

Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings Calgary

2:02 p.m.

[Chairman: Chief Judge Edward R. Wachowich]

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to start the hearings. I want to welcome you and to say good afternoon. I would also like to make a few introductory remarks.

My name is Edward Wachowich, and I am chairman of the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission. I'm also the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta.

Let me introduce you to the other members of the commission. Robert Grbavac of Raymond, Alberta, is on my immediate left, Joe Lehan of Innisfail is on my immediate right, John McCarthy of Calgary is on my far right, and Wally Worth of Edmonton is on my far left. 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 your criticisms and to consider your thinking with respect to the proposals that we have made in our report, released in January.

Why are we here? The commission is here to listen to your comments on the proposals made with respect to the electoral boundaries in Alberta in our first report, which I believe received very wide circulation throughout the province of Alberta. The commission is charged by law to examine the areas, the boundaries, and the names of electoral divisions in Alberta and to make recommendations with respect to them.

As I have said, we made the preliminary recommendations in January. These recommendations were given wide publicity, and more than 3,000 copies of our report have been circulated throughout the province. We feel that on the second round of hearings we need only listen to your reactions, evaluate your comments and critiques, and move on to our final conclusion with respect to our mandate.

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. I want to tell you that we have reached preliminary conclusions with respect to our mandate, but I also want to tell you that our minds are not closed, nor have we reached any final conclusion. Every member of this commission has given these matters a lot of thought, and in reviewing the law, the work of previous commissions and committees which have studied boundaries in Alberta and in reviewing what the courts have said about electoral boundaries in the province of Alberta and in Canada, we've attempted to craft a preliminary proposal that will assure that all of the citizens of Alberta and all of the regions of Alberta are adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

In order to put our second round of hearings in perspective, I want to present a brief summary of the electoral boundaries law. One, our function is to review the existing electoral boundaries and to make proposals to the Legislative Assembly about the area, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions in Alberta.

Two, we have a very limited time to accomplish this task. We submitted a report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in late January and must now, after a second round of public hearings, submit our concluding report to the Speaker before the end of June of this year.

Three, as I have said, the commission is required to hold two sets

of public hearings. The first set of hearings was completed last year in November. This second set of hearings will be completed in April of this year, and after we have considered the input from the hearings, we will craft our final report for submission to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Four, 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 that we have set out in our first report. I believe we have given reasonable notice of the times and places for this second round of hearings.

Five, the commission has the power to change its mind with respect to its preliminary proposal. When the second round of hearings is completed, we will also complete our deliberations and lay before the Speaker our final proposals with respect to electoral boundaries. The Speaker shall make the report public. It shall be published in the *Alberta Gazette*.

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

Seven, 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.

Eight, then it is up to the Legislative Assembly by resolution to approve or to 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 then come into force when proclaimed before the holding of the next general election.

Population rules. Population means the most recent populations 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 the proposed electoral divisions, then the commission may use this data.

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

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

Population of electoral divisions. The population rule is that a proposed electoral division must not be more than 25 percent above or below the average population for all 83 electoral divisions. There is an exception to the 25 percent rule. In the case of not more than four proposed electoral divisions the commission may have a population that is as much as 50 percent below the average population of the electoral divisions in Alberta if three of the

following five criteria are met: one, the area exceeds 20,000 square kilometres or the surveyed area of the proposed electoral division exceeds 15,000 square kilometres; two, the distance from the Legislature Building in Edmonton to the nearest boundary of any proposed electoral division by the most direct highway route is more than 150 kilometres; three, there is no town in the proposed electoral division that has a population exceeding 4,000 people; four, the area of the proposed electoral division contains an Indian reserve or a Métis settlement; five, the proposed electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the province of Alberta.

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

This is a very general overview of the legislation, but we must also turn to the guidance that has been provided by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Supreme Court of Alberta. The commission wishes to note that many persons may not agree with our interpretation of these decisions. Be that as it may, we are certainly prepared to hear argument on the various points and to reconsider our position.

What have the Supreme Courts said? The Supreme Court of Canada and the Alberta Court of Appeal have agreed that the right to vote under the Charter includes, one, the right to vote; two, the right to have the political strength or value or force of the vote an elector casts not unduly diluted; three, the right to effective representation; four, the right to have the parity of the votes of others diluted but not unduly in order to gain effective representation or as a matter of practical necessity.

The rulings of the Supreme Courts as well as the electoral boundaries Act must guide our decisions and ultimately the proposals that we make to the Legislature.

Our focus. The commission clearly stated in its report that it wishes to merge a number of rural electoral divisions and to add one electoral division to Calgary and one electoral division to Edmonton. We invite you to comment on these proposals in their particulars. We have put before the people of Alberta our preliminary conclusions with respect to this matter. We have not reached any final conclusions.

The commission now wishes to hear the views of Albertans with respect to our first report and the focus I have described. Please let me assure you that our deliberations are preliminary at this point and that no final conclusions have been reached. The commission shall not move to the consideration of final proposals without the benefit of input from individuals and organizations in Alberta. Indeed, this is the whole purpose of the second round of 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 reasoning of all organizations and individuals in Alberta with respect to the area, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions.

I now call upon the first presenter, who is Sheila Cooper.

2:12

MRS. COOPER: Good afternoon, gentlemen. I'm Sheila Cooper, vice-president of policy for the Calgary-Egmont PC constituency. You may remember I made a presentation to you during the first round of talks, but I know you've seen a lot of people since then. The executive and board of directors of Calgary-Egmont were rather disappointed with the published document that showed proposed changes to our constituency. We wish to reiterate our position that the boundaries of our constituency should not be changed and offer further information for your consideration.

The city of Calgary is presently conducting a survey of the

Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood areas to find out ways of preserving the small town atmosphere that exists in the community. This community is self-sufficient, and the city of Calgary recognizes its unique qualities and its geographical location. It is my understanding that if you move these communities to Calgary-East, you would have moved Erin Woods over to another constituency. May I respectfully submit to you that you would then be splitting the community of Dover into two segments, as it is my understanding that presently the residents of Dover and west Dover consider themselves to be one community with common interests and common problems. My board of directors and I feel that the splitting of communities is not in the best interests of the electorate.

Gentlemen, if I could ask you to look at page 4 of my written submission, where there was a map provided for you that will help you, the only residential area in Calgary that is contiguous with Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood is the Riverbend area. On the excerpt of the Calgary map that I have provided, all developed residential areas are shown in white, where industrial land and undeveloped land are shown as pale green. You will see that Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood, which I have highlighted at the bottom of the page, are surrounded on the west, east, and north by nonresidential areas, but we do adjoin Riverbend to the south. There is a considerable amount of land surrounding Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood that can never be developed. It is this geographical anomaly that makes this portion of Calgary-Egmont so special. It is our opinion that the residents have nothing in common with Dover or east Calgary, but we do have a lot in common with Riverbend.

The Calgary city survey that is currently under way shows that some areas of Ogden are south of Glenmore Trail and to the east of Riverbend. These include quite a large mobile-home park, known as South Hill park, and some private residences. It would appear from your draft document that you will now be splitting the community of Ogden into two constituencies: the north part moving to Calgary-East and the southern part staying in Egmont. Again, we feel that splitting communities into different constituencies is very detrimental and would have a very severe negative impact on community life and community spirit and would be counterproductive.

The electorate of Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood are a self-contained community with easy access to Riverbend. The residents of Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood have schools in their area for their children, they go to church in their area, and they shop in their area or in Riverbend. Since the publication of your preliminary report I have spoken to many residents of the Millican-Lynnwood-Ogden area, and I have not found anyone who travels to Dover in Calgary-East for either schools, churches, or shops. Our young children are members of the Carburn Sports Association, a group that originates in Riverbend and organizes all the sports activities for the youngsters in the area. If some communities are split away by electoral boundaries, they may not be eligible for some of the necessary funding for our sports programs. It would be unreasonable to expect the young people of the Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood areas to be a part of Calgary-East or the Dover sports facilities due to the extra traveling time and the shortage of facilities in that area.

Millican and Lynnwood are bounded on the west by the Bow River and city pathway system, as is Riverbend. These natural areas are used extensively, and it is essential to have only one MLA who can look after the interests of all the residents. We understand that an environmentalist group will soon be looking to the provincial government to ensure the future of the Bow River and its quality of water. We feel that our Calgary-Egmont MLA is ideally suited to

handle any problems that may arise in this part of the city. Any problem that Riverbend has will probably be the same problem as Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood has, whether it be traffic concerns on the Glenmore Trail or concerns related to the Bow River and the adjacent parkland.

We feel very strongly that representation by one MLA would be in everyone's best interests. Our present MLA has not had any difficulty working with the people of Calgary-Egmont despite the size of our constituency, and we respectfully submit to you that this constituency should be left as is. Please consider whether it is really necessary or desirable to change boundaries at this time, taking into account that there will be considerable growth to the south and east of Calgary-Egmont, east of Deerfoot Trail, in the foreseeable future when it may be necessary to realign the boundaries to accommodate all the new residential areas that are proposed.

Gentlemen of the commission, speaking for the Calgary-Egmont constituency association, I respectfully request your reconsideration of boundary changes to Calgary-Egmont. I thank you for your time this afternoon. If you have any questions, I could try and answer them for you.

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll start the questioning with John McCarthy.

MR. McCARTHY: Thanks. Sheila, the thrust of your submission, if I can summarize it, is that you don't want any changes at all across the board and specifically you don't want any changes to Calgary-Egmont. Is that correct?

MRS. COOPER: That's right.

MR. McCARTHY: Our problem, I think, on the commission is that there's a feeling that as a result of that particular court decision that is not an option for us and, as a result, some change has to occur. If some change has to occur, then Calgary-Egmont is going to be affected because it has one of the largest populations of any constituency in the province.

MRS. COOPER: Yes, it does.

MR. McCARTHY: So therefore my question is: if there had to be a change, understanding that you do not want a change, then where would you remove 3,000 to 5,000 people from the present constituency of Calgary-Egmont?

MRS. COOPER: If I had my personal choice, sir, I would move them from the south end of Calgary-Egmont, which would probably mean putting some more into either Calgary-Fish Creek or Calgary-Lougheed. I don't know.

MR. McCARTHY: The problem is that they have very large populations as well.

MRS. COOPER: I understand that you're bringing some more people to us from Calgary-Elbow, which, if we go back to the status quo, needn't happen.

MR. McCARTHY: Yes. I understand that. I mean, we've agreed that the status quo is your preferred option. Our problem is that that's not an option for us.

MRS. COOPER: I'm afraid for Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood. I live there; I'm a resident of that area myself. If they get moved into

Calgary-East, they won't be adequately represented because in Calgary-East you'll have a very high density of residents and then suddenly this little island, which is basically what we are at the moment, of Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood – I don't know whether we would have adequate representation.

MR. McCARTHY: Well, Millican, Ogden, and Lynnwood is, you know, a community that's got some history, and they've been together for a long time. Riverbend, of course, south is relatively new.

MRS. COOPER: And still growing.

MR. McCARTHY: And still growing, yes. So I just want you to understand our dilemma here.

MRS. COOPER: Oh, I understand your problem. I wouldn't want to be in your shoes.

MR. McCARTHY: Well, neither do we.
Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: John had a similar question to the one I had. Thank you.

MR. WORTH: Just one brief question. In your submission to us you talked about the fact that if the boundaries were to become as we proposed them, some of the children from some communities may not be eligible for funding for sports programs. Does funding for those kinds of activities relate to electoral divisions in Calgary?

MRS. COOPER: This has been a gray area, sir, and I honestly don't know the sort of black-and-white position. It's my understanding that if Calgary-Egmont did apply through the Carburn Sports Association for a grant of some sort, it would be to support X number of children that were in that constituency.

MR. WORTH: I see. Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I have no questions. I want to thank you for coming and making your views very clear to us.

MRS. COOPER: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Richard Marz.
2:22

MR. MARZ: Good afternoon, gentlemen. I'm Richard Marz from the MD of Kneehill. I'm the reeve of that municipality. It lies in the north end of the Three Hills-Airdrie constituency, and hopefully through your reconsideration it will remain as such, and hopefully I can give enough reasons for you to reconsider those things.

We wish to appeal the proposed electoral boundaries for our municipality. Alberta's electoral boundaries were redrawn prior to the last election and shall be redrawn again in the year 2001. This is the fourth political commission studying the problem in six years. Four court decisions, including the 1994 Alberta Court of Appeal

case, have also studied this matter, and we feel each one has found that the current electoral boundaries meet all legal and constitutional tests. The population variances between urban and rural ridings in Alberta are well within the acceptable limits. The courts allow for a 25 percent variance from the provincial average and 50 percent for special consideration ridings. The current boundary changes are a result of Rocky Mountain House receiving Sylvan Lake. This change has caused a chain reaction in boundaries south of Rocky Mountain House and to the east. We feel that if Rocky Mountain House received enough of Sundre and surrounding area and Bears paw was left in the Olds-Didsbury constituency, all areas would be within legislated limits with little or no changes, eliminating the domino effect that seems to have been created throughout the east-central region.

