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency.

The task ahead is not an easy one for you. We all want to defend what is familiar to us, but I wish you good judgment as you deliberate on this matter. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mrs. Smith. If you'll just wait. Do you have a question, John?

MR. McCARTHY: If I can describe Cypress-Medicine Hat as being semiurban or semirural, depending on how you want to describe it, how many people are urban and how many people are rural? I see our population, as I understand it, based on the 1991 census is 23,442. Do you have any rough idea of what the split is between urban and rural in that population?

MRS. SMITH: No, I don't. Just from the figures that I've mentioned in the Ross Glen and South Ridge areas, I would figure that it must be about 60-40.

MR. McCARTHY: Sixty urban and 40 . . .

MRS. SMITH: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any questions, Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No.

MR. GRBAVAC: Just a question of clarification. I'm assuming, because of the school growth that you alluded to in some of the communities, that the nature of the population growth in the areas of Medicine Hat that are within the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency is by relatively younger people, and this is not a case of the seniors settling in that area who have chosen to make Medicine Hat their retirement home.

MRS. SMITH: Certainly not in the South Ridge area, no. The area where I mentioned the school growth – no. It's all younger families.

MR. GRBAVAC: So you would foresee some long-range stability in the area, then, in terms of that growth.

MRS. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. GRBAVAC: Thanks very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: You heard Mr. Heller tell us that he wants no more of Medicine Hat in the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency. I understand that you live in the part of Medicine Hat that is in Cypress-Medicine Hat.

MRS. SMITH: That's right, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have the same feelings as he, or do you care if there's another subdivision of Medicine Hat?

MRS. SMITH: I would rather not see another subdivision of Medicine Hat. I would rather see more rural, if that were the case. We have a very good working relationship right now with the rural area, and I would hate to see that diluted by more urban population.

THE CHAIRMAN: What you're saying is that you feel the rural people are happy with the present split and they wouldn't be happy with, as Mr. Heller states . . .

MRS. SMITH: No. Having spoken to quite a few of them, I think that Mr. Heller was speaking for a majority of them, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: You don't want to make those rural people any more unhappy.

MRS. SMITH: No. They're our friends.

THE CHAIRMAN: Another solution. You say make it more rural, and I notice that you're saying throw in Redcliff. I don't know whether this solution is an answer. You could also throw in a lot of this area north of Medicine Hat, but my understanding is that that area is just very, very sparse and would probably make the constituency just too large and too unmanageable. Do you have any comments?

MRS. SMITH: Well, I agree with you that it would be unmanageable. As I mentioned, the distance between towns and the sparsity of population would not be particularly – what can I say? I don't think the MLA would appreciate the five- or six-hour drive that would be included in that, rather than the three.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I understand he's a young, hardworking MLA.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Hardworking but not too young.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, I want to thank you, Mrs. Smith, for coming and making your views known.

MRS. SMITH: Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is Alan Hyland. If you could put up your sign, because I don't want to be calling you Cathy Smith. I don't know who would be offended.

MR. HYLAND: I would assume it would be Cathy. She's considerably better looking, and she doesn't have gray hair.

Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of briefs to present. One is on behalf of the Bow Island Chamber of Commerce, and my brief really is a combination of my 18 and a half years as the MLA for much of this area. Because others have covered the legal aspect and things like that, I think I'll leave that alone. I am willing to answer questions on my feelings of that after. I think I'll stick to gut feeling and the problems that I've gone through in the number of years.

In discussion about the committee at home, around the coffee shop, et cetera, I think the one thing members need to be aware of as far as urban councils and mayors is that there is the urban municipal

convention on right now in Edmonton. That's taken all but one of our councillors from Bow Island, so that's why I have a short note from the mayor to read, because of that fact. I don't think it's because of lack of interest; it's just because something else was going on at the same time.

Others have talked about the 25 percent variance. What I thought was interesting was that in the last – let me see. When I represented my constituency, I saw it change in 1979, I saw it change in 1982, and I saw it change when I retired. So I've seen three different changes. I've seen four. I saw it change once before: I lost 200 people. So I've appeared to express my view before probably more commissions than anybody else in this room.

Commissions have been made up by MLAs in part. One time there was Henry Kroeger and Bill Payne and Grant Notley plus a judge plus a couple of other members. There was another time when it was a committee in total. I happened to be on the Members' Services Committee at that time when that committee came before us asking for more money for legal views. They had already spent something like a \$150,000 on legal advice, and they wanted to spend more.

Your Honour, I was glad to hear your comment that your minds aren't made up, because I think that's key. The last commission, that was a committee of people, at least it appeared – people went there in large numbers and presented briefs, at least at the three that I attended, only to see a report totally – and I mean totally – ignoring what they had to say. There was nothing in that report that had their view. They talked about joining constituencies together, et cetera. There's nothing in that view. You know, I believe at least there should be a right of access to the MLA. We can say what we want about size, about one person, one vote, but I thought it was interesting that when all this was going on the second-last time, lo and behold the city of Calgary opposed the divisions with a plus or minus 25 percent. The city of Edmonton opposed them. What did they do when they gave the guidelines to their returning officer or whatever he was called to divide the wards up? They gave him a guideline of plus or minus 25 percent within the city boundary. So there's got to be, you know, some reasonability there. If it's okay for the wards for the city, why is it not okay for the wards in an area that's very vast?

8:01

When I was an MLA I traveled – and I don't think Lorne travels any less – 70,000 to 80,000 kilometres a year. Assuming that you go the speed limit, that you don't go any faster – Lorne has got more certificates to show that he has gone faster, or I just didn't get caught as often as he did – if you divide that out into hours, five-day weeks, eight hours a day, you'll find that works out to four and a quarter months or five months out of the year that you spend behind the wheel. Now, that's time you have to make up somewhere. It either comes from your family time or your sleep time or whatever. I'm using this as an illustration of just the ability to get around.

Let's take preessional tours, for example. It used to take a week to 10 days to do a preessional tour. It still takes a week or 10 days to do a preessional tour in this area because of the number of small towns. In the city when it's all close, you could do your preessional tour in a shorter period of time. You've got more people, but you've got more hours to work with. In the average week going to Edmonton, you lose a day and a half in travel, six hours each way in travel. So if you're in the city, in Edmonton for example, you gain that 12 hours. You have that in time to work with people. You have

fewer governments to deal with, but you have more people to deal with, so you've got more people time available to you.

In this constituency in rough terms there used to be five town councils, three rural municipalities, three hospital boards, eight recreation boards, and four school boards. That doesn't include the health unit, the other boards like that, those boards that represented this area. They want to see you. They want to talk to you. They want you. They don't want an assistant; they want the MLA.

I at one time was an MLA buddy to a constituency in Edmonton that was represented by an opposition member, a buddy for our party, for the constituency association. I got to know a lot of their problems in that two and a half year time period. You know, the people problems aren't a whole lot different; there are just more of them. They're really often the same kind of people problems. But a city MLA often gets to go home and see his family. He gets to see his family at supertime. He may get to see his family by 2 o'clock Friday afternoon; I'm talking of the old time when Friday was still a sitting day. I chose to drive simply because of the flight schedules. I would be lucky to get home at 7:30, 8 o'clock.