Rural ridings require special consideration due to their large geography, transportation barriers, and widely varying industrial and cultural demographics. The MD of Kneehill's total population of 10,685 is spread over 820,265 acres and includes six urban centres. The agricultural facets of the region bind it together. The main highways in the municipality are Highway 21, running north and south, and Highway 27, going east and west. Highway 9 borders our southern boundary, and the Red Deer River provides a natural boundary for the eastern limits of the municipality.

We feel different areas have different concerns. Keeping our area in one constituency will allow people of the same socioeconomic background to express their common local concerns and inputs. In addition to our original submission, I'd like to state that we in the MD of Kneehill feel that consideration must be given to not only the tasks of the MLAs representing large rural ridings but also the difficulty imposed on local elected officials in providing effective representation.

It seems the trend is to divide rural municipalities into as many pieces as possible. We have one set of boundaries for hospital regions, one for education, one for municipal services, and yet another for provincial constituencies with no thought given to the coterminous boundaries. Each time a local council needs to communicate any concerns – and in the case of rural municipalities a lot of it is transportation – it seems we have to talk to a multitude of people to do so. Another concern is that when your municipality is divided into several parts with each part becoming a very small portion of several constituencies, your representation is diminished in the same portion. Being a relatively large part of the constituency, we can be effective partners with the MLA in representing the public we both serve instead of a lost voice in the wilderness fringe of several regions. That's what we believe we're facing in this situation, because we would have very little voice, being a remote part of several larger constituencies. As a block we can relate common concerns with the areas of Rocky View to the south of us and the Beiseker area, which have general common concerns that we do.

That's all I have.

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll start the questioning with Wally Worth.

MR. WORTH: Richard, picking up on your final point about dealing with your MLA as a local authority, how many MLAs do you currently have involved in your municipality?

MR. MARZ: We have currently two. One takes care of a very small corner of our constituency, and as a result, we end up dealing very little with that particular MLA.

MR. WORTH: And under our proposals you would deal with more?

MR. MARZ: We would deal with three. The north half of our municipality would end up in the Innisfail riding, and it is one of our most sparsely populated areas. We feel we would really be watered down as far as anything in that area would be of relevance to the MLA in that constituency because of the heavier populated Red Deer and Innisfail areas, in the Highway 2 corridor. We feel that would become a barren, forgotten area at the provincial level.

MR. WORTH: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: I think I'll defer to our central Alberta resident expert.

MR. LEHANE: Richard, I appreciate that your position is that you don't want any change. You're quite right: when a change is made in one area, it creates a domino, or ripple, effect. It just naturally affects other constituencies, and that's what makes this a very, very difficult task.

Your suggestion that Sundre could go with Rocky Mountain House and fix that problem – you know, you've certainly put your finger on one of the problems. On the west side of the province, in what we might call central Alberta, we have a very high population variance in the Rocky Mountain House constituency, which we don't think is acceptable under the court cases and legislation. So that's certainly one area that's been sort of sticking out in terms of having to fix. I guess that's compounded if you go to the far east side of central Alberta where you have the Chinook constituency, which is also surrounded by other constituencies that are very high up in terms of negative variances. So, you know, those are the problems. When you try to fix one, it has that domino, or ripple, effect.

We took a hard look at Sundre going with Rocky Mountain House because we felt that there was some community of interest in terms of things like the forestry industry and logging, petrochemical, not petrochemical so much as oil and gas, up and down that Caroline-Sundre corridor. We were told essentially by the people in that area that Sundre's ties were with Olds in terms of things like nursing homes and hospitals and schools and many of the other community of interests. The option that you've discussed and that we discussed with them was one that they told us they would prefer not to have. So that gives you a little bit of the background there. You're quite right that if we could have made that fix, we could have probably left Sylvan Lake in our proposals without any change, and there may have been no change to the Innisfail riding. I'm from the Innisfail riding, and I can tell you I'd prefer that it stay the way it is. We have a difficult task, and when you go to fix one thing, as I say, it just necessarily affects others.

In your submission you've said:

We feel different areas have different concerns and keeping our area in one constituency will allow people of same socio-economic background to express their common local concerns and input.

One of my observations that I'd like you to comment on is that I think that in terms of a rural or agrarian type of constituency, Innisfail has much more in common with the MD of Kneehill in the Three Hills area than Airdrie does. To me, Airdrie is a bedroom community of Calgary, for the most part, and I think that their interests lie more to the south with Calgary than they do with Three Hills, which is a very agriculture-related community. So in terms of trying to deal with a difficult situation, we thought that an Innisfail-

Three Hills rural riding addressed the concern of common interests and community of interests, and I'd like you to comment on that.

2:32

MR. MARZ: I guess I already did as far as the interests with the Rocky View area to the south of us that borders right up to Airdrie. Airdrie's history is one of farming and ranching. They have developed into a bedroom community in the last 10 years. Basically there's been substantial growth there, but its roots are still rural and agriculture related.

The more important issue, we feel, is that of representing the local concerns to an MLA. When we are divided up into chunks so that each one of our remaining areas is a very small part of each newly formed constituency, we are the small kid on the block, and all of our interests are not going to become a priority of any MLA in any constituency, whereas keeping our community together, which is the argument you used with the seniors' housing and those types of things – we also have those types of things within our municipality. Our ambulance service is one of the last volunteer ambulance services in the province, and we're fighting to keep that hanging on. It is a model that we've had a lot of pride in for a lot of years. That will be dividing the two stations, one in one area and one in another. Our seniors' housing, which has been recently amalgamated and is working very successfully between the towns of Trochu, Acme, Linden, and Three Hills, basically our urban centres, would be split in half. We feel this is an unworkable situation for us.

I don't know what to say. We are relatively 10,000 people, jointly urban and rural, which is not a lot of people. To start dividing that by three, to split them up into three different constituencies, you become an extremely small voice in any of those constituencies. This is a real concern for elected officials.

Besides that, as I stated before, trying to get in contact with an MLA is getting to be a harder task all the time because of their schedules, and to try to contact three of them compounds the job of a local elected official, who is still perceived by many in the public eye to be almost a volunteer position. Some of you that I see sitting in front of me here are probably aware of that perception and have had that experience. We still have to make a living through other sources, and the more people we have to meet and the more appointments we have to make to effectively represent our constituency, the tougher it is for us to do.

MR. LEHANE: I appreciate those points, Richard. It seems to me, though, that if you look to the future, too, and the demographics that we're seeing, in terms of being a minority voice, in continuing to be part of a constituency with Three Hills, it will probably end up in a situation where Three Hills will be the majority of the population in the constituency, because I believe present population figures would probably show them at 14,000 or 15,000.

MR. MARZ: The town of Three Hills?

MR. LEHANE: No, the town of Airdrie.

MR. MARZ: Oh, the town of Airdrie.

MR. LEHANE: The town of Airdrie. I appreciate that what you're saying is that you don't want any changes, but for the sake of discussion, could you help us in terms of the southern border that has been proposed?

MR. MARZ: The southern border?

MR. LEHANE: Yes, in terms of it being illogical or not working with the present school or health regions or trading patterns or whatever.

MR. MARZ: I don't have a very large map of that. Just a minute here. The southern border is proposed to be just south of Three Hills?

MR. LEHANE: Yes.

MR. MARZ: Of the Innisfail constituency? Or are we talking about the Airdrie constituency?

MR. LEHANE: Yes. If you look in the back of the book, there are a number of maps. There's one that goes from about Ponoka-Rimbey down to the bottom of the province, and it's a little bigger to look at. I believe the southern border is just south of Three Hills. Now, what you've indicated to me, I believe, is that the southern border of the MD of Kneehill is Highway 9, was it?

MR. MARZ: Right.

MR. LEHANE: That's coming across from about – what? – Crossfield towards the Drumheller area?

MR. MARZ: Approximately, yes. It's the road coming out of Drumheller. There is a slight jog up there in our municipality, but basically number 9 forms most of our southern boundary in the MD.

MR. LEHANE: Now, I have no idea what population would fall between, say, the southern boundary of the MD of Kneehill and the proposed southern boundary of the new constituency, but would that be a more logical southern boundary?

MR. MARZ: I would more think that the southern boundary of the Innisfail constituency would probably be more likely the northern boundary of the MD of Kneehill.

MR. LEHANE: Which takes it back up north of Three Hills.

MR. MARZ: Right, north of Trochu.

MR. LEHANE: You know, I can indicate to you for the sake of discussion that that's not going to create enough of a population base within that constituency to get within what we consider to be a variance that would be acceptable to the courts.

MR. MARZ: Is that not because Chestermere is being added to the southern portion of the Airdrie constituency and Bearspaw is being added?

MR. LEHANE: Well, all the changes are interconnected.

MR. MARZ: Yeah. So there have been some high concentrations of urban type of populations being added to the southern and western parts of the Airdrie constituency to compound that problem, so perhaps we should be looking at the southern portion in readdressing those things. Olds-Didsbury has had their population decreased by taking Bearspaw off. Perhaps, as I stated before, reducing the northern portion, which seems to have more commonality in the forestry and ranching types of industries, and leaving Bearspaw in Olds-Didsbury wouldn't compound the problem straight across the

central portion.

MR. LEHANE: Chestermere has been added, and you're right.

MR. MARZ: Right, and Bears paw as well.

MR. LEHANE: Bears paw as well, because we think that both of those communities have more commonality with Airdrie in terms of being either acreages where people work in the city or bedroom communities of Calgary.

MR. MARZ: Yeah, but we're not opposing a partial mix. You know, we have country residential in some of our area as well, and there are also heavy livestock-intensive operations throughout some of that area, even when you get down in the south area. I think to a degree they complement rather than separate one another. I think there's an area to help people understand one another better, to have some type of mix rather than segregate according to urban and rural totally.

MR. LEHANE: So other than your suggestion that the southern boundary of the proposed constituency go back up to where it was before, do you have any other input in terms of where . . .

MR. MARZ: Yeah. We feel that the Rocky is within the acceptable limits of 24 percent, according to what we've read in this document, so a very slight adjustment would correct that even more. We feel it is correctable within the western side of the province without dominoing the effect straight across the central. The solution seems to be creating a bigger problem than necessary, than has to be created to solve the problem in the Rocky-Sylvan Lake area.

MR. LEHANE: Thank you, Richard.

THE CHAIRMAN: John?

MR. McCARTHY: No questions, thanks.

2:42

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for coming, Richard. What I want to comment on is the fact that you've come here and you've said what your objections are and you've also suggested to us an alternative, which is a lot better than most people do. A lot of people say, "You've done the wrong thing," but don't give us an alternative. I should tell you that your suggestion and your alternative were pretty well debated at our first round of hearings between ourselves, and the Rocky Mountain House variance was not acceptable. You'll see that we've basically got the variances down to 15 percent throughout Alberta. The most logical way of improving Rocky Mountain House was to give them back Sylvan Lake, because it also didn't exactly fit in Innisfail. Then the question is how do we solve Innisfail, and you don't like our solution to Innisfail. So we're aware of that, and we'll have to look at the problem again.

Thanks.

MR. MARZ: I'd like to thank you for your time, gentlemen. Just one last comment. I hope that you would especially reconsider our concerns about the effectiveness of our representation as local councillors in being divided up piecemeal into small areas of large constituencies. I think that's an extremely important issue to consider, and we hope you'd take that into careful consideration in making your decision.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The next presenter is Mr. R.E. Wolf.

MR. WOLF: Well, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you. I don't have a written submission, and I'm not as prepared as some of the other presenters. I would like to comment on the variances. It seems to me that they tend to work for noncity representation, and I feel that we've had almost 60 years of pretty much the same political representation in the province, whether it was Social Credit or the present government. I have the feeling that a lot of that has been engendered by what I see as inequities in the variance. Some of them, as I understand it, can be almost as high as 25 percent in two directions. I think when you have that amount, it strikes me as being a very considerable amount to contend with as a voter.

I believe that in the last election only 37 percent of the people voted. Nineteen percent, approximately, voted for the party in power, and 18 percent opposed it. It strikes me that 63 percent of the people who were eligible to vote feel very defeated by this system and have tended to stay away to some extent. Now, that isn't all the fault of gerrymandering or criticisms that can be presented to this commission. I don't know whether you remember a lawyer by the name of Graham Price, who has made presentations on behalf of what was then the Civil Liberties Association. I supported him in the preparations that he made.

In my view, it seems that in glancing at these distributions, there's been an attempt made to mix city populations with rural populations. As to how fair that will become, I don't know, but it makes for some very peculiar looking boundaries, it seems to me. I feel concerned; it seems there was one electoral boundaries hearing where opposition parties entirely were not represented. That was the previous system, I think. In this one, as I understand it, opposition parties have attended and had some input. It looks to me, from what I see of it, that it's more fair this time, but I'd tend to be very surprised if it's not, to some degree by reason of these variances, weighted to the rural constituencies.

The points I wanted to make. Some of the variances that I've marked it seems were as high as 48 percent, and to me that sounds extreme to have lingered for as long as it may have. I just think this has been a way of canting the electoral situation.

I would like to mention and leave for your attention the situation of the Lubicon, who are almost 60 years now without a treaty. They're in a terrible state there. Their assets are being taken away, and I would say that they have very little capacity to vote or represent themselves. While it may seem to you an unrelated matter, I feel that it is related to discrimination by the province and the federal government against these people. There's documentation been made about the situation of the Lubicon where the tribes have been divided, and there's evidence that bribery and manipulation went on by the province and federal agencies. It's really quite an internationally despicable situation.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just have a seat, but give us the document because somebody here may want to ask you some questions.

We'll start the questioning with Wally.

MR. WORTH: I don't have any questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: John?

MR. McCARTHY: Just a check. Just one comment, no questions. The percentage of voter turnout in the last election was 60.21.

MR. WOLF: Provincially?

MR. McCARTHY: Yes.

MR. WOLF: Oh, I'm in error.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wolf, you said that there's a mix of city with rural. I don't know what part of Alberta you were talking about, but if you're talking about Grande Prairie . . .

MR. WOLF: Well, if I can find that map. I felt some of the configurations were . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think you'll find that the city of Grande Prairie is divided in half: east and west. The west half all the way to the B.C. border is part of the same constituency. All the east half for some distance with the rural is one constituency. So it's what you would call a 'rurban' constituency: half city, half rural. I can tell you that we canvassed this very carefully when we were around there in our first hearings, and everybody except one person, who was a defeated MLA, wanted the constituency to stay 'rurban.'

MR. WOLF: To stay urban, you say.

THE CHAIRMAN: To stay 'rurban,' the way it was.

MR. WOLF: Oh, I see.

THE CHAIRMAN: They said: "The people who are living in Grande Prairie, living out on the farms, we know them and we trust them. We like it the way it is." We canvassed this point as we traveled Alberta, and I think every city in Alberta can be 'rurbanized' except Edmonton and Calgary. Eventually, I think they could once you saw that . . .

MR. WOLF: You see that happening for those two cities too, you say?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. I say that eventually they could be. The last electoral boundaries hearing tried to 'rurbanize' them, and there were all kinds of problems. That's why they came up with five different reports the last time. We're not trying to 'rurbanize' them this time. I'm just pointing out to you what I think is a possible trend. This antagonism between rural and urban representation I think can be done away with with the next electoral boundaries after that.

2:52

MR. WOLF: Well, I certainly have seen a lot of progress since Graham Price started coming, where there were considerable inequities. I'm pleased to see that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thanks for coming.

MR. WOLF: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Dave Picken.

MR. PICKEN: Good afternoon, gentlemen, and thank you for having me here. I am the director of civic affairs for Parkridge Estates mobile home park, and we have a very active community association and a great number of seniors in our park. We all feel very strongly about this particular situation that develops here.

As I point out in my presentation, gentlemen, we feel very strongly a part of a community which is bounded by McKnight Boulevard to the north, the Trans-Canada Highway to the south, and 36th Street to the west. The east of our constituency is pretty well open, mostly because development hasn't gone on there, and that's because there seem to be a number, quite a large number actually, of sour gas wells capped and so on in that particular area. So I don't think anything's going to happen there for quite some time.

However we do feel that these boundaries are very specific and that they are very strong psychological factors in the community sense that we have. For example, nobody that I've spoken to in our park feels associated at all with the community to the south of the Trans-Canada Highway. It's a very real geographical boundary, particularly out at 68th Street where we are located. You know, there's no kind of continuity to the community at all.

One of the other things that we note, too, is that the community that surrounds us has grown towards us in the last, oh, four years. Most of the development around about us coming close up to the park has been in the last four years. We have helped out Monterey Park considerably in the past by allowing them to use our community hall, for example, for their own association meetings. They are in the process now of building their own community hall, and the proposal that you have put forward here would split that particular community completely in half. The growing part of Monterey Park to the north of 32nd Avenue would probably feel kind of lost because half of their community is in one constituency and half in another. As far as Parkridge Estates is concerned, as I say, we feel very strongly that we are a part of this specific community. It's very, very clearly defined by the boundaries that I've suggested in my presentation there, gentlemen.

I give you an example of how we react as a whole community. When the Calgary health board, for example, proposed to do away with the pediatric unit at the Lougheed hospital, the reaction of the whole community was immediate, it was very strong, and it was very specific. I think every community within those boundaries that I've explained to you took part in a concerted effort to have that decision overridden. The result was that we do have a pediatric unit maintained at the Lougheed hospital. It's our hospital. We have that sense of community, and I don't think anybody from south of the Trans-Canada Highway made a presentation as part of that community; do you see?

It seems to me, too, that the proposed changes to Calgary-Montrose, in taking away part of Calgary-Cross and adding it to Calgary-Montrose and then taking away part of the current Calgary-Montrose and adding it to I believe a new constituency which is called Calgary-Forest Lawn, do the same kind of thing to all of these little areas round about. The sense that one has in this particular portion of northeast Calgary is that these are the boundaries. McKnight's up there. A little square there, Whitehorn, which is in the northwest corner of the boundary area that I've told you, is in Calgary-McCall, but the people in Whitehorn feel very much more

a part of this other community, which is currently at Calgary-Cross. I suspect – I don't know because I can't talk for anybody in Forest Lawn – that the people in that kind of panhandle bit of Forest Lawn there feel that they belong more to Montrose than perhaps they do to Forest Lawn. Another important boundary in this area is 17th Avenue S.E.

Now, in some cases these are psychological, but psychological boundaries are extremely important in any community, gentlemen. They're the things that define "us" as opposed to "them," whoever them might be. They are very important, and they are very clear for us. I'm sure that the people of Parkridge Estates would feel very disconcerted to find that our MLA is kind of estranged from us, doesn't live within our particular little boundaries and so on. At the moment it's tough enough the fact that we are not in the Calgary school division, for example. I haven't the faintest idea who the school trustee is for our particular little section of the city. None of the kids in this area go to the Rocky View school district, for example.

Now, that's the kind of thing that I suspect would happen if this boundary change were, you know, carried out, that we would tend to feel isolated and alienated from the community that we feel we really belong to, and I don't think it would make very much difference to the numbers you talk about, the population density and so on, the variance and that, if you left that part of Calgary-Cross in Calgary-Cross and made some other little arrangements round about to produce – I believe that's a new consistency – Calgary-Forest Lawn. Correct me if I'm wrong. I'm not sure about that, but it seems to me, you know, that Forest Lawn tends to be a community by itself south of 17th Avenue and so on or between those two boundaries that you have there, north and south. These are very, very clear.

Our community feels very strongly that we would be alienated and lost in this process. We know our MLA, who lives locally and so on. It's very important to us, that kind of thing. Honestly, gentlemen, I just wouldn't know what to do and neither would the other people in my community in terms of associating our political power, if you like, what there is of it. It's not very big, but there are about 500 of us that feel really strongly about this.

I believe Monterey Park has made a presentation. I don't know if they're going to make a verbal one. I don't know if they could manage to get here.

THE CHAIRMAN: They will be making one.

MR. PICKEN: They will be making one; yeah.

Those are really basically my concerns, gentlemen. You know, I feel that we do belong to this community. There is a very strong sense of this community, as I say, in the way, for example, that we dealt with the Lougheed hospital problem.

Then, also, local aldermen would be faced with having to deal with four MLAs now instead of three, because the one from Forest Lawn would come into his ward now, you see, which makes things kind of difficult for him.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you telling us that aldermen are overworked?

MR. PICKEN: No. They would say so, I know. Well, they're pretty busy. I understand that. I said this once before, that sometimes they may feel like a gerbil in one of those exercise wheels, you know, especially in Calgary.

Now, if there are any questions you'd like to ask, gentlemen, I'd be happy to try and answer them.

3:02

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we'll start the questioning with John McCarthy.

MR. McCARTHY: Yeah, I've got a couple of questions here. You were talking about Rundle. Is that what you said earlier, or am I wrong on that?

MR. PICKEN: No. I wasn't talking about Rundle specifically.

MR. McCARTHY: Let me make sure I've got it. What's the area immediately to the west of the sign there in McCall?

MR. PICKEN: Oh, could I come up and point it out?

MR. McCARTHY: Yeah. Sure.

MR. PICKEN: This little square right here is Whitehorn. This area right in there, a nice little rectangle, operates very much together when it comes to local concerns and so on with the city of Calgary and very much together in terms of, you know, working with the provincial government.

MR. McCARTHY: In the past Whitehorn has been in McCall. That's still in McCall.

MR. PICKEN: No, that hasn't been changed. That's the point. Whitehorn is at the moment in Calgary-McCall.

MR. McCARTHY: And has been in the past.

MR. PICKEN: And has been in the past, yes. I'm not arguing for them. I'm just pointing out that they are part of this natural boundary system that we have here.

MR. McCARTHY: So if I could summarize your submission, your preference would be to have the Calgary-Cross boundary extended from 16th Avenue N.E. east to the city limits.

MR. PICKEN: Yes.

MR. McCARTHY: And that square, which is Monterey Park. Is that correct?

MR. PICKEN: Yeah. Well, it's half of Monterey Park. This is down in the right-hand corner, the southeast corner.

MR. McCARTHY: The right half of it. The remaining part of Monterey Park would be included in Calgary-Cross.

MR. PICKEN: Well, as it is at the moment. Yeah.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. I understand your point.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No. I think if you've made your point clear to John, I'm satisfied.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally?

MR. WORTH: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I don't have any questions either. I want to thank you for coming and expressing your concerns about your area to us, and we'll have to give them consideration.

MR. PICKEN: Thank you very much, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The next presenter is Gerald Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you very much, gentlemen. My presentation will be very short and not as elaborate as some of the other presentations. I would like to congratulate the commission on the thoroughness and the expeditious manner in which you presented your January report. I've read it. I'm speaking here as a concerned citizen only, and while I have discussed this proposal with some members of our Calgary-Foothills Progressive Conservative Association, I'm not speaking for the riding association.

I am pleased to see on page 13 of your report that you recorded my suggestion to reduce the number of electoral districts to 67. I don't expect there'll be action taken on that immediately, but it would be hoped that it would be in the future. I submit for your consideration that same request today. We should be reducing government. We have not addressed how the boundaries should be restructured. If we were to reduce the number of electoral districts by 16, we realize it would impact almost every community in our province. However, we feel it should be done.

The government has done an admirable job the last two years in reducing the size of government with regard to the number of employees and cost. We should now take a serious look at reducing the first line of government: our elected representatives. With a reduction to 67 electoral districts, the electoral quotient would rise to 38,130. Now, this would not be out of line with the three largest provinces of Canada, and I attached a table to my written report. We must reverse the trend of growth in government. I ask the question: how many elected representatives will we require in Alberta when Alberta's population rises to 4 million people, which will probably be in 20 years?

If we could reduce the number of MLAs by 16, we would save in the order of \$4.8 million annually in administrative costs. I realize this is not very significant when the government is spending \$12 billion annually. However, MLAs tend to generate programs that do cost significantly, and this would fly in the face of the present trend to reduce government and increase entrepreneurship.

I respectfully submit this for your consideration.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Gerald. We'll start the questioning with Wally Worth.

MR. WORTH: Gerald, I don't have any specific questions, just an observation. Certainly your point is well taken and well put forward, and it's a point that we have heard in a number of instances. I think that one of the other things we have heard in many communities is a concern about what they call effective representation and the fact that as population increases in a constituency, it gets more and more difficult for them to maintain contact between the MLA and the constituents.

I think that one of the things we need to ponder as we talk about reducing the number of MLAs is just what the impact of that would

be on effective representation. Certainly you and many others have pointed out that there would be a fiscal consequence that might be of some benefit. I think we need to ponder what the consequence would be in terms of the average citizen feeling that they were adequately represented in the provincial Legislature. That's just a question. You may or may not wish to make an observation about it.

MR. THOMPSON: I'm not an expert on it, so I wouldn't be able to comment very clearly on it. With modern communications and technology I think a lot of the concerns that people have on effective representation could be overcome. I realize and you do as well that I am from Calgary and that perhaps I am somewhat biased on that in that we're above the average number of residents in the riding as compared to some of the rural areas. I do realize that, and I respect your statement. I don't want to introduce one person, one vote, but we should be getting somewhere close to that. I think with modern technology and the communications that we have, there should be no lack of being able to get to your elected representative.