There was a period in time when my children were small. When you see Colin now, it's tough to think that at one time he was a little baby, when you're looking up at him and he's taller than you are. Time passes. I wasn't married when I got into this job; I wasn't gray. Things change. One of the toughest things I had to do after we had children, when they were little babies, was to come home Friday night and find they wouldn't go to you. They screamed because they'd forgotten you. Do you know what that does to your heart? It's because you're away so much. By Sunday night they wouldn't go to sleep because they knew that when they woke up, you were not going to be there. It's tough, and I use these examples just to show that humanly you can only cover so much ground.

I would hate to see us go the route of the federal government where you're lucky to see the MP visit, because he just can't get around. I like the system we have where people can see the MLA, and I'd hate to see it be any bigger, you know, just simply because of the distance from the capital, the timing, and all these things.

I know that John explained the legal ramifications, and I understand them. I spent a lot of years in a business where I went in as a farmer. I'm not sure what I came out as, but I assure you a guy learns to understand and to read a lot of legislation through the years. I guess the part that bothers me is that more and more in our system, with all due respect to the Chief Judge, the judges and the Supreme Court are making the rules and the politicians aren't. With the politicians, if you screw up, you're kicked out. You put your name forward or your party puts its name forward every so many years, and if people don't like you, that's it. I think often too many of the rules affect us directly, like this representation, et cetera.

I remember when a judge decided that it was okay to beat a woman when you were drunk because you didn't know what you were doing. Nobody approved of that, but it was a decision. I shouldn't say "nobody"; obviously that judge did because he approved it. But everybody rose up against it. So what had to happen? The government had to change the rules. Maybe the representation won, and the quotes that John made, maybe they're just as wrong as that. They are to some people.

Right now, as others have said, people have to travel an hour or two hours and the MLA travels an hour or two hours to meet somewhere in the middle in a constituency like this. One like Chinook is much worse. I spent many miles going through it, many, many miles and many years driving through that constituency. Your

distances are even greater there, and the population variance is greater.

I think why the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency works is because the urban people here aren't as far removed from basic agriculture as many are in other constituencies. I think why this system works is because they know somebody that's still involved in agriculture, or their parents are or their brothers or whatever. I think that's why this constituency works. You ask any businessman in Medicine Hat. Medicine Hat may have a lot of oil and gas, et cetera, but there's still a lot of agriculture too. I think that's why it works in this part of the country. In other parts there are more problems because there's not a commonality of interest.

I guess I've probably used up my five minutes. I didn't time myself. I suspect I've probably used up my five minutes on those areas.

THE CHAIRMAN: We're not restricting you to your five minutes.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, do you want to question me on that, or should I go into reading the comments of the other and then you'll question both together?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think if you go through your second one, then we'll do the questions together.

MR. HYLAND: Okay. Just briefly, you'll note that that one is signed. Mr. Chairman, if you can keep this coloured copy. You should have the original where the mayor signed it as well.

8:11

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Yeah, I've got it.

MR. HYLAND: This was prepared and signed by the president of the Bow Island/Burdett Chamber of Commerce.

We strongly believe that electoral boundaries should not be based solely on population figures. As commendable as the theory one person, one vote may be, there are a number of other criteria to consider when attempting to achieve equal representation in government.

The ever increasing trend of population in urban areas and the resulting decrease of population in rural areas merely widens the gap between equal and unequal representation. The elected representative in an urban constituency can easily cover the entire constituency in one day, while the elected representative in a rural constituency requires several days just to drive to all areas of his constituency. The larger the constituency in terms of area the more difficult and time consuming it is for the representatives to address the concerns of the constituents and the harder it is for them to make contact with him or her.

Because of the vast area in a rural constituency the requirements of an elected representative are far more diverse than those of an urban representative. The number of rural electrification associations, gas co-ops, community pastures, grazing leases, parks, municipalities, counties, right-of-way groups, seniors' lodges, et cetera, et cetera that have to be dealt with will only increase if the rural constituencies are expanded.

As large urban areas continue to expand, there will no doubt be a need for more constituencies to be created; however, caution must be taken not to reduce the strength of the rural representation. While the greatest resource in the province is people, where would the

people be without the resources supplied from agriculture, energy, lumber, and mining, all of which come from rural Alberta? It is imperative that the balance of representation be maintained between the people and the consumable resources.

Thank you for your consideration. The Bow Island/Burdett Chamber of Commerce. Signed, Dale Wheeler, president. As you can see from your copy, Mr. Chairman, there is a short note here: "As mayor of the town of Bow Island, Alberta, I agree with the above concerns." Signed, Ralph Bateman, mayor.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Before we go to any questions, Mr. Hyland, you told us about a commission that spent a lot of money on legal fees. I want you to know that this commission so far has spent nothing on legal fees, has got its legal advice free, and that advice might be worth exactly what we paid for it.

MR. HYLAND: I don't know why John's laughing. Is he the source of the legal advice?

MR. GRBAVAC: Alan, how strongly would you subscribe to the notion that a rural MLA who's representing a constituency that comprises a very large land base has a responsibility to that land base in terms of representing any environmental considerations, concerns, changes in land use, that sort of thing? Do you feel, as one other currently sitting MLA who I asked the same question felt, that, no, that was the responsibility of the entire 83 members of the provincial Legislature? I'm just wondering. With your years of experience as a rural Member of the Legislative Assembly, how much time or what responsibility did you place on representing that geographical land base, if you will, not only in representing its complexities to Edmonton, if in fact you did, but any changes that may be implemented legislatively and the impacts it would have on the people who resided on that land?

MR. HYLAND: I guess, Bob, I tried through my years in the Legislature to represent the people and their concerns, be it on legislation that we had drafted or legislation that they thought should be drafted. I think a key part of an MLA's job is you meet with people when legislation is passed and if it's affecting them wrongly or not the way it was intended. A good example is the Planning Act many years ago, that you and I had lots of discussions about – and you weren't even in my constituency – and the places where we had to change things like that. I think your job is basically a policy one, but when that policy starts to affect people, then you've got to be ready to put your recommended changes into the right places to get that changed. Saying that, I was very involved in a couple of ecological areas: one that started just before I didn't run again and one where I was on the committee and attended some of the committee meetings on the Milk River canyon ecological area to be sure that everybody would have a say in it.

I guess anybody in this room can tell you my feelings towards Cypress park. I in my first couple of years as MLA stood against the departmental recommendation, and it was an interesting time for a while, but we got it changed to where it became a people place.

I guess that's a long way of answering your question, but I think, Bob, it depends so much on the issue and the changes needed to make that issue more acceptable.

MR. GRBAVAC: Just one other observation I have, Alan. As you know, I've probably served in municipal government just about as

long as you have at the provincial level, but I can certainly sympathize with the demands that are placed on a rural MLA. I mean, just your parade schedule in the summer would be enough to deter me from that kind of involvement. Sometimes I wonder if rural people don't place too great an expectation on their MLA. I mean, the 50th wedding anniversary, the birth, the death, the graduation at the high school. If you're not there, you're conspicuous by your absence. Sometimes I think that maybe rural MLAs wear themselves a little thin trying to cover all of those bases. Maybe that's a bit callous – I don't know – but it just seems to me that in an urban setting if you show up at a social function like that, you're more apt to get the response of "Who are you and why are you here?" as opposed to "Why weren't you here?"

MR. HYLAND: Well, I suppose the difference, Bob, is – and I know, because I've heard from people in your constituency or your district, that you attend a lot of things there. You do it, I think, because you're friends. You know the people. You know the area. I think that's the difference between an urban member and a rural member, that you often look at your constituents, because you know so many of them, as friends. So you attend these kinds of things. You know, the reason I left – one of the reasons is sitting right there, and three of them are at home – is that I couldn't say no. People would phone you anywhere from 5 o'clock in the morning until 11 or 12 o'clock at night in Edmonton, at home, et cetera, and even though you try to save Sunday for your family day, that doesn't always work out either.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe? John?

Well, I want to thank you for coming, Mr. Hyland, but I just want to make one comment. We're listening to the arguments as to sort of the rural/urban argument, which is the biggest issue here, versus effective representation. I'm not going to record that rural MLAs go gray, despite what you had to say.

MR. HYLAND: Well, Your Honour, it's probably better than my brothers. They all went bald. I went gray, so I'm probably further ahead of them.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you.

8:21

THE CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is Tom Livingston.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, hon. members of the panel. I would like to commend the committee on even undertaking such a formidable task. It's a difficult task, at best, to consider boundary reform. I truly hope that as you carry out your responsibilities, you'll consider more than just population numbers. I would also like to comment that electoral boundary decisions are not a rural/urban issue. New boundaries are an Alberta issue and must be determined for the good of the province.

In regard to the review it is important that time, distance, and area are taken into consideration as well as population. An MLA representing a large rural riding deals with a situation that's totally unheard of in an urban district. To put this somewhat into perspective, I'm most familiar with the Bow Valley constituency. The Bow Valley constituency is approximately 120 miles long and

50 miles wide. What that is in kilometres, I don't know. I'm a little too long in the tooth to be very familiar with kilometres. To put it in perspective, our MLA is representing 170 townships, for one MLA. The city of Calgary covers approximately five townships, and there are 20 MLAs and – what is it? – seven aldermen. You're from Calgary.

MR. McCARTHY: Fourteen.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Okay. I was half right. I was only seven out. That's not bad out of 14.

An urban MLA can see every building, almost every residence in his riding from the top of a tall building. There are 20 MLAs to deal with one health authority, one municipal council, two school boards, all within the boundary of five townships. Our MLA has two county councils, seven municipal governments, six hamlets, two school boards, the regional health authority, and an irrigation district, all of which require travel, time, and effort. Each entity has its own situation which must be addressed.

I would also say there's a large – well, it wouldn't be the largest, but it's one of the most active petroleum industries in the province right now centred in Bow Valley, or centred in the Brooks district. These guys all want representation and they all seem to want a little more money, but what it amounts to is that there's a completely different set of conditions and situations than the urban MLAs deal with.

Lesser Slave Lake riding covers approximately 900 townships, and with the same split as an Edmonton MLA, approximately the same as the Calgary – what are there? Sixteen MLAs in Edmonton?

THE CHAIRMAN: Eighteen.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Eighteen. And what? Four townships in Edmonton, five townships?

Electoral boundary decisions made in the Legislature could drastically affect the agriculture industry. We just got through going through the Water Resources Act and the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, which are both highly significant for a viable agriculture industry. Had the balance been toward the urban issues or the urban considerations, we may not have had a revision of the Water Resources Act or the environmental protection Act. Some of these Acts highly impacted, adversely, on agriculture. We needed some representation to – I wouldn't say to blunt the Act or turn it aside – make them viable, to make them reasonable and workable for the agriculture industry.

Next to the petroleum industry the agricultural industry is the largest economic engine in Alberta. We all eat three meals a day. I believe we have to recognize the importance of agriculture and recognize the unique challenges facing those in rural Alberta. It is also important to rural voters, as it is to urban voters, who like to see their MLA once in a while, not just talk to him on the phone.

In regard to the Redcliff situation. Redcliff's in our constituency now; we have a constituency office in Redcliff. Our MLA, Dr. Oberg, spends as much time there as he can weasel out of his busy schedule. We keep the constituency office open I think four days a week now. We have some concerns from Redcliff. It isn't a real hotbed of dissent, thanks mainly to Alan Hyland's very commendable administration at that time. He poured oil on the troubled waters, and the problems are now somewhat minimal. We do the best we can to address Redcliff's concerns and to make them

feel that they're not a political football. They're approximately 3,000 in population and a very integral part of Bow Valley constituency at this time. I think we've been changing the boundaries around so much that it's just about like a seat in a public toilet; it's up and down time after time.

I thank you kindly for your time and hope you can consider the remarks you've heard here this evening.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will you just wait, please. I notice from the article you have given us that you're chairman of the Bow Valley Progressive Conservative Association. Where do you live?

MR. LIVINGSTON: Twenty miles north of Brooks.

THE CHAIRMAN: How many miles?

MR. LIVINGSTON: Duchess, 20 miles north of Brooks. Again, I'm somewhat lost with kilometres. We don't have kilometres in our area.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have no trouble converting miles to kilometres.

MR. LIVINGSTON: I do; I never did convert. We also have no hectares, just acres.

THE CHAIRMAN: There may be some questions. John?

MR. McCARTHY: Oh, I think our maps are in sections too, so it's all right. No, I don't have any questions. I think your points were made quite clearly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No.

MR. WORTH: Mr. Livingston, I have one small question. This afternoon in Drumheller we were looking at special area 3 and the whole special areas group with some people there. The suggestion was brought forward that if you have to start carving up the special areas and changing the constituency boundaries, one thing that might be done would be to include the area from Cessford south in special area 3 in the constituency that you've been talking about. How do you react to that? Is it a feasible suggestion?

MR. LIVINGSTON: Well, I would say that given the effort the present government has made in putting some paved highways around the country, I guess you could make anything fit anything. But, really, the Cessford-Waterloo area is a dryland area. The special areas office that controls 95 percent of the land base is in Hanna. If you move the constituency office to Brooks – they do some shopping in Brooks, true enough, but their political business is pretty well done in Hanna. There's a good road, 36, to the town of Hanna now. It's not that far away. The problems are not really the same.

I guess you could use as an example the Jack Horner situation a few years ago. We were in Crowfoot on the other side of the river then. Our problems were totally different from the dryland area on the north side of the river, so the Red Deer River was made the boundary.

There was an old Greek that had a bed – was his name Prometheus? You scholars would probably remember. He had a bed that was only so long. When his guests came, if you were too short, he stretched you. If you were too long, he cut you off. Well, the result was that all guests were exactly the same size, but it was kind of hard on the guests, and it's doubtful that the result was worth the effort put into it.

MR. McCARTHY: I have just one question, if you don't mind. Your federal representative, your federal MP: does he or she get around enough, do you think? I don't even know who it is. How do they meet the challenge of communicating with constituents in I guess a much larger area to represent?

MR. LIVINGSTON: Well, I'd have to say as effectively as possible. He's pretty active. He isn't quite as long in the tooth as some of us are and he's still fairly active, so he gets around quite a lot when he isn't flying back and forth to Ottawa. In regard to the area representation in the large areas, Bob Porter was a former MP from Medicine Hat, which included our district. When he flew into Calgary, it took him longer to get home than any other MP in Canada on account of the plane schedules, so he spent more time traveling to try and represent the people. Solberg's a little closer to Calgary than Porter was, but the same problems apply. As Alan so aptly reiterated, you spend so damn much time on the road to represent your people that you think you might just as well have been a contractor. Our MP spends quite a lot of time on the road.

8:31

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you, Mr. Livingston, for coming and expressing your views.

MR. LIVINGSTON: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Ralph Erb.