MR. WORTH: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions.

MR. McCARTHY: The only comment I have is that, as you know, Gerry, your comments have a lot of support, I think. Unfortunately our mandate on this commission is that we're required to make our changes within the number of 83 seats.

MR. THOMPSON: I realize that, but maybe we'll get another chance sometime in the next few years to change the mandate for your commission.

MR. McCARTHY: Well, it won't be this group of people; that's for sure.

MR. THOMPSON: No. I realize that, sir. I realize that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to make this comment, Gerry, along those lines. As we've gone across Alberta and heard people, we've had quite a few representations that the number of constituencies should be reduced. As John has said, our mandate is to divide Alberta into 83. The speech you've made here today I want to say is effective and a good speech, but really the speech should be made to the politicians and not to us. I wouldn't give up on the speech, because we get a lot of MLAs that appear before us as we travel throughout Alberta, and I'm getting the feeling that the MLAs are also getting this message from the people. There were some inferences that this may be dealt with before the next election. So if you want to see a reduction in the number of MLAs, deal with your MLA.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Judge. You give me some hope then. Thank you.

3:12

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenters are Gerry Meagher and Bill Janman.

MR. MEAGHER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. My name is Gerry Meagher, and with me today is Bill Janman. The two of us together with Ken Peake have provided a further written submission to the commission on behalf of a concerned group of citizens in Calgary-Foothills. The submission that has been provided this time around is basically a revision of our previous submission, with some additional comments on your report that was released in January.

First of all, I'd like to apologize for the disheveled appearance perhaps of myself and Mr. Janman. We were at the Flames hockey game last night, and we went straight to work this morning.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you're not any happier; are you?

MR. MEAGHER: No, certainly not, but we received twice the value for our tickets.

THE CHAIRMAN: We from Edmonton know how you feel.

MR. MEAGHER: First of all, I'd just like to comment on the current submission that we've provided. It has an introduction that basically recognizes the problems and the complexity of the balancing act that the commission has been asked to perform. It also recognizes some of the limitations that we believe were placed on the committee that really deserve further comment and that should be reviewed further by the government.

Within our submission we refer to the guidelines of the reference regarding the electoral division statutes amendment Act of 1993, and I'm sure you've all heard enough about the guidelines on effective representation and so on that were set out in that case. In addition, we talk about possible solutions in our submission, and we adopt the first three from the Court of Appeal's reference regarding hybrid divisions, more electoral divisions, and that if those weren't acceptable, then the only other solution appeared to be a reduction in the number of rural divisions.

To that we would like to add a fourth solution from the people that we have spoken to and discussed these matters with. The fourth solution, that we believe would receive widespread support from rural and urban voters, would be a significant reduction in the number of seats combined with revision of electoral boundaries. Now, in the 1993 reference the Court of Appeal didn't deal with that particular issue, but as we have gone back and discussed your report with people in our community, we are hearing more and more that the commission has to go further, that the government has to go further. We appreciate that your legislated mandate is at 83 electoral divisions, but we believe that this commission should report on the comments that it receives from the public.

I refer to page 16 in your report as certainly a step in the right direction. At page 16 there's a paragraph that says:

Although the issue was entirely outside the Commission's mandate, we feel it necessary to reiterate, without comment, that a large number of submissions focused on the reduction of the number of Members presently comprising the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

We do appreciate that that is outside of your mandate, but at the same time we believe that this commission should be prepared or at least be asked by us as members of the public to relay our comments to the government with regards to a reduction in the number of seats.

Just as an aside and probably in as much context as an earlier comment that was made, I do work for a First Nation in northern Alberta called the Loon River Cree First Nation. Our dealings with the provincial government have been impeccable, and the province has acted throughout in good faith.

With regards to recommendations that we make, we point out that the Court of Appeal stated that it expects to see a gradual and steady change through a new and proper review before the next provincial election. You've heard all these statistics before, and I'll go over them just very, very quickly. Of the 83 electoral divisions in Alberta 38 are in Calgary and Edmonton, representing 60 percent of the population, and 45 are in the rest of the province, representing 40 percent of the population. Our recommendation in our first submission, which we repeat here, is that the legislation should be amended by redrawing certain electoral boundaries to reduce the number of electoral divisions by six to a total of 77 electoral divisions.

We agree with the commission's approach that this could be accomplished by combining parts or all of several ridings in central and southern Alberta, including removing the special status for the electoral divisions of Chinook and Cardston-Chief Mountain. The land area in the electoral divisions proposed to be combined is not as large as the northern areas, and they have well developed transportation and communications infrastructures. As Mr. Thompson indicated, with modern technology, including the use of computers, fax machines, teleconferencing, and mobile phones, communications within these electoral divisions could be improved. Increases in legislative support services can also be made to deal with proportionally larger geographical areas.

A second recommendation that we make is that the electoral divisions in Calgary and Edmonton be left unchanged in this review. The result would be that of the 77 electoral divisions, there would be a balance of 38 in the two larger urban centres and 39 in all other areas of the province. A rough parity would then exist between the two large urban centres and other areas of the province. This represents a reduction of approximately 7 percent of the number of seats in the Legislature, consistent with government policies to reduce the size of government and government spending.

We are of the view that in Calgary we are already overgoverned, with 20 MLAs, 14 aldermen and a mayor, and six federal Members of Parliament for a population of approximately 750,000 people. The people we have spoken to in our community do not want additional seats. It's an interesting step to take, then, if we take the commission's recommendation of combining some rural and urban ridings, particularly rural ridings, to reduce the number of rural by two and adding two into the urban areas. The message we got from the people we talked to is that the urban areas don't want two more, that we're overgoverned as it is.

You know, in part answer to Mr. Worth's question to Mr. Thompson, there's no magic in a 30,000 persons per constituency average. What if our population goes to 5 million in the next 10 years? Are we then going to end up with 166 seats in the Legislature? I'm afraid that that becomes the logical extension of dealing with those numbers. So when looked at in that light, thank you for the suggestion that two be reduced in the rural areas and two added to the urban areas, but perhaps the urban areas don't want them. Perhaps what is required is an across-the-board, overall revision and reduction of the number of seats in the Legislature.

We wish to express our support for the commission's efforts to provide a considered and well-reasoned analysis in your recommendations for the revision of electoral boundaries. This was absolutely essential. We agree that difficulty of representation does equate to effectiveness of representation. The conceptual model of the matrix is a useful guide to quantify certain variables involved in attempting to achieve effective representation.

Our concern is that the commission has not gone far enough. We are concerned that the commission's recommendations, albeit within

your legislated mandate, fall short: firstly, the Court of Appeal's direction that gradual and steady change towards effective representation must be demonstrated; and secondly, the wishes of a majority of Albertans to reduce government spending and the size of government. On the first point, we are concerned that combining rural seats to reduce the total number by two and adding one to each of Calgary and Edmonton is not a significant enough change to satisfy the requirement of gradual and steady change. On the second point – and we recognize that this is outside your legislated mandate – we urge the commission to advise the government that the wishes of Albertans are not served by a restrictive mandate that limits the commission to consideration of electoral boundaries with a fixed number of 83 electoral divisions. We ask the commission to advise the government that this restriction is seen as a transparent attempt to protect the status quo and that the people of Alberta expect and deserve real change.

While it is outside the commission's current mandate to recommend a reduction in the number of electoral divisions, we request that the commission advise the government of these concerns and that legislation that reduces and revises the number of electoral divisions may be passed just as readily as legislation that merely revises the boundaries.

Thank you very much.

3:22

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine. We'll start the questioning with Wally Worth.

MR. WORTH: Just a question of clarification about one statement that you made, Gerry. When you were talking about the matrix, you said, "Our concern is that the commission has not gone far enough." I take it you were not referring to the matrix there but were referring to our actual recommendations.

MR. MEAGHER: Yes, with the proportionate change that's being recommended in the seats and in the distribution of the seats. With regards to the matrix, we're impressed with it as a modern method to evaluate the variables involved in a very complex situation. I was going to say particularly in Alberta, but in any province with a large geographic size and with a population as diverse as we have in this province. We compliment the commission on the matrix, and we believe that other electoral boundary commissions in other jurisdictions would be well served to consider the work that you've done.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

MR. LEHANE: Just to follow up on that, Gerry, I think that as we've traveled through Alberta on these hearings – and we were in 17 different communities in the first round of hearings – one thing that we heard over and over again from the rural areas was that it was a lot more difficult to represent a rural area than it was, for instance, to give the largest contrast, a constituency in the city of Edmonton where you could go to your constituency office from the Legislature in a very short period of time, where there are many government offices as well that constituents can access directly in terms of finding out about any government business. The MLAs go home at night, they have a family life, and they live close to where they work, essentially. They have a geographical area of perhaps eight

or nine square kilometres, which in terms of time is very, very important. We were told over and over again that the biggest thing in terms of effectively representing your constituents is the time: the time it takes to meet with them, the time it takes to address their concerns.

So when you compare that to Athabasca-Wabasca with 124,000 square kilometres and a long distance from the Legislature to travel before you can even meet with your constituents, you begin to ask the question: at what point do you make it impossible, by increasing size, to be an effective representative? That's why we created or attempted to create the matrix, in our understanding one of the first attempts ever to create some quantitative methodology to measure the degree of difficulty of trying to be an effective representative.

I think you get quite a different perspective in the rural areas. They say that their MLAs are going full out a hundred percent of the time and putting in long hours seven days a week to do what they have to do to represent them. They're part of the popular theme that says we've downsized everything in government but the Legislature and we should get in line with the Legislature and downsize that. They think the logical place that you're going to downsize it is to take them out of Edmonton and Calgary because they're such small geographical areas that it's easy, and you don't need any more MLAs. I mean, I guess they're on that same theme, but they're saying, "Don't take any away from us." So it's a more complex problem.

If you believe what you hear out there, I think that perhaps the \$4.8 million or whatever we spend out of our \$13 billion budget on MLAs maybe isn't that badly spent, because particularly in rural areas they carry out not only the legislative role but their ombudsman role, and the demands on that role seem to be so much greater. One of the reasons is that there are no government offices or other services there, so they're directors of traffic in terms of steering people the right way, and they have many, many elected municipal authorities to deal with.

So that just gives you some of the other background and shows you that it's not an easy issue either.

MR. MEAGHER: No, and I appreciate your comments. I'm familiar with some rural MLAs in different parts of the province, and I'm aware that the demands on their time, the expectation that they be personally involved directly with their constituents, is greater than the demands made on MLAs within the urban areas.

On the other hand, as the matrix recognizes, there's more than just geographic concerns and the difficulty of getting around and being able to visit every particular social function or fair or whatever that may be on. There are other variables that have to be considered, and I think in this day and age both in urban and rural areas there are more advanced means of communication that can be used. I don't see the magic in a number of 30,000 or 32,000 for urban electoral divisions. That's a place where we should stop and say that this is acceptable because we just happen to have gotten here. You know, we've come as far as the Rockies, so let's stop here.

I think we have to revisit this whole idea of effective representation and dealing with it in terms of an absolute number of 32,000 plus or minus 25 percent. The purpose for the variables within the legislation is to accommodate the differences, as I see it, between the urban and the rural ridings, but I don't see that there's any magic in one MLA for 30,000 people or for 40,000 people. I go back to the example that I set out with Mr. Worth, and that is: what do we do when the population of Alberta doubles in the next 15 years and we end up with 5 million people? Mathematically, are we going to end up with 166 seats? I don't think so. I don't think

effective representation is geared to those kinds of absolute numbers. I think effective representation between rural and urban areas should be governed by the plus or minus 25 percent variable.

MR. LEHANE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: John.

MR. MCCARTHY: Yeah, just a couple of comments. You've highlighted in your submission the urban/rural imbalance, and you've also I guess highlighted and indicated that the legislated solution to that is unacceptable in that our mandate is to try and solve that within the 83-seat limit. I guess I can say to you that these hearings are taken down by *Hansard*, and the transcripts are provided to the Speaker and are available to any members of the House and yourself as well if you want. It's interesting to note, though, that when you add up the number of submissions that have come in – and you've seen it in our report – the majority of the submissions indicate that they would prefer to have no change. Yours may not be a minority view within the province as a whole, but within the number of submissions that have been made to this commission, they're in the minority.

I think that's all the comment that I have to make.

MR. MEAGHER: Thank you, Mr. McCarthy. It was precisely from reviewing the commission's report and seeing the statistical breakdown between preserving the status quo and reductions that we felt it was important to come back before this commission to restate our position perhaps a little more clearly than we had the first time.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Gerry, first of all let me apologize for mispronouncing your name. I have trouble with Irish names.

Your solution here today is reducing the number of constituencies by seven, I think you said, and leaving Edmonton and Calgary the same. Well, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that those seven constituencies come out of rural Alberta according to your solution. If you traveled rural Alberta with us, you would find out how unacceptable your solution would be and how disliked it would be. Along the lines of your solution, from what we hear from city reps and rural reps, you could probably cut another six, three MLAs out of Edmonton and three out of Calgary, without any problems whatsoever. If you cut that many more MLAs and you allow for voting parity and what the court cases have said, you'd really have to reduce the number of MLAs in rural Alberta. I'm just pointing this out to show you the dilemma we're in.

3:32

I'm in a way thankful the government has said to us: divide Alberta into 83 constituencies. We don't have to deal with the number of constituencies. I think you've heard us earlier tell other people that the number of constituencies is outside our mandate. We could easily tell people who come here to tell us to deal with that problem that it's not within our mandate – “We don't want to hear you” – but we think that in a democratic society if people want to come here and talk to us about the number of constituencies, we should let them talk to us about it, and we should tell the government that we've had these people. I think you're asking us to go one step further and make a recommendation, and whether we will do that or not, I don't know because it is outside of our mandate.

You also talk about the magic number. Well, the magic number in Alberta is nothing more than the population divided by 83. If the population were 4 million people instead of the 2 million-something

that it is now, the magic number would just change accordingly. There was a presenter earlier who showed us that in parts of Canada the magic number is 55,000. So I want to say that we didn't pick the magic number. The magic number is what the rules say that it should be.

Those are the comments I just wanted to make.

MR. MEAGHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to perhaps clarify one thing. We appreciate that it is not within the commission's mandate to make a recommendation to reduce the number of seats, and we wouldn't ask the commission to do that. What we would ask the commission to do is to pass along the comments of concerned citizens. The reason I made reference to the earlier report was that that statement was passed along without comment in your previous report, and really what we're asking is that the comments of these concerned citizens be likewise passed along, but we would not expect it as a recommendation.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thanks for coming.

I'm sorry. Bill, maybe you wanted to say something.

MR. JANMAN: I guess the only thing that I would comment on is something that Joe said about the rural areas. Five, 10 years ago I would agree that it would really have been tough, but I would have also urged the commission to take a look at what options are available for better communications in some of those constituencies outside the major centres and what can be done to improve that so they may feel that there is far better representation than what they have now. I'd suggest: take a look at current technology to do that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to make this comment in respect to this. Bill, we've confronted rural reps with this. We say that practically every household has a telephone in Alberta today, and you've got free phone calls to the government on top of that through your RITE system. A lot of households have computers, and a lot of people have E-mail. Getting in touch with your MLA is basically no problem no matter where you are in Alberta, even in northern Alberta. Those places have telephones, except maybe the trapper who's out on his line. Maybe he has a cell phone now; I don't know. They tell us: “That's not good enough; that's not effective representation. We want to see the whites of the politician's eyes. We want to deal with them on a personal basis.” Now, I don't know why they want to see the whites of the politician's eyes, but that's what they're telling us.

MR. JANMAN: Okay. I don't disagree, but there are probably a lot of people in Edmonton, Calgary, and other large suburban centres that never see the whites of their politician's eyes either.

THE CHAIRMAN: Correct; no doubt about it. It's an altogether different relationship. I shouldn't say “altogether;” in many ways it's a different relationship between the MLA and rural people and the MLA and urban people.

Thank you.

MR. JANMAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Norman Conrad.

MR. CONRAD: Your Honour, commissioners, my name is Norman Conrad, citizen. I have several points that I'd like to make. Some of

them are on themes that have been touched on earlier and perhaps a slightly different perspective.

The first concern arises from section 16 of the Act and the criteria which you have used in your matrix to determine variability. There seems to be both within the legislation and those criteria a great fixation on geography. I know that your function is to draw lines on a map, and really what your commerce is in geography, but what you're dedicated to do is to look at effective representation before you draw the lines, and what you have to take a look at in terms of determining effective representation is not limited to geophysical features or geographical features. There's a wide range of other variables that ought to be considered that go far beyond what is provided in section 16 or the variables which you have identified for your matrix. Those appear to me to be linear – roads, distances, areas, those kinds of considerations – when the variables that one ought to be inspecting when determining quality effective representation are in the human, social, cultural, and economic domains. There is a dearth of treatment of those subjects, both within the legislation and within the variables that you have used in your matrix.

If those matters are considered – matters of economic diversity, matters of social and cultural diversity, racial diversity – then you bring a different view to the table when you think about what effective representation is and how best to achieve it. It isn't simply miles of road and square miles to be considered. It's far broader. This ought to invite a new consideration of how representation occurs within cities, for instance, because cities are not amorphous. They're very heterogeneous. They are many different cultures, many different kinds and qualities of business and economic activities within cities. It isn't a no-brainer to represent a city. It takes hard work to get out there and find the whites of the eyes of your constituents so that you can adequately represent them. So my first recommendation is that when you are exercising your discretion under section 16 and when you are constructing your matrix some provision be allowed for gauging the diversity – the human cultural, racial, economic diversity – of the constituency, because that will permit far more effective representation. The omission of it is clear. That is not one of the criteria which jumps out either in the legislation or your matrix.

The second point I have that I wish to make relates as well to this geographical kind of bias, this land fixation which seems to permeate these criteria. That comes from an earlier time and an earlier place. I won't bore you with my thoughts on that, but the history of the evolution of democracy and representative government I think records it well, and it's clear that there has been quite a change in terms of how representative government is conducted now as contrasted to 100 years ago or 300 years ago. The technologies of representation have changed radically. A number have touched on themes of telecommunications, computer, E-mail, all of those matters. The criteria which are used in this legislation I think are buckboard technologies. Today we have far different means of communications. I know everybody likes to see the whites of the eyes of their politicians, not always to be kindly to them, but there are so many more effective ways to communicate.

3:42

Now, technology and means of communication is another variable which ought to be closely considered, and it ought to be expressly recognized within the legislation. I know that's not your function, but it is your function to identify what the criteria are, and it would do a great favour to effective representation to recognize technology expressly within your matrix so that the technologies of communications can be recognized.

Now, there's another theme, and I think it's been beat on so many times that I would leave it alone except that I disagree with it. It's the equation of 83. There should be a reduction of the number of representatives, somehow or other, to get effective representation. Now, without further thinking, I'm neither pro nor con on that. But without accepting one position or the other, it seems to me that the marriage of the idea that you have to reduce representatives for economic criteria is a ludicrous position.

Let me put it in the context of the Calgary Flames. The 25 young fellows who roll around the ice on the Calgary Flames have twice the payroll of the 83 Members of the Legislative Assembly. The significance and importance of the function that the representative does in this society is orders of magnitude higher than that of the splendid hockey players – well, those bums from Calgary couldn't do it. But there is an order of magnitude difference in terms of the significance of their roles.

My thought is that some of the recommendations that you should be making in terms of more effective representation would not include diminishing the amount of representation. If the argument for elimination of democracy is that we can't afford it, then we are in deep trouble.

Those are my comments. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Norman.

We're going to start the questioning with Wally Worth.

MR. WORTH: Norman, much of what you said struck a responsive chord. I would just like to comment briefly on the question of our matrix and the fact that we have not included the human element to the degree that you think we ought. Obviously, when we started with this, we said: what are we going to include to begin with? We thought, well, we'd better at least focus it initially on the items that are in the legislation that we are implored and obligated to take account of. But certainly we've come to recognize that a number of things that relate on effective representation in an urban context are not included there, such things as the mobility or transiency of the population, the degree of facility in the English language, and things of that sort which relate to a diversity in the culture and in the economic condition.

What we're about, I think, is trying to establish what criteria we should include in that matrix after we've heard many, many suggestions from people about this. One of our problems is to try to think of a screen that we can sort of put these through to determine whether or not they actually are related to effective representation. It would be helpful to us if you could identify any criteria that you might apply to a variable if you were trying to determine whether or not it should be included in the matrix. For example, one criterion might be validity. Does it have an apparent connection to effective representation? Are there some other criteria that you might apply?

MR. CONRAD: Well, that's an extremely complex question. I've been hoping to throw the ball into your court rather than have you lob the volley back.

MR. WORTH: Well, I'm just trying to pass it back.

MR. CONRAD: I would hesitate to speak on that without reflecting on it more.

MR. WORTH: Sure.

MR. CONRAD: I think there are quite a number of tools that are

available that one could quantify, essentially qualitative differences. It would take some considerable research on my part to give you anything other than bafflegab on that.

MR. WORTH: I just thought you might have a stroke of insight, you see.

MR. CONRAD: I know the problems. I'm just really poor at the solutions.

MR. WORTH: Thanks very much.

MR. GRBAVAC: Norman, I think we've recognized that there's an element of validity certainly in your argument. The problem is that you walk into a mine field. Part of our consideration has to be the view that will be taken of our report by the courts. It's one thing to deal with this quantitative measure that we have with respect to rural Alberta; it's quite another if you start moving into the human element, which I will concede is real but is very, very difficult in terms of individual rights to work into our equation, if you will, other than in a very broad context. I mean, you'd have to be very, very careful as to how that was done, you know, in terms of – you spoke of ethnic diversity and things of that nature. I mean, it would be very, very difficult to include that and, in my view, pass the test of the courts, but I want to tell you that I think we all have a sensitivity to that and we appreciated your presentation very much.

MR. CONRAD: Thank you.

MR. LEHANE: I want to thank you, Norman, for pointing out a difficult problem but no thanks for the solutions. We've discussed that, you know, and it's a very, very complex area that takes a lot of reflection, because there's the philosophical aspect about what sort of element in the matrix is really a proper one in terms of the Charter even. I mean, are we going to measure the WASP population in each constituency and give them a lower weighting because they should be easier to represent because of their familiarity with our language and culture?

MR. CONRAD: A voting handicap system.

MR. LEHANE: Or are we going to say, well, if we have a constituency with, for instance, a large Vietnamese population, there are obviously some difficulties in terms of effective representation that will flow from that. But those will change depending on who the particular representative is at the time and their ability in the language and in the culture. So do we resolve that by a weighting in terms of the constituency, or do we try to provide some other resources that would flow through from one particular representative to another in terms of being effective? You've touched on an area that we've discussed. This matrix we put into our report is really a first cut at some way to create some methodology and create a level playing field and say, "Well, let's really try to analyze across all the province and all the urban constituencies and all the rural the things that go in to making representation difficult and analyze it on that basis." So we're looking and hopefully we can or somebody else in the future – I guess we're more hopeful someone else in the future will pick up where we left off, because we want to get off the train pretty quick here – can develop perhaps some socioeconomic or cultural variances or elements to go into that matrix.

Thank you for those comments.

MR. CONRAD: Thank you.

MR. MCCARTHY: You mentioned bafflegab. I thought I'd share with you some bafflegab that we received in Hanna when we were up there from one of your fellow members of the legal profession, Eugene Kush, QC. Then after I finish with his bafflegab, I'll try and make a point. He said:

I am going to give you some new ideas – ideas that may never have crossed your minds before. My ideas do not conform to modern political thought – the accepted way – or as some say "politically correct". Running with the herd is not my way of doing things. I must explore the alternatives, playing as a team is nothing more than an excuse for collective imbecility.

Why did this province ignore the results of the last commission? To appease the "cry baby mayors" of Calgary and Edmonton, not to mention the editorial writers for the "soon to be bankrupt Southam Press," including Catherine Ford and Bill Gold. I have a feeling that our cabinet is absolutely terrified of every negative editorial on CBC radio and television. One of these editorials is to get "equality of representation" – whatever that means. We are not equal – never have been. There are the basic differences of sex and physical appearance – then comes intellect, skills, god given gifts for music, art, the ministry, the law, etc. We continue to swallow the big lie of equality, where equality does not exist and never will exist.

Do you want to see equality – go to a commercial chicken ranch, or hog ranch. Residents of these ranches all look alike, eat at the same time, and are all equal to one another.

The point I'm going to make is that if you start including personal characteristics or the like in your matrix, I think you're at risk of offending various human rights legislation or the Charter or whatever. So there are some characteristics that you could put in, socioeconomic characteristics, but you'd have to be careful if you added them. Mr. Kush in commenting on things like sex, physical appearance, et cetera – that would be completely unacceptable.

3:52

MR. CONRAD: He's altitude challenged, if I remember correctly.

MR. MCCARTHY: Yes. In fact it's interesting that you mention that. He sent in his submission, and at the bottom it says: "Printed and Published by the Hemaruka and District Flat Earth Society."

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for coming, Norman. I don't know you, and the questions I'm asking myself: what do you do, and who are you? Your name just appears on the sheet here, and I thought maybe we could recommend you to sit as a commission member on the next commission.

MR. CONRAD: I think I recognize some pain on the commissioners' faces from time to time.

THE CHAIRMAN: I gather from the remarks that John made that you're a lawyer in Calgary?