MR. R. ERB: I have a small business in Seven Persons, and I'm here as a concerned citizen. I'm going to feel a little bit like an echo; a lot of the things that I was going to say have been covered. I know that it takes a lot of energy to cover all the areas in a large constituency. If we're lucky to have MLAs as ambitious as we have, we're okay. I would just love to put a guy from the city out to keep up with them for a while.

One thing I would recommend to you as a committee – and it'll take you maybe half a day – just to appreciate the distance, maybe you should drive from one corner to another corner in some of these constituencies just to get the feel, because I don't think we can explain to you what that is unless you do it yourself.

Irrigation land needs representation. It's about 4 percent of the land that is farmed, and it produces 20 percent. We have to have people in there that are able to represent that.

A lot of the other points I had have been well made, and I just feel like I'm repeating things that have been said.

MR. McCARTHY: Where is Seven Persons, and what constituency are you in?

MR. R. ERB: In Cypress-Medicine Hat.

MR. LEHANE: Mr. Erb, are you satisfied with the present boundaries of Cypress-Medicine Hat?

MR. R. ERB: I feel it's been working very well with the city. When I go into Medicine Hat to do business, I don't feel like I am in a big city. It's very rural. So I think it's just what Alan said: it is very noticeable that whoever you run into has more or less got the same interests.

THE CHAIRMAN: What would your reaction be to giving you a little bit more of Medicine Hat to make the figures look a little better?

MR. R. ERB: We're just getting used to this. I would disagree with that. If you're going to change boundaries every election, I don't know what for. Again, to reduce MLAs – they can waste more money in the stroke of a pen than what those four or five extra MLAs cost us.

MR. WORTH: Mr. Erb, earlier we heard that there was some substantial increase in the enrollment in the Seven Persons school. Are they drawn from a large area, or do they come from very close around Seven Persons?

MR. R. ERB: Deregulation of the schools – moneys follow the child – has had somewhat of an impact, and there are a lot of acreages close to Medicine Hat. It's a very good school.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Erb, you suggested that it would be a good idea for this commission to travel all of the Cypress constituency.

MR. R. ERB: I'm not suggesting Cypress, but I think just to get a feeling of – you pick it. I think you can appreciate what it does.

MR. GRBAC: If it's any consolation, I offered to take the commission to the Manyberries bar, but they didn't take me up on it.

MR. R. ERB: That would be a great example.

THE CHAIRMAN: I should tell you that when the minister phoned me and asked me if I would take this onerous job, I knew what the job entailed. I didn't go into it blindly. I said to myself: well, I'll at least get to know all of Alberta. The part of Alberta that I wanted to get to know, that I've never been to, is the Foremost corner of Alberta, I guess you'd say, south of here. As I do this work, I'm going to find out that I don't get to see that part of Alberta unless I accept an offer like yours somewhere down the road.

Thanks for coming and making your views known.

MR. R. ERB: I appreciate the job that you have in front of you; it's not an easy task. But thanks for giving us the chance here.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Donald Schaufele. I'm sorry; the spelling I have is a little – no, I do have the right spelling but the wrong pronunciation.

MR. SCHAUFLE: I apologize; I don't have copies for you. I can prepare a copy and get it to this commission tomorrow if you wish.

My name is Donald Schaufele. I'm a chartered accountant. I live in Medicine Hat. I'm in the Cypress riding, and I'm a concerned citizen. The existing electoral boundaries are well within the required 25 percent, as you're well aware, from the provincial average. Therefore, why spend the time and the money to alter these boundaries, especially since another review is scheduled in the year 2001?

Specifically relating to the Cypress riding, I hope the commission considers the sparsity and the vastness of this riding, which takes, as has been indicated earlier, approximately three hours to cover. If this area would be included in another riding or expanded, this would result in ineffective representation, which, according to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is guaranteed. Also, effective representation does not mean equal voting power has to exist. Rural ridings lack the resources that are available to them presently, and that is a difference from the urban area. In rural ridings such as this, people require or demand more time of the MLA. So it's just not the travel time between going and seeing your constituents; it's the extra time that is demanded or expected, right or wrong, in this type of riding.

I believe that the difficulty in representing a rural riding justifies a deviation from the average constituency population. We should also consider the long distance the riding is from the Legislature, as has been indicated. It takes a long time. So it's not just the time to service your constituents but the time to get to the Legislature and back. Therefore, any increase in the riding size would result in less effective representation. Compare the Cypress riding to various ridings in Calgary and Edmonton, as has been indicated also previously, where it may take 10 to 15 minutes to get from one end of the riding to the other. It takes a couple of hours here. I believe that some rural population variance is necessary to prevent urban domination of government policy also. I think this is a very important issue.

For the above reasons I hope this commission considers to not change the current electoral boundaries. Fair is not necessarily the same as equal. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine, Mr. Schaufele.

Any questions?

MR. WORTH: You've advanced the argument that you think there should be a negative variance to allow for better and effective representation. You'll note, I guess, from the circular that Medicine Hat is presently at minus 23. Do you consider that a reasonable variance, or is there some other figure that you'd consider even more reasonable?

MR. SCHAUFELE: I personally feel that that is at the outer limits. If this commission and the government decide that something has to be done to this riding, I would like to see Redcliff included in Cypress, if that has to be. I like it how it is, but that is the best solution if a solution or a change has to be made. I'd hate to see increasing the vastness of this riding other than by Redcliff, which really doesn't increase the vastness or the travel distance.

8:41

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

MR. GRBAVAC: Donald, I've got a question. Some people seem to have a clear distinction of what is urban and what is rural. I don't

have that clear distinction at all. I mean, in the area in which I live, there are a lot of acreage holders there that have no really direct connection with the land. The people who own the land all live in Lethbridge, and I defy any MLA to take an anti-agriculture stand in Lethbridge, because it would not be in their best interests. So I certainly don't consider Lethbridge to be an urban riding, nor do I probably consider Medicine Hat. I don't think you would want to ignore agriculture in Medicine Hat, or you would do it at your own political peril.

You know, I'm curious. When 'rurban' ridings were put forth by Bob Bogle and his select committee – I can't remember which committee it was; there were so many of them there – 'rurban' ridings were not seen as desirable by a lot of people in the province. Yet here and in Grande Prairie they seem to be working fairly well. I'm just wondering what kind of growing pains you had or encountered when that riding was struck that way, because it seems to me that would answer a lot of our problems in some of the areas outside of maybe the cities of Calgary and Edmonton specifically, although I think it has some application there too.

MR. SCHAUFELE: I think actually the transition went quite well here. An important point, which was made by Wayne Heller, is that it depends upon the MLA that's elected in that area. That MLA must consider the urban and the rural aspects of that riding to provide effective representation for all the constituents, and that is the key. I think the rural constituents feel that's where the scariest aspect of this could be, if you have too much urban concentration in that riding so that their vote won't count or that they will not be provided with adequate assistance or service.

MR. GRBAVAC: Well, that doesn't really help me very much, because we can't pick the MLA before we set the riding.

MR. SCHAUFELE: That's right. I think that actually – I hope I can try to answer this – it went quite well. We didn't have any problems. I think it's just that in a city like Medicine Hat, we need the agriculture business. We provide a lot of services to the agriculture business, and it's very important to us. We did not have any problem with the transition that I'm aware of. It was very smooth. It's a marriage.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to expand on that. I've been suggesting here tonight that maybe we extend the transition. I'm getting the feeling that people don't want it extended. In other words, what they're telling us is: Cypress-Medicine Hat has part of Medicine Hat, but don't give us more of Medicine Hat.