MR. CONRAD: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want you to know that you win today the award for the phrase or expression of the day when you used the expression "buckboard technology."

Thanks for coming.

MR. CONRAD: Thank you, Your Honour.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter – we're waiting for an Ivan Weleschuk. Has he showed up? Well, the next presenter, then, is Oscar Fech.

MR. FECH: My name is Oscar Fech. Chief, panel, I'm in Calgary-Elbow. I still feel that we shouldn't have more than about 50 MLAs, constituencies. The reason is that when you go back in history, the more people you have in government, the more problems you create, the more red tape, et cetera. It creates more division in general. It seems, when you go back in history, that the less people you have, they work closer together. We should have more people working together in a community to create good social structures instead of having so much red tape. Divide and conquer: it seems that's what's going on in the world right now. To me, the UN, the World Bank, and I'll be frank, the Vatican, they sort of control the whole world. Divide and conquer. They all print their own money. I think we're heading for a new era in the next 10, 20, 30 years for the 1,000-year reign or whatever you want to call it.

We've gone away from truth and justice. We have to focus more on working as individuals, not be like sheep and follow whatever the trend is. We have to believe in the Creator and have Him guide us through the spirit from our hearts. We've gone away from that. I'm not trying to knock anybody or anything, but this is our problem.

Now, with the high technology of the Internet and the highway and everything we're moving so fast. Nobody knows anymore what's going on. We're heading for a cashless society and the whole bit. We're heading for real destruction to a point that we're going to start over again: like Sodom and Gomorrah, the Roman empire days, the Mayas, the Incas, and I could go on and on. I know people don't want to hear that, but that's where we're heading. Like Charles Dickens said, "The law is a ass." I'm just using his phrase. Well, the reason for that is because we don't fight as individuals anymore, like the people used to do in the olden days. They got together, prayed together, and created good laws, good, commonsense laws.

Like I mentioned last time, I studied history for over 30 years. I've traveled over 50 countries. I studied all the religions also. Not that I'm trying to be smart. I study and listen, but the end result is that I believe through a spirit that the Creator will guide you and lead you in whatever you're supposed to say, whatever is supposed to happen to you. That is my feeling.

I've got something here for the chief. I'd like him to take it with him and read it. I would sure appreciate that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to warn you I have trouble reading. No. Thank you.

Well, we'll start the questioning with John.

MR. McCARTHY: Just one comment, Oscar. You indicated that you wanted 50 members. I just looked up the electoral history of Alberta and the last time Alberta had less than 50 members was in the 1909 election.

MR. FECH: In 1909. Well, we should have kept it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally?

MR. WORTH: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for coming, Oscar, and expressing your viewpoints with respect to our problems. Thank you.

MR. FECH: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think those are all the submissions this afternoon, unless Mr. Weleschuk has shown up or unless there's somebody here who didn't register and has something they would like to say.

Well, that being the case, we're going to adjourn this afternoon's hearings, and we will reconvene tonight at 7 o'clock. So these proceedings are now adjourned.

[The hearing adjourned from 3:59 p.m. to 7:02 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Please be seated as we would like to start these hearings. I want to welcome you and say good evening. I would also like to make a few introductory remarks.

My name is Edward Wachowich, and I am chairman of the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission. I'm also the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta.

Let me introduce you to the other members of the commission. Robert Grbavac of Raymond, Alberta, is on my immediate left, Joe Lehan of Innisfail is on my immediate right, John McCarthy of Calgary is on my far right, and Wally Worth of Edmonton is on my far left. 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 your criticisms and to consider your thinking with respect to the proposals that we have made in our report released in January.

I want you to know that we've received criticisms from a lot of people that there are no women on this commission. This is the last night of our hearings. I have read this speech about 50 times, and our administrative assistant, Corinne Dacyshyn, has assured me that she can do a better job of reading the speech and has asked for the privilege of reading the speech. I'm going to ask her tonight to read the speech. Wherever the speech says I when she's reading it, that means me.

I now call upon Corinne Dacyshyn to read the speech.

MRS. DACYSHYN:

Why are we here? The commission is here to listen to your comments on the proposals made with respect to the electoral boundaries in Alberta in our first report, which I believe received very wide circulation throughout the province of Alberta. The commission is charged by law to examine the areas, the boundaries, and the names of electoral divisions in Alberta and to make recommendations with respect to them.

As I have said, we made the preliminary recommendations in January. These recommendations were given wide publicity, and more than 3,000 copies of our report have been circulated throughout the province. We feel that on the second round of hearings we need only listen to your reactions, evaluate your comments and critiques, and move on to our final conclusion with respect to our mandate.

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. I want to tell you that

we have reached preliminary conclusions with respect to our mandate, but I also want to tell you that our minds are not closed, nor have we reached any final conclusion. Every member of this commission has given these matters a lot of thought, and in reviewing the law, the work of previous commissions and committees which have studied boundaries in Alberta and in reviewing what the courts have said about electoral boundaries in the province of Alberta and in Canada, we've attempted to craft a preliminary proposal that will assure that all of the citizens of Alberta and all of the regions of Alberta are adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

In order to put our second round of hearings in perspective, I want to present a brief summary of the electoral boundaries law. One, our function is to review the existing electoral boundaries and to make proposals to the Legislative Assembly about the area, the boundaries, and the names of the electoral divisions in Alberta.

Two, we have a very limited time to accomplish this task. We submitted a report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in late January and must now, after a second round of public hearings, submit our concluding report to the Speaker before the end of June of this year.

Three, as I have said, the commission is required to hold two sets of public hearings. The first set of hearings was completed last year in November. This second set of hearings will be completed in April of this year, and after we have considered the input from the hearings, we will craft our final report for submission to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Four, 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 that we have set out in our first report. I believe we have given reasonable notice of the times and places for this second round of hearings.

Five, the commission has the power to change its mind with respect to its preliminary proposal. When the second round of hearings is completed, we will also complete our deliberations and lay before the Speaker our final proposals with respect to electoral boundaries. The Speaker shall make the report public. It shall be published in the *Alberta Gazette*.

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

Seven, 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.

Eight, then it is up to the Legislative Assembly by resolution to approve or to 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 then come into force when proclaimed before the holding of the next general election.

Population rules. Population means the most recent populations 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 the proposed electoral divisions, then the commission may use this data.

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

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

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

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

This is a very general overview of the legislation, but we must also turn to the guidance that has been provided by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Supreme Court of Alberta. The commission wishes to note that many persons may not agree with our interpretation of these decisions. Be that as it may, we are certainly prepared to hear argument on the various points and to reconsider our position.

What have the Supreme Courts said? The Supreme Court of Canada and the Alberta Court of Appeal have agreed that the right to vote under the Charter includes, one, the right to vote; two, the right to have the political strength or value or force of the vote an elector casts not unduly diluted; three, the right to effective representation; four, the right to have the parity of the votes of others diluted but not unduly in order to gain effective representation or as a matter of practical necessity.

The rulings of the Supreme Courts as well as the electoral boundaries Act must guide our decisions and ultimately the proposals that we make to the Legislature.

Our focus. The commission clearly stated in its report that it wishes to merge a number of rural electoral divisions and to add one electoral division to Calgary and one electoral division to Edmonton. We invite you to comment on these proposals in their particulars. We have put before the people of Alberta our preliminary conclusions with respect to this matter. We have not reached any final conclusions.

The commission now wishes to hear the views of Albertans with respect to our first report and the focus I have described. Please let me assure you that our deliberations are preliminary at this point and that no final conclusions have been reached. The commission shall not move to the consideration of final proposals without the benefit of input from individuals and organizations in Alberta. Indeed, this is the whole purpose of the second round of 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 reasoning of all organizations and individuals in Alberta with respect to the area, the boundaries, and the names of

the electoral divisions.

I now call on the first presenter, who is Tunde Agbi.

7:12

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to thank our administrative assistant, Corinne, for doing a very good job of reading the introductory remarks. All of the people over there thought that she does a better job than I do, and I won't quarrel with them. Had I known she could do such a good job, we might have used her earlier. She may be the next chairman of the next Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Go ahead, Mr. Agbi.

MR. AGBI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments will be brief. First I wish to commend the commission on the excellent job they appear to have done in the first draft of this report. My comments are intended to amplify the areas of the preliminary report that deserve additional attention by the commission as you prepare your final report. The major deficiency with the matrix proposed by the commission is that it undervalues the challenges involved in representing a demographically and culturally heterogeneous high-needs urban constituency.

Of the 10 variables cited, only two, namely population and number of households, reflect the issues and problems facing an MLA for a constituency such as Calgary-Buffalo. I understand the same applies to Edmonton-Centre. On the other hand, seven of the 10 variables are weighted to advantage a sparsely settled rural constituency, including geographical area, population density and sparsity, unincorporated communities, elected/appointed bodies, Indian reserves and Métis settlements, primary and secondary highways, and contiguous boundaries.

For all the reasons cited in our original submission to the commission, the focus on geographical factors and arbitrary factors fails to reflect the reality of urban representation. There is no accounting in this report for multiplicity of ethnocultural organizations, English language literacy levels, income levels, population growth rates as a function of the provincial average or as a function of anything.

If stability of electoral boundary definitions is a concern – and I suspect it is – we submit that these factors are inevitable factors for today's Alberta. On what basis does consultation with elected councillors of a small rural hamlet amount to a more important or pressing consideration than consultation with representatives of more than 120 clubs, associations, and dialects which are active in Calgary's Chinatown? The fact that a town hall meeting in Calgary-Buffalo requires the provision of at least six different language interpreters surely is as worthy of attention as the number of unincorporated communities.

As in our original submission, we do not minimize the challenges posed by representing a sparsely settled, geographically vast area. We ask only for some equality and fairness in identifying the variables which are included in the matrix so as to avoid the appearance of a zero-sum result. At the end of the day the most important question is whether the proposed matrix leads to results which can readily be defined as isolating the most difficult constituencies or areas to represent. In view of the rural bias, which I suspect was imposed on the commission by the Act, in the proffered matrix the answer can only be negative.

Why is it that Lesser Slave Lake and Athabasca-Wabasca are identified as special consideration electoral divisions, yet very diverse and challenging inner-city constituencies – I mentioned earlier Edmonton-Centre and Calgary-Buffalo in particular – are not viewed as warranting such designation?

My point is that perhaps in the original submission we made too

much emphasis about the rural-urban conflict, but the fact is that the urban constituencies deserve as much attention as it appears that either the Act or a combination of the Act and whatever you heard before made you put it into the matrix. We respectfully submit that the matrix should be modified to better reflect the reality of contemporary Alberta. We acknowledge that this would have the effect of suggesting additional constituencies in the two largest cities. This, however, is a logical conclusion if we are to avoid a rural bias and treat urban core challenges with rural geographical challenges.

On behalf of my colleagues I thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

We'll start the questioning tonight with Wally Worth.

MR. WORTH: Tunde, thank you very much for your comments about our matrix. You're quite right in indicating that we have been criticized for developing a matrix that apparently in the views of many people reflects a rural bias, and you've identified some of the factors that fit into that. Our goal is the same as yours in the sense that we want to develop a matrix which at the end of the day, to use your terminology, will help us identify those constituencies that are difficult to represent in this province, whether they be urban or rural. So we welcome very much the kinds of suggestions that you've made with respect to additional factors that might warrant consideration. In developing our matrix in the first instance, we thought that we would be guided by the legislation, and that accounts for the fact that many of the factors that are included in there are of the sort that you identified.

I have a particular question about one of your suggested factors. You point out that there is no accounting for income levels. One of the things that we are concerned about in developing our matrix and including variables is that any factor we put in the matrix, any variable we put in, has a logical and apparent connection to difficulty of representation. I'm interested in how you see income levels fitting into that.

MR. AGBI: Again I have to admit my own bias, because I represent a constituency that is Calgary-Buffalo. The issue is: if one is to look forward as to where Alberta is growing, where the population is growing, what the demographic shift is that is occurring in Alberta, I think it's not very difficult to identify that. More and more people, for whatever reason, are becoming disadvantaged. They're becoming older; they're not able to support themselves. In a constituency such as Calgary-Buffalo there's a high degree of old-aged people, welfare people, and they still deserve to be represented. If I were to soft-pedal my aggressive posture in the submission, I would say that such factors may very well deserve in your deliberations special consideration such as you've given to some of the rural constituencies like Lesser Slave Lake.

Income levels are an inevitable fact of today's Alberta because very many people in Calgary as a whole, never mind Calgary-Buffalo, are sort of scaling what Statistics Canada defines as the poverty boundary. They need to be represented. In the case of Calgary-Buffalo most of these people don't speak the language, they don't have the skills, and they still deserve representation whether or not they speak the language. So they have to be represented in the same way as somebody who lives way up north.