MR. SCHAUFELE: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: Of the rural versus urban argument I have somewhat this concept. Places like Medicine Hat are really made up to a large extent of the rural people that lived around here, and there isn't the sort of animosity between the rural and urban people in the Medicine Hat area. They get along. They know one another. They migrated into Medicine Hat. As Robert has said, the urban person who wants to discriminate against the farmers or against the rural people is in for trouble. So I'm sort of saying to myself: why are they not accepting a proposal that I'm suggesting to sort of balance things?

MR. SCHAUFLELE: I think we want to keep the rural people happy. I'm an urbanite. I've always lived in the city. I'm not a farmer; I'm not a rancher. I, too, do provide accounting services to many farmers and ranchers in that sector as well as city businesses. I think we want to keep them happy, and we're willing to bend over, at least we perhaps could perceive it as bending over, to make them happy. That's why we don't mind having less urban and giving them a little more rural representation, because we think they're going to treat us fair and we hope to treat them fair.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe, any questions?

MR. LEHANE: On this point with respect to ridings that are composed of both rural and urban areas, I'd like you to give us your thoughts in terms of the populations. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I understand now it's about 60 percent urban, 40 percent rural in Cypress-Medicine Hat. Do you think one of the goals in that type of riding would be to try to keep as close as possible an equal balance between the amount of the population that is urban and the amount that is rural? Let me just expand on that for a minute. There are other ways to do it, of course, where you might just tag on a little bit of an urban area to bring the population of a basically rural constituency up, or you might have an urban constituency where you'd tag a little rural on to get their numbers in line. I'm suggesting that that might not be as acceptable a type of urban riding as one where there is a balance in the population.

MR. SCHAUFLELE: I personally wouldn't have any problem with a 50-50 split, but the problem in this specific situation is that in order to get a 50-50 split – that means to get another 10 percent rural – we will have to increase the area that is covered by the MLA. Therefore, I do not feel that would provide effective representation, and because of that reason I don't think it's right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me get your comments on another proposal. Grande Prairie, in the last electoral boundaries, was divided in half, right down the middle. One-half of the city of Grande Prairie and all the way to the B.C. border is one constituency, and one-half of the city and quite some distance to the east is another constituency. Now, they really `rurbanized' Grande Prairie and the surrounding area. We haven't been there yet, but I think the people are happy with this. What do you think the reaction of the people of Medicine Hat would be – and this would affect the rural people also – if we tried to look at Medicine Hat and say, "Let's divide Medicine Hat in half and give enough rural people, say, to the south and enough rural people to the north to make it into two constituencies"?

MR. SCHAUFLELE: I don't think the urban people would have a problem with that, to be honest. That's my personal opinion. The urban people I don't think will have a problem with that. The rural people would have to judge, in their feeling, to see if they're being fairly treated or fairly represented. Again, they think they're at the uttermost limits right now perhaps having 40 percent of this riding. They have an MLA who has a combination of urban and rural upbringing, so they feel that's okay and that's their limit. As far as a split down the middle, if the rural people thought they were fairly treated, it probably would work.

THE CHAIRMAN: The trouble is that it probably wouldn't work in Medicine Hat like it does in Grande Prairie because we don't have enough people around here.

MR. SCHAUFLELE: That's right.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. I didn't ask you whether you wanted to ask any questions, John.

MR. McCARTHY: No. Well, I just see that the city of Medicine Hat is suggesting here – Mr. Godin suggests splitting the city in two, I guess, in a different way. If I understand it correctly, it says that there would be one constituency consisting of those parts of Medicine Hat to the south of Seven Persons Creek and another constituency consisting of those parts of Medicine Hat to the north of Seven Persons Creek and the town of Redcliff.

8:51

MR. SCHAUFLELE: I personally wouldn't have a problem with it, but again I have to say that I want to keep the rural people happy, and a review and discussion of that breakdown I think should be warranted to get their opinion of it. You'd have to see the actual numbers, et cetera. Perhaps the presentation this evening later by the city of Medicine Hat is going to add a little light to the rationale of that split.

MR. McCARTHY: Well, maybe after the city of Medicine Hat makes its submission. Usually the chair calls for comments from the previous people who have spoken or others who haven't spoken, so that might promote a little discussion after we hear from them.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to thank you, Mr. Schaufele, for coming here and making your views known.

MR. SCHAUFLELE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next speaker was supposed to be Mr. Godin, but he's been replaced by Norm Bauer.

Mr. Bauer, am I correct by stating that you're speaking?

MR. BAUER: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. BAUER: I can see why my friend Wayne here sees the humour in this.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, my note says: add Norm Bauer to the list; take Larry Godin off. So I just thought you were his replacement. I wish to apologize to both you and Mr. Godin.

Go ahead.

MR. BAUER: I am Norm Bauer, and my family and I operate a farm and ranch at Hilda, Alberta.

MR. WORTH: Where?

MR. BAUER: Hilda, Alberta. For the benefit of those who don't know where it is, it's about 50 miles northeast of here.

MR. McCARTHY: What constituency is that?

MR. BAUER: In Cypress-Medicine Hat. It goes much beyond that, by the way.

Many of my thoughts on this matter have already been expressed here tonight. The problems brought about by distance and travel time have been well documented. I have but one request, and that is that your commission recommend that a criteria of plus or minus 25 percent in population is far too simplistic and that some type of an area or geographic component must be added to these and future considerations. That's all I have.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you.
Any questions?

MR. GRBAVAC: Well, Mr. Bauer, as you're aware, I guess the legislation as it now stands allows for four special areas. Are you suggesting, then, that maybe that ought to be expanded, where in fact landmass and distance from the capital, et cetera, et cetera, are taken into consideration, the four out of 83?

MR. BAUER: With your powers, then, as a commission, would you not be able to recommend that these things be put in place, that that would be expanded?

MR. GRBAVAC: Well, the last time I commented on this, I was corrected by my colleagues. I don't know if I want to comment. I don't think we have the mandate to do that. I think we have the mandate just to reconfigure the existing 83, but I suppose we could recommend almost anything as an addendum to our report.

MR. BAUER: Well, I see a danger here in the future. Most of the problems could be swallowed up by two giant black holes, that being Calgary and Edmonton. Maybe it's not fair.

MR. GRBAVAC: This wouldn't be intellectual black holes; would it?

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bauer, I think Robert is correct. Our mandate is to divide Alberta into 83 constituencies. We're allowed four special areas, which I announced in my opening remarks. I guess what you're saying to us is: if necessary, because of the 25 percent, make this area a special area.

MR. WORTH: Mr. Bauer, I'm not sure you're saying that. I'm going to disagree with my colleagues. I think you're asking us to take account of area, to take account of in a sense the sparsity of population, to really consider the area in which the people live in addition to just straight population.

MR. BAUER: Yes, exactly, and not only in this constituency but over the whole province.

MR. WORTH: Yeah. I think that is simply drawing our attention to one of the criteria that we have to use in making our decisions about boundaries. In addition to municipal boundaries, population, geographical features, road systems, and all of that, you're saying: take a look at landmass.

MR. BAUER: Yes. And distance. I don't see that it's in there now.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?
Well, thanks for coming, Mr. Bauer.

MR. BAUER: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next person that is on the list is Richard Pratt.

MR. WORTH: What about Larry Godin?

THE CHAIRMAN: My note said to take him off.

MR. WORTH: He's not here?

THE CHAIRMAN: Is Larry Godin here?

MR. PRATT: I think Larry had to referee a hockey game. Sorry that you guys aren't as important.

Anyways, my name is Richard Pratt. I'm a teacher in Medicine Hat. I live in the Cypress-Medicine Hat riding in an area called Ross Glen. I was born and raised in Medicine Hat. I've lived here all my life. I know this community really well, and I also feel that I know the rural areas. I really appreciate the comment by Mr. Grbac about the Manyberries bar, because I was there about 10 years ago, 12 years ago on a Saturday night, and I met my wife there. So I appreciate that. It's a great place. You guys should head out there.

MR. LEHANE: I hung out there when I was single too, and I didn't have any luck.

MR. PRATT: Are you married?

MR. LEHANE: Well, since then, yeah, but not at that time.

MR. PRATT: Well, you can have some pretty good luck there, you know.

Anyways, anybody that's driven to Manyberries knows it's an awful long ways, and people who have to travel through the constituency realize that. I appreciate living in this riding. I'm concerned I think with what everybody's concerned with, and that is getting along in Alberta, in Canada. What has happened with this kind of mix that we have, the urban/rural mix, and this new term 'rurban', that I'll have to look up in *Webster's*, coined by I don't know who . . .

MR. GRBAVAC: It wasn't me.

MR. PRATT: Oh, okay.

Anyways, I really believe that what it does is make urban people much more aware of rural situations and rural problems. When I attended university and so on, I didn't really pay much attention to what was going on outside the area of Edmonton because I was living in Edmonton. Now that I'm in a riding that includes rural areas, when I pick up the paper or hear the news, hear what people are saying, I'm concerned with what's happening with people in the rural areas, and perhaps more so down here because we've got that type of unique mix, as opposed to Calgary or Edmonton. I think

we're lucky that way, and we really need to fortify that and maintain that as much as possible.

I've known Wayne Heller for years, and I don't think he was trying to be personal with his comment and others about expanding the riding into Medicine Hat. But I think by the same token there has to be trust built up, and you alluded to that in asking other speakers how they felt about this expansion into the Medicine Hat riding. I don't blame rural people for sometimes not trusting urban people in sharing their concerns. We've now had this riding going for a while, not long, and it's starting to happen. I really believe that people in the urban area are starting to understand, are trying to understand, are at least paying attention to these problems, paying attention to environmental concerns, that are raising their heads as well, more so than what used to be in the Medicine Hat area. So what I feel should be maintained is this kind of a mix to help people get along, but I can understand, too, that it's going to take a while. It's building, and it's growing, and I really believe it.

9:01

Now, we've had this kind of a mix federally here for years and years, where we've had an urban/rural mix, but one of the problems with that is that the riding is so massive. Mr. Livingston was alluding to that, the distances that the MPs have to go federally. It's difficult as it is right now for the MLA in the Cypress-Medicine Hat riding to travel the distance through it. To make it larger on a rural basis would be extremely difficult. I don't want to go against the grain here of rural people, but I think if it meant expanding the riding to a larger area – one of the questions came about going north. I think the only way is if you could take into a census count gophers and rattlesnakes up there to get in the numbers that we need, because it's kind of sparse in that area. If in fact the riding is going to be expanded in a rural area to make it much larger, to get the numbers in there – sorry, Wayne – perhaps we'd have to have a few more blocks of Medicine Hat to do it. It seems to be one of the alternatives that can work.

I really have a feeling that I want people to get along in this country and in this province. We're often called, down here in the southeast corner, the forgotten corner of the province. Sometimes that's a blessing, because we don't have to put up with some of the hogwash that goes on in other parts of Alberta. We're kind of lucky in a lot of ways down here to have an area where people do get along in a really unique way. We get along really well, and I'd like to see it maintained by this kind of an urban/rural mix. I honestly feel that I'm paying more attention to the plight of people in agriculture in a lot of areas because of that, and I would think that perhaps I might turn off to it if I were in a strictly urban riding. I agree with what some of you are saying, that, yeah, it's hard to define Medicine Hat as being urban as opposed to central Calgary or Edmonton. I know that we're all very much aware of rural situations, but I think more so in this riding. It's unique that way.

Anyway, I appreciate you fellows. You seem to be awake still; it's nice to see. Thanks for coming down.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was going to say you may have woken us up a bit, but that might be casting the wrong inference on the previous speaker, so I'm withdrawing that remark.

I just want to find out – Wally, do you have any questions?

MR. WORTH: Just a comment. I share with you the view that one of the hopes that we ought to pursue, one of the goals that we ought

to pursue as a commission is to develop boundaries that will facilitate the development and the maintenance of a sense of community throughout our province. So I share your sentiments, and they struck a responsive chord with me.

THE CHAIRMAN: My question's not very relevant but to help understand you. You're living in Medicine Hat as a teacher, you're in the Cypress-Medicine Hat constituency, but what was your background before? I was under the impression that you may have come from Edmonton.

MR. PRATT: Oh, no. I went to university in Edmonton.

THE CHAIRMAN: So where did you . . .

MR. PRATT: I'm from Medicine Hat, born and raised here.

THE CHAIRMAN: You're from Medicine Hat.

MR. PRATT: That's right. And then attended university and came back again.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe? John?

Well, thanks for coming.

MR. PRATT: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter, according to the list I have, is Dr. Lorne Taylor, the MLA from the constituency that we're doing a lot of talking about tonight.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. We appreciate the opportunity, and let me say that certainly I have a new perspective on politics. I was barely a party member six months before the election, so when I got involved in this, quite frankly I really didn't quite know how involved it was going to be. If I had a young family like Alan Hyland, I would not be sitting here today, because I would have resigned. Quite frankly, I don't know how he did it. My youngest is 17 years of age and the oldest is 27, so my kids are pretty much grown up. It would be a very difficult job.

I'd like to just read you a list of communities: Walsh, Irvine, Elkwater, Bow Island, Foremost, Etzikom, Hilda, Schuler, Medicine Hat-Ross Glen, Medicine Hat-Southridge, Manyberries, Skiff, Seven Persons, Orion, Burdett, and Dunmore. Each one of those communities has a community hall. Each one of those communities has an active community group. Each one of those communities wants to see and talk to their MLA. On Saturday, November 11, at 11 o'clock in the morning I am to be at three separate Remembrance Day services over 60 miles apart. Obviously, I can't do it. What I do is I rotate the services, so this year it's my turn to be in Bow Island. I would like to be at all of them. Last year I was in Foremost. They're meaningful times for all of us when we attend these.

The constituency, as people have mentioned, is three to three and a half hours across. I don't know how Alan managed to get home at 7 o'clock in the evening; I don't get home until midnight. He must have driven faster or something.

MR. HYLAND: We quit at 1 o'clock.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Oh. I'm in a situation where I now have to drive the speed limit, so it takes me about three and half hours to get across the constituency. I hope the press doesn't report that, if they're here.

Much of my constituency has gravel roads, and I would challenge anybody to get across my constituency today in three and a half hours. If you want to try it, I drive a four-by-four, three-quarter ton diesel truck, and I'll take you out and we'll try it. Even in a four-by-four you won't do it today. You wouldn't have done it this spring in the rain, when I had to be in a four-by-four on the country road south of Foremost because they had so much rain. You simply couldn't do it. So it depends; in ideal conditions you can do it in three to three and half hours.