MR. WORTH: Are you saying, then, that the lower the income level the more difficult it is to represent a constituency?

MR. AGBI: The more challenging it is.

MR. WORTH: Okay. Thank you.

7:22

MR. GRBAVAC: I want to tell you that I would concur with some of your sentiments. However, when one attempts to quantify such things as differences between people, I think we walk into very dangerous ground. What are the parameters? Where do you stop? Once you start down that road, where do you stop? Do we start looking at age? I mean, to what degree do we define the demographics? Maybe you can accuse us of taking the easy way out, that we concentrated on, if you will, geographic considerations to reflect the level of complexity or difficulty in representing an area. We discussed many of the considerations that you are now raising. However, trying to define where we start and where we stop is very difficult.

When we start to differentiate between people, it becomes an extremely subjective process. What you may see as challenging others may not see as so challenging. I think we could be accused maybe of wilting in the face of a real challenge, but I think you can appreciate, on the other hand, the complexities associated with differentiating between people on the basis of race or immigrant status or income level. I just want to suggest to you that we may not stand a court challenge if we start to differentiate on that basis.

Are we to assume then, for example, that white Anglo-Saxon Protestants over the age of 65 are easier to represent than nonwhite Anglo-Saxon Protestants under the age of 25? I mean, where does it stop? That's the concern we have, and that may be perceived as a cop-out, but I think it's a legitimate concern.

MR. AGBI: I'm not too happy to agree with you that it is a cop-out. I think it is a cop-out.

MR. GRBAVAC: Well, that's fair enough.

MR. AGBI: I certainly am not suggesting that the distinction be made on the basis of race, religion, colour, creed. What I am suggesting, though, is that the wisdom, that is clear to me in this report, that was able to identify Lesser Slave Lake as a special-needs area could very well be extended without generality or without sacrificing the correctness of your approach to areas like Edmonton-Centre or Calgary-Buffer. The reason being: we don't have to say that we're going to create a constituency that represents largely, shall we say, black people or Chinese people, but we have to identify that for some reason or another there's a large concentration of diversity in Calgary-Buffer, and that is a reality, or a fact, of today's Alberta.

When I came to this country, there probably were fewer black people in Calgary. Today there's quite a large community. There were fewer Chinese people here. The recent immigration from the Balkans is another indication. The point is that representation is for all these people no matter what they are, and their special circumstances must be factored into the matrix. Those special circumstances in my view include how literate they are, what it takes to represent them, how easily do they move around. I think that you could do that without appearing to be biased, without fractioning your considerations to the degree to which you want me to believe that it poses a problem. I think it's just something we have to recognize. There are lots of Russians who have come here, and it takes two, three years to become very fluent in the language.

I'm not an MLA, and I have no aspirations of being one, but someone who represents them has to deal with those problems. Calgary-Buffer is one of the smallest in area but is as difficult, in

my view, for whoever represents that constituency as it is to represent Pincher Creek-Macleod, where they have to travel large distances. When you go into an apartment and they won't let you in or if they let you in they don't speak English, it's just as difficult. So I'm asking for an extension of what you call special considerations.

MR. LEHANE: I'd just like to respond, Tunde, for a moment to your question you pose about why Athabasca-Wabasca or Lesser Slave Lake should have special consideration. I think, for example, we can look at some of the things you discussed which are not in the matrix, and I think in a fair view of things, if you want to talk about ethnic and cultural problems, if you want to talk about literacy, if you want to talk about income levels, those are two constituencies that could probably demonstrate to you that they have significant problems in those areas.

But leave all those aside for a moment and just say that those make you equal, with those same problems on another front that you have in Calgary-Buffer. We don't have a map up here today, but there's Athabasca-Wabasca in terms of the province. There's the province of Alberta. There's Athabasca-Wabasca and there's Lesser Slave Lake. They probably represent 25 percent of the geographical area of the province of Alberta. We're talking about Calgary-Buffer having nine square kilometres geographically. Athabasca-Wabasca has over 124,000 square kilometres, and Lesser Slave Lake has over 87,000 square kilometres. Those are massive areas to try to get around in. One of the things that we've determined in terms of rural constituencies is that to be an effective representative it seems to take so much more time when you have the distance to travel from Edmonton and then you have the great geographical area to service. I think that when you look at that, there is justification for those being special consideration areas.

MR. AGBI: I think it's clear in my presentation that I'm not challenging the justification for those two constituencies. I'm not about to in fact agree with our mayor, who has commented here at the hearing: MLAs don't represent area; they represent people. I think there are factors which must be taken into account when someone represents an area as large as Athabasca-Wabasca. I'm quite familiar with that.

Maybe what I'm trying to convey to this commission is that the task of representing a small, nine square kilometre area such as Calgary-Buffer – you notice I haven't talked about transience of population. The task is no less challenging because it's full of apartment blocks, because it's full of people who do not, as I say, have English as their first language. The task of going from one apartment block where maybe there are 300 people to the next where you can't get in to represent them or, if you do get in, you may have difficulty with language is in my view, without being flippant about it, as challenging as representing Athabasca-Wabasca. If I were the MLA, I would say: what do you have to do? Get yourself a fax, get yourself a cell phone and you can talk to your people, or have constituency offices everywhere. The guy in Athabasca-Wabasca would say, "Oh, you can walk around Calgary-Buffer in a few hours." But when you think about what it is they're walking around to do or driving those large areas to do, they're really representing people.

What I'm asking is that an equal amount of consideration be given to the challenges that this individual representative faces in a place like Calgary-Buffer. I do not wish you to change what you've done with Athabasca-Wabasca because the people there deserve the representation in as an effective a manner as the people in Calgary-Buffer. I just want to heighten your awareness that there are

difficulties. Do not be misled by this nine square kilometres. It's just as difficult. That's all I'm saying.

MR. LEHANE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: John?

MR. McCARTHY: No questions, thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Tunde, I want to thank you for coming. We knew when we made the matrix that we would get criticisms in respect to our matrix, and we invited criticism, and we've got a lot of criticism in this second round of hearings. I think it was Joe who described it earlier on in our hearings as a diamond in the rough, and we're hoping we can improve on it, but it's not going to be easy.

Thanks for coming.

7:32

MR. AGBI: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Doug Piepgrass, representing the Calgary-East PC Association.

MR. PIEPGRASS: Not that it's material, but the name is Piepgrass.

Basically, I'd like to thank the commission for allowing us to make a presentation. I want to get down to some specifics. I do believe that we need to have a redistribution. Also, I think the concept of one person, one vote is quite adequate in our democratic society.

I represent an area or am president of an association that is very diverse, Calgary-East. We have some problems with the original division that was put forth, the original matrix that was put forth by the commission. We feel that communities are a very integral part of our society, and when they are split, as was the case in Calgary-East and in a number of other cases, it's important that they maintain their integrity so they can work together and operate as a unit. There have been a number of situations where different political parties have represented one community, and it's difficult for the communities to address any problem when the only thing that the opposing parties can agree on is to disagree.

I have some maps that we've drawn up; I don't know if you want to see them now. There will be some presentations by the other communities within Calgary-East. They will also have maps similar to this. As you'll notice, in the original division the community of Dover was basically split in half. They are a very cohesive community, and they would like to maintain the integrity of the community. Politically it makes a lot of sense to have, as we've drawn up here within the yellow boundary, Forest Heights, Forest Lawn, Dover. Within Dover there's west Dover, east Dover, Dover Glen, Erin Woods, and Southview. These communities here have a reputation of working very closely together. The rest of the area basically is industrial. It has about 200 population in it. We would like to see this area maintained as a unit.

The other part of it is a rather unusual shape, but I believe it has a certain logic to it. When you take in Marlborough, Alberta Park, Radisson, and then the areas that take in part of the old Calgary-Buffalo or the current Buffalo area, Inglewood and Ramsay, then we do have a problem with the boundaries. I'm not saying it's a problem, but Victoria Park actually is cut in half. That is a community that's losing population on a continual basis. Then the downtown centre and downtown east are divided slightly. However, the voting population is practically nil in those areas. Then we get into the Manchester industrial area, where there's very, very little

population. It's a huge area. Then Ogden, which is a very cohesive community within itself, is basically isolated in the southern part of the constituency.

Our primary concern is to maintain the integrity of communities not only in Calgary here or within our own area but throughout the province. I know there are a number of constituencies or municipalities that have been split in three different directions with the way the matrix has been drawn. I think there should be special attention paid to their needs, because it is a grassroots organization. It's very basic to our way of life or to the small communities. If you split them, they become less efficient in presenting their views, particularly if they have to present them to two different parties representing them.

I believe that's basically what I had to say. I have some other maps here for your perusal.

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll let the questioning start with John McCarthy.

MR. McCARTHY: I take it you're not able to tell me what the population of this proposed . . .

MR. PIEPGRASS: Yes.

MR. McCARTHY: What is it?

MR. PIEPGRASS: Forest Heights, Forest Lawn, Dover, which includes Dover east and west and Dover Glen, and Erin Woods are in that area which we'd like to maintain as the current Calgary-East. I think it's proposed to call it Calgary-Forest Lawn. However, we would like to recommend that that area be called Calgary-East. There's a total of 34,211 population in that area.

MR. McCARTHY: What about the other rather strange configuration in pink?

MR. PIEPGRASS: In Marlborough, Radisson Heights, Alberta Park, Victoria Park, Ramsay, Inglewood, and Ogden, there's 33,907, which is about a 300 variation. They're within 300 people of each other.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. In Marlborough and Marlborough Park, are those regarded by you as separate communities then, separate and distinct communities?

MR. PIEPGRASS: Yes, Marlborough Park is a separate community. It has its own community association. It basically operates as a separate entity from Marlborough.

MR. McCARTHY: What would you propose the name to be for this particular one in the pink?

MR. PIEPGRASS: We would recommend that it be called Calgary-Fort. Of course, Fort Calgary would be within the area, and Ogden is a very well-established community, an old community established when the CPR was established in the late 1800s. Inglewood, of course, is a very old area of the city, along with Ramsay. Fort Calgary is right in the corner of it, and we would recommend that the name of the constituency be Calgary-Fort.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. Those are all the questions I have.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

7:42

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally?

MR. WORTH: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for coming. I think you helped illustrate to us and everybody here how difficult our job is, and I want to apologize for mispronouncing your name, Mr. Piepgrass.

MR. PIEPGRASS: That's fine.

THE CHAIRMAN: Our next presenter is the MLA for Three Hills-Airdrie, Ms Carol Haley.

MS HALEY: Well, gentlemen, I know that you've had a lot of long days on this, and I want to thank you very much for the opportunity to come before you and present my thoughts on your report. I hope you'll be able to consider my comments in the context of being given from the heart of someone who's very proud to represent a vibrant, diversified rural constituency rather than from what some might be tempted to easily discount as a partisan political position.

I've been involved with the Three Hills riding, as it was known then, since 1981. At that time the riding bordered the east side of Highway 2 from Balzac to Olds. It contained part of the county of Mountain View, much of the MD of Kneehill, and a portion of the Rocky View municipal district. We had a very good mix of rural and urban constituents.

In 1985 the then electoral boundaries review committee decided to remove the northern part of the municipal district of Kneehill, and they drew a new line on the map between Trochu and Three Hills. As an association we were amazed that the commission clearly did not see the value of keeping intact an MD and obviously didn't understand the connection between Three Hills and Trochu. They are two communities which are only 13 kilometres apart. We did protest loud and long, and in the end the commission agreed to shift the line to just north of Trochu but would not leave the balance of the Kneehill MD intact in one riding, so the northern part was lost to us.

In 1992, in one more electoral boundary review, the north was put back in. This time we lost the east side of the riding. The county of Mountain View was put into the Olds-Didsbury riding, which to be fair – and I do want to be fair – was a logical move, as it put most if not all of the county of Mountain View into one constituency. Just about all of the MD of Kneehill was put into the new riding of Three Hills-Airdrie. To accommodate this shift to the east, we picked up part of the Drumheller riding, and the new area now forms our eastern boundary.

We were happy with the changes because logically the MD belongs together. It also balanced out once again a rural-urban mix. We, naively as it turned out, believed we were safe from further disruptions for at least seven years, but no, here we are again, three years after proclaiming our new boundaries, trying to keep our constituency together. This is where the thinking person starts to ask himself or herself a few questions, like: "How can we fix this

system? How can we make others understand that constituency lines do matter, that we are in fact much more than just lines on a map?" The other side of me, the cynical side, says: "Why bother? You can't win. The report is already written, and they won't change it." I hope that's not true.

To be honest with you, Mr. Chairman, anyone who is not impacted by your report doesn't know the electoral boundaries review commission even exists, so there will be no protest from them. What it all comes down to for me is simply this: it's my job as an MLA to be an advocate for the people of my constituency. I would not be doing my job if I didn't come here and try my best to explain to you how I and many of my constituents feel about what you've proposed in your report.