I'm concerned about the marginalization of the agricultural community. I'm concerned by the fact that agriculture is the second biggest income producer in Alberta, only second to the energy industry, and the first biggest employer. It employs more people than the energy industry. I think those economic facts have to be seen in this kind of context. We cannot marginalize our agricultural community, and we are in danger of doing this.

You know, Calgary already has 20 MLAs. If 15 aldermen can run the city – unless MLAs are a lot dumber. They may be; I don't know.

THE CHAIRMAN: We won't comment.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I don't know why they'd need any more MLAs in urban areas, quite frankly. So I'm very concerned by it when I read your initial report or your initial publication in an attempt that I see is to remove rural ridings from the map.

I would point out that we're working on 1991 data, but the two most rapidly growing areas in Medicine Hat are Ross Glen and Southridge. Those are the areas. If you drive through them – they're just down the highway a ways here – you'll see that. That's the area of growth in Medicine Hat, quite frankly. So I would suggest to you that your 1991 data is not very accurate, and if you would consult the city, I'm sure they can give you more up-to-date figures for both Ross Glen and Southridge in terms of numbers. I would suspect that the roughly over 23 percent variance is probably not accurate any more.

The other two rapidly growing areas in the constituency are Dunmore and Seven Persons, and you heard that earlier. They're growing rapidly, not necessarily, I believe, from rural people moving into those areas; they're growing rapidly from urban people moving in. They're bedroom communities for Medicine Hat. So the majority of the people in Dunmore and Seven Persons work in Medicine Hat. Although 10 or 15 miles outside Medicine Hat, they are really urban populations.

So I have some concerns in terms of what I see happening, and I would ask you to very much take into account the sparsity and distance, especially of a constituency like this. If you even take into account the miles of pavement, the county of Forty Mile, it's my understanding, has fewer miles of pavement than any other county or municipality in the province. I travel those roads, and I travel them all the time.

So I think it's a situation where we need to be aware of the issues, and I think we must take into account sparsity, distance, and effective representation.

Thank you.

9:11

THE CHAIRMAN: John, you wanted to ask something.

MR. McCARTHY: Yes. I was going to raise this earlier, but I wanted to wait for you, because you sitting there and the Chief Judge sitting there will kind of – well, I'll be a little more blunt than Alan Hyland, because he's way too polite sometimes and always has been. He's been a very polite man over his career.

What we've got here is a conflict between the judiciary, being the Court of Appeal, and the Legislature.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Absolutely.

MR. McCARTHY: Everything that's been said tonight can be used to justify the boundaries as they are; in other words, the interpretation is a subjective interpretation. The Supreme Court of Canada has laid down some guidelines, and as I say, those guidelines are, you know, open to subjective interpretation. Now we come to the Alberta Court of Appeal, all of whom I think live in the cities, in Calgary and Edmonton. They describe them as metropolitan areas. They indicate clearly, without me reading lengthy passages – but I know you've reviewed the case, I'm sure.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Yeah, I've read it.

MR. McCARTHY: They say that metropolitan Alberta, being Edmonton and Calgary, have an existing inadequate level of representation. As you heard me say earlier tonight, they then conclude by saying, "We reject any suggestion that the present divisions may rest until after the 2001 census."

Alan's comments were much more polite than the mayor of Wainwright last night, who I believe said that he was sick and tired of the judiciary and fed up with them. It's a real dilemma for us because we're caught between the Legislature and the judiciary. If there's no change, then the judiciary, according to the Charter of Rights and our Constitution, apparently will have the right to change the boundaries themselves. So I'm just curious as to what you have to say about this dilemma.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Not being a lawyer, I can't understand the arguments that you're making, but it's my impression that – quite frankly, my personal opinion was that we should have appealed the case. I was unhappy with the fact that this government did not appeal the case. I believe we should have appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, because we are within the 25 percent variance as I understand . . .

MR. McCARTHY: That's right.

DR. L. TAYLOR: . . . the Supreme Court ruling. So I was unhappy that the government did not appeal the case, quite frankly.

I would agree with Alan. I mean, if people don't like what I say or do, they can chuck me out in less than four years now, but there's not much we can do to the judge there. We can't even reduce his pay.

THE CHAIRMAN: You might have been able to had you done it right.

MR. McCARTHY: Just one other item. You know, I've got to tell you from a Calgary perspective that when you go into the bars or the restaurants of Calgary, the topic of electoral boundaries never comes up. It's not a hot item in the barbershops of Calgary; I can tell you that right now. Again, we've got this problem where we have the judiciary that is concerned about metropolitan Alberta being underrepresented. The one point that you might want to be aware of, too, is that the city of Calgary grows every year an amount equivalent to the size of the city of Medicine Hat, every single year.

DR. L. TAYLOR: It's not just rural Alberta that's going to be marginalized; it's going to be cities like Medicine Hat. I mean, Medicine Hat's growth has been relatively constant. We're right around 50,000, as I understand it, now. But if Medicine Hat grows a thousand to 2,000 people a year – quite frankly, you're going to have a whole marginalization of smaller urban communities as well.

MR. GRBAVAC: Dr. Taylor, I'd like to make a comment – I probably wouldn't make this comment to anyone who wasn't a sitting member of the Legislature – and respect that this comes from a municipal bias. I say this at the risk of you accepting my premise that you would marginalize yourself as an MLA. That would be that if you were to disseminate your power back to the municipal level – not take our taxes and put them through the funnel in Edmonton and then make us feel like we have to be grateful for getting them back – if you left the power at the local level, then we wouldn't have this problem. We, frankly, wouldn't care how many MLAs there were, because the power base would reside at the municipal level, with the people at the local level. So when they made a mistake, you tripped over them in town when getting their mail, and you know, they're under your foot all the time. There are ways of minimizing it.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I'm certainly prepared to argue provincial municipal politics with you.

MR. GRBAVAC: Oh, I'm sure you are.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I don't think this is the forum that we're to do that in.

MR. GRBAVAC: It's not, but I just took advantage of my position to lay before you a bias. It's late in the evening. You're a sitting member of the Legislature, and I'm just suggesting that you have it within your power to not marginalize rural Alberta by giving back some of the power that you've taken from them.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe.

MR. LEHANE: Yes. I have a question, and the question I'm going to ask, Lorne, is a question that I'm not asking only of you. I'd like any other person who's spoken tonight or anyone who hasn't spoken: if they have any comments with respect to this, would they please give them to us? We have a written submission from the city of Medicine Hat, from the city clerk, who couldn't be here tonight. I want to read it to you.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I've read the presentation already.

MR. LEHANE: Okay. Some people here may not have, so I'll just read it out. There was a resolution passed that said

that the Medicine Hat City Council recommend to the Electoral Boundaries Commission that there be one constituency consisting of those parts of Medicine Hat to the south of Seven Persons Creek and another constituency consisting of those parts of Medicine Hat to the north of Seven Persons Creek and the Town of Redcliff.

Now, it says:

Based on the City's 1994 Civic Census the total population living North of Seven Persons Creek is 23,886 and South of Seven Persons Creek is 22,006.

So I look at that recommendation from the city and I say that if we have a population quotient of 30,000 for the province, that means that if you want to strive to be close to that quotient in terms of those two constituencies, you're going to have two constituencies with approximately 7,000 or 8,000 rural residents and 22,000 or 23,000 urban residents. I'm not sure that that creates a balance or a mix or the type of trust that's been alluded to previously here by some of the speakers. So I'd like, perhaps, if we could get some feedback with respect to this submission by the city.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Well, I certainly don't support that submission. I think there is a problem with balance already. On the '91 statistics we're about 60-40. I would suspect we're more like, in terms of today's, 65-35.