I want to start by talking about your matrix, which in general I support all the way. I think the concept is right, but I view this only as a first attempt at evaluating a riding and not as an end of a process. I view the matrix only as a beginning, a first step to put down on paper a concept which is long overdue, but in my humble opinion it is incomplete. It is not yet developed enough to use as a basis for changing existing boundaries. At the very least, I'm confused as to why the new constituencies were not evaluated and given a matrix rating of their own. But I digress.

I'd like to take a moment to just make a comment on some of the items in the matrix that you did use, the first one being distance from the Legislature at 220 kilometres. I'm guessing that if I went right to the northernmost edge of my riding, it might be 220 kilometres from there to Edmonton, but as my riding borders Calgary and you have Calgary down as being 300 kilometres from the Legislature, I was wondering why my riding's distance would in all honesty not be the same. I know I drive a lot farther than 220 kilometres to get to work.

Contiguous boundaries. Here again I found it interesting that we would weight more heavily those ridings that border other provinces, where for the most part there are few people living on either side of the borders, but constituencies that border Edmonton and Calgary are not recognized as being impacted by bordering a city of approximately three-quarters of a million people. There is a spin-off impact from the cities, Mr. Chairman, on business viability, on agricultural land, and on our youth, to name but a few. The proposed new Airdrie riding would border about 15 other constituencies, which makes it very difficult to find common ground.

Number of appointed or elected bodies. You have this down as 15 for my riding, but it isn't correct. There are two municipal districts and three school divisions – the Golden Hills school division, the Calgary Catholic school division, and the Rocky View school division – plus two major private schools: the Prairie Bible Institute and college and the Airdrie Koinonia Christian school. There are three regional health authorities and two seniors' housing foundations, both of which cover large rural regions, plus councils for Airdrie, Irricana, Beiseker, Acme, Lyndon, Three Hills, Trochu, Torrington. In reality 20 major bodies to deal with, and that doesn't count the fact that every single town has a Lions Club, a Legion, and everything else that goes with it. Everybody wants to meet with their MLA, which is fine. You know, I do my best to do that.

The number of households you have as 8,730. It's very much out of date. I did a mail-out two years ago, and there were 11,000 residents and businesses to do a mail drop to. I know that if I were to do it again this year, which I will be, it will be up substantially. Current figures are available from the post office on it, but our guess right now is that it would be around 11,500. That's household and business addresses.

Population figures are out of date: 27,308. Airdrie by itself has

grown over 2,000 people since the election. I'm proud to tell you this, Mr. Chairman: just about all of my communities have grown. I have no doubt at all that my constituency population is well over 30,000 or 31,000.

My only point in raising this is to show that the matrix number for my riding probably should be around 47, which if I'm right and you're wrong, instead of your placing my riding in a position where I should have a zero to plus 5 percent variance, in fact it would put me in just the opposite, into a negative variance of zero to minus 5. Well, it's all in your perspective; isn't it?

I represent a high-growth area, and on top of the incredible growth in Airdrie, the number of acreages is expanding at an even faster pace. One example is a small area close to Balzac that has recently had the first 57 two-acre parcels approved for development. The whole plan, if completed, calls for 700 acreages. This is just one of many. One of those little areas that you proposed in the new Airdrie riding will see a new acreage and condo development for up to 900 units, whether they be single-family dwellings or condo-style apartments. This is not part of the town. It's all on acreages. It's just my thought, but high-growth areas should be recognized in your matrix and so should acreage developments.

While you don't recognize it in your matrix, you do recognize it in your report. On page 47, in your second paragraph, you talk about the Drayton Valley-Calmar riding not changing

because the current population data and projections available . . . indicate growth and the domino effect of changing the boundaries of this electoral division would upset

several other surrounding ridings. It goes on to say that the present boundaries, communities of interest and organizations legitimately reflect the application of the redistribution rules.

Well, Mr. Chairman, to change Rocky Mountain House, which currently has a matrix number of 51, you've also changed Olds-Didsbury, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, and the Three Hills-Airdrie riding. We, too, have communities of interest. I know that others from my constituency have asked you to please look at the possibility of moving Sundre from the extreme northwest corner of Olds-Didsbury to the Rocky Mountain House riding, thereby meeting at least in part your concerns about the low population numbers in the Rocky Mountain House area, minimally changing Olds-Didsbury, and leaving the Innisfail-Sylvan Lake and Three Hills-Airdrie ridings as they are.

So now I've told you some of my concerns as well as proposing an alternative to your current report, which for the most part would deal with your original concern about high variance for Rocky.

7:52

I want to speak to you briefly about what it feels like to be nothing more than a line on a map. The people who are impacted just quite simply don't understand why this happens to them. No one goes and asks them what riding they think they should be in. Many of them will not know that their riding has been changed until an election. Many feel the current system of riding redistribution lets them down and in fact does not recognize their needs or their wishes. We build communities of interest. It's slow, but it works. The MD of Kneehill has done much to build a community of interest, and I commend them for doing that. To now take a pen and cut the MD in half totally misses the point of keeping communities of interest together.

I think you would have every right to suggest that the census data of 1991 is too old to have been of any value in your work. It does not reflect the true growth in the province. I commend you for developing the matrix, but I honestly believe more work needs to be done. However, without doing a matrix for the new ridings and

without consulting with the people that are being put into the new riding, your new lines will be just as hard or harder to justify than the old ones, and they will make no more sense than many of the old ones did.

In my current riding the city of Airdrie is 50 percent of our population. It is balanced between what I call rural and urban, because you see, Mr. Chairman, many of the rural ridings contain cities. It's too easy to say "urban" and just mean Edmonton and Calgary. For my part, if I'm lucky enough to be elected again, no matter what the riding is, one of the first things I want to do is review the legislation that deals with electoral boundaries to ensure that continuity becomes a factor for stability, because it matters. In the end effective representation comes down to personal contact. It's hard to develop that when you're nothing more than a line on a map and the line keeps changing. I ask you please to reconsider the lines of the Three Hills-Airdrie constituency.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

We will start the questioning with Joe Lehane.

MR. LEHANE: Thanks, Carol, and thanks for your support of our matrix concept. I think we should indicate that we as well think it is a first attempt to create a process by which we can do some quantitative analysis of the degree of difficulty of being a representative of a constituency and create some methodology, because we haven't found any anywhere before.

MS HALEY: I don't think any exist, Joe.

MR. LEHANE: We think that any electoral boundaries review in the future that has variances in population is going to have to be able to justify those variances to the courts.

MS HALEY: That's absolutely right.

MR. LEHANE: If you can create an instrument that can measure all constituencies and the degree of difficulty in a fair and level approach to all of them, we think that then you're going to be able to support and justify those variances. We fully admit that this was the first cut at a very, very difficult process to develop. It needs a lot of refining and processing, and it needs a lot of adjustment in terms of perhaps what weighting should be given to the various elements of that matrix. So hopefully that will evolve over time, but we felt we had to start somewhere.

MS HALEY: I totally commend you for the start. I just don't think it's a great place to end.

MR. LEHANE: In terms of the refining and polishing of what we hope to be a diamond someday, I think you're probably right that the measurement in terms of the distance to the Legislature, which was one of the elements in the matrix, probably went to the closest boundary of the constituency, and that's been pointed out to us on a number of occasions. I think on reflection that that's clearly wrong, and we should be looking at perhaps the centre of the constituency as a more reasonable measurement.

In terms of population we're dealing within the parameters of the Act, which restrict us to the last decennial population figures, the 1991 figures, because we have to use population figures that are consistent throughout the province.

MS HALEY: I appreciate that, but my understanding is that you've

used current data for Edmonton and Calgary.

MR. LEHANE: No. Your understanding is incorrect on that, Carol.

MS HALEY: Thank you.

MR. LEHANE: There has been some confusion, and we'll have to make it more clear in any future report. What we did was consistently use 1991 census data, and we heard from all kinds of places that said: you know, we're growing really fast, and if you took our present population, what you're using from '91 is not a proper reflection of where we stand in comparison to others.

MS HALEY: It's certainly true in my area.

MR. LEHANE: The other thing that we heard many times was: you know, people are all moving out of the country and they're moving to Edmonton and Calgary. That's where we used some '95 data in our report. That's where I think the confusion crept in. That understanding is a misunderstanding, and it's not true.

MS HALEY: It is absolutely. I mean, Airdrie's growing; Irricana is growing; Beiseker is growing. The little town just to the north of us, Crossfield, is expanding. That is why you have the spillover onto the acreages. There are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of acreages being developed now, because people are moving out of Edmonton and Calgary. I'm not saying that there aren't more people being born there or more people are coming there from other provinces or other countries. I think that's happening too. Alberta is growing. But don't underestimate the growth in rural Alberta, because for the first time in a long time our rural communities are holding their own and picking up.

MR. LEHANE: You're right. We agree with you, and in our report we try to correct that misconception that people have. That's where we used the '95 data, and we used '95 data to demonstrate the difference between the '91 population figures. The '95 population figures that we had for the total province indicated that Edmonton and Calgary were growing no faster than the province as a whole, but we didn't have the individual data that we could measure each constituency to use '95 data. That's how that came about.

The other point that I would like to deal with in your submission is your suggestion that Sundre be moved into the Rocky Mountain House constituency. This commission looked long and hard at that as a way to resolve what we considered an unacceptable negative variance in the population of the Rocky Mountain House constituency. In many ways it's a much more simple fix than what was in the proposed report. If you move Sundre up into Rocky Mountain House, you can leave Innisfail-Sylvan Lake alone; you can leave Three Hills-Airdrie alone. When we went out to our hearings in Olds-Didsbury, we were told that Sundre doesn't fit with Rocky Mountain House. It fits with Olds-Didsbury because of all of the health and seniors' programs, schools and hospitals.

MS HALEY: I could use exactly the same argument for why my riding should stay the way it is. It's the same argument for the school divisions, the regional health authorities. The trading patterns are north/south; they are not east/west. You know, the people in Three Hills-Airdrie have no desire to be part of the Innisfail-Sylvan Lake riding. They want to be part of the Three Hills-Airdrie riding. That's why I'm here.

MR. LEHANE: I appreciate that your position, Carol, is that there shouldn't be any changes to that riding.

MS HALEY: What I'm proposing to you, Joe, is that there doesn't have to be. You've a very minimal change that can be done to accommodate what we know is another interim step on the way to a 2001 boundary review. I mean, this isn't going to be the end of this. This is just one more change for another three or four years until we're back into this again. These people have already been moved in the last three years. If you don't have to make a major change, then all I can say to you is: please don't do it, knowing full well that in the year 2001 or 2002 it's all going to start over. If there was a major reason for having to do it right now, I wouldn't be standing here arguing with you. I can't justify what you're doing, Joe.

MR. LEHANE: Some people would suggest that Airdrie and Chestermere Lake are both bedroom communities of Calgary.

MS HALEY: I've actually had several people tell me that you've made that statement. I want to tell you that maybe 10 or 12 years ago that's the way people could have described Airdrie, and maybe they would have been right. We have a very large industrial complex in Airdrie now. We have people that actually come out from Calgary to work in Airdrie. So maybe Calgary's our bedroom community. It's not the way it was. I invite all of you to come out.

Of course there are people that work in Calgary that live in Airdrie. But you would not believe it. At 6:30 in the morning if you drive into Calgary and you happen to look over into the northbound lanes, all three lanes are full of people driving the other way too. It's not the way it was when you just had subdivisions. We now have a lot of businesses. Our retail businesses suffer because of the proximity to Calgary. But we have factories; we have manufacturing. It's a very vibrant area. I don't think anybody in Airdrie would tolerate you calling it that anymore. That is not how we see ourselves.

8:02

MR. LEHANE: Well, you know, I don't think we have to use that term, but I think that, as I say, it's been suggested that in terms of community of interest or communal interest, Airdrie and Chestermere Lake may have more common interests . . .

MS HALEY: I'd like to know who told you that, Joe, because when I read the *Hansard* reports, those comments were coming from this panel and not from the people that were coming in to make presentations to you. The deputy mayor of Airdrie came in to tell you that they worked well inside the constituency that they were in, and the first time we heard about the Chestermere connection was when we read the *Hansard* comments. It wasn't us that suggested it.

MR. LEHANE: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: John.

MR. McCARTHY: I think Joe has covered most of it. I have one small point, though. You said we will be into this in another three or four years. You may be; we won't.

MS HALEY: John, I don't blame you. I'm sure it's just not been that great an experience for any of you. It hasn't been a great experience for a lot of us that sit there and see our boundaries get changed and can't answer why. We happen to think that the MD of Kneehill is a

very strong, solid municipal district; we want to keep it together.

MR. GRBAVAC: Carol, I wanted to quiz you a little bit