I think one of the things rural people are talking about when they talk about trust is exactly a submission like this, which indicates the city, the urban, wants two urban seats basically. You can see why we had rural people sitting here tonight saying, "We want our representation," because obviously the city consideration is not very considerate of the rural needs, quite frankly. So I think that's an unrealistic expectation. I think it's totally out of balance.

THE CHAIRMAN: I see Mr. Hyland has joined you. He thinks you need help.

MR. HYLAND: I wouldn't say Lorne needs help.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you mind if he speaks?

DR. L. TAYLOR: No, I don't mind if he speaks.

MR. HYLAND: I wouldn't say Lorne needs help. He can get into enough trouble, like I could by myself, anyway.

The proposal that the city put forward they've put forward before. They put it forward to the second last commission with Justice Virtue. They said they had the support of Redcliff, and when Redcliff got up to speak, they spoke against it. Redcliff, as I remember, wanted to remain in the Redcliff-Cypress riding, and if they had to add from a portion of the city, they suggested a southern portion of the city, which was what was added to Cypress. Redcliff was put in Bow Valley.

The city has said for I don't know how many of the last number of redistributions that they would like the variance to be increased so that they could have two city seats. I don't know what the whole recommendation said, but previously they had suggested that rural areas wouldn't be included, that it would be just the urban areas as part of the city.

9:21

One of the other recommendations that was in one of the previous was cutting the city in two pieces from north and south and leaving the centre. That was soundly rejected by the people in the next phase of the hearings.

As I remember, when the city presented their proposal before the committee, those private individuals from the city that presented a proposal at that time didn't get up and say, "Yes, I support city council." They were more in favour of the type of split that we have now versus a 50 percent split.

As I remember, the split in Grande Prairie that was referred to tonight had a rural/urban split. If my memory serves me right, at the time that was done I think it was a 60-40 split, almost like we are, because of the area around it, if I remember the numbers right. Maybe that's why it works too.

The one person that spoke against it at that time was the mayor. The council wasn't necessarily against it; the mayor was. He ran as a Liberal candidate and got defeated. Did he have the city's support or not? I don't know.

THE CHAIRMAN: He might have been looking for his own supporters.

MR. HYLAND: He might have been.

That's what I remember about the time before, if this is the same proposal.

THE CHAIRMAN: When you say Grande Prairie works, that's only my comment. We haven't had confirmation of that. When we get up there, we will find out.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I would say that this riding, Cypress-Medicine Hat, from my perspective is working. I think you've heard that to a certain extent this evening.

THE CHAIRMAN: There's no doubt.

DR. L. TAYLOR: It's a 'rurban.' You said: well, you can't select the MLA before. In one sense, you've got to be a relatively special person, I believe. I'm not saying I'm special, but I have an agricultural background although I live in Medicine Hat. My father sent me away to university and said: maybe when you're a little older you can come back. I stayed in university quite a long time, and by the time I was about 36 years of age he said: "Well, I want to take it a little easier. If you want to come back, you can come back." So I came back, but I didn't come back until I was 36 or 37 years of age, with experience in various parts of the world.

Our business trading area with our agricultural background is through my whole constituency, basically. It's not as heavily traded in the Foremost area, but all through this whole constituency has been our business trading area in the agricultural business.

My family was known in that area, and I knew a lot of these people. Norman Bauer sitting there: I've helped Norman Bauer load cattle at 12 o'clock at night. I can still remember eight years ago, Norman, we were loading Charolais calves down there on your semi-trailer liner at midnight. So I've had those kinds of connections with the agricultural community, but I live and grew up and lived in Medicine Hat, and I was chairman of the public school board in Medicine Hat. So I had the urban connection as well.

I think it could be very dangerous for rural Alberta if you get an overbalance in the urban area. The urban people could quite easily control a nomination meeting and nominate somebody who had no experience with rural Alberta, who didn't know what the issues were.

I quite frankly don't know a lot about the grain business. I'm learning more and more about it. I knew nothing about the speciality crop business when I got elected. I am fairly comfortable in the cattle business. Even with that kind of connection it's been a huge learning task for me to learn about the grain business and the speciality crop business, and I still haven't learned about it. I've still got lots to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: When you were telling us that you were at university that long, I hope you're not telling us you were a slow learner.

DR. L. TAYLOR: No, I wasn't. I actually worked for about 10 of those years as a professor. I probably was a slow learner. I stayed at the university studying for so long.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to ask you an irrelevant question. You say that you traveled a lot of gravel roads. My first reaction is you must lose five windshields a year.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I've lost some windshields, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: In my position as Chief Judge I want you to know I can do nothing about your speeding tickets.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I wouldn't even dare ask.

THE CHAIRMAN: The lady there wanted to make a comment.

MRS. E. ERB: Yes. I'm Elaine Erb. I'm a school trustee for the Prairie Rose regional division. I just thought, regarding the city proposal, that it's too bad we don't have representation from Redcliff here tonight. Just to show you the philosophy and maybe the intent behind what they may say regarding this, with regionalization of school districts they did choose to regionalize with an all-rural school district instead of Medicine Hat No. 76.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a reason for that?

MRS. E. ERB: Yes, the same reasons that we're saying tonight. They wanted to identify with the rural district as far as the school jurisdiction. So I would assume they would think the same way in the political . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hyland, you have my copy of the letter from the city of Medicine Hat. I'm not clear in respect to those figures. I think from what people are telling me here that the Medicine Hat figures do not allow for the rural areas around.

MR. HYLAND: It would appear as if it's still the same as '91. It's two city . . .

DR. L. TAYLOR: It's two city constituencies, as I read it.

MR. LEHANE: When I reviewed that proposal, I wasn't suggesting that the city of Medicine Hat was saying that they were going to

have a `rurban' riding with 22,000 or 23,000. I think what they were suggesting there is that they were going to have two urban ridings of 22,000 and 23,000. All I can say is good luck, because they both have to be special areas.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, if there are no more questions, I want to thank you for coming, Dr. Taylor.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you for being here.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'll let you thank Mr. Hyland for the help he gave.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I'd just like to thank everybody that came. It was good to see you had such a good turnout.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, after we've had the listed speakers, we allow for walk-ons or anybody who wants to make any comments in view of what they have heard. Is there anybody here that wants to add anything?

MRS. E. ERB: I'll just make a real brief one. Just today I was at a zone 6 school district meeting. That's from Lethbridge, Warner, over to here. Just the variance within the school district – I can't imagine what Lorne goes through, and a much larger, more diverse area.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have the *Hansard* reporter, and I'm not sure that they got your name.

MRS. E. ERB: Elaine Erb.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks. Anybody else wish to make any comments?

MR. LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what we've heard tonight emphasizes very emphatically that time, distance, and area need to be taken into consideration as well as population. Let's not make this a rural/urban controversy. Let's insist that we make the new boundaries or any boundary change, boundary review, an Alberta issue to be determined for the good of the province, not for rural/urban relations or urban renewal, or rural renewal, for that matter.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Well, I guess if that's it, I want to thank you people in the Medicine Hat and Cypress-Medicine Hat and Bow Valley constituencies for coming – I don't know if I named all the constituencies that were here tonight; it's not exactly the most pleasant day – for helping us in trying to determine what we should do. Thank you.

[The hearing adjourned at 9:30 p.m.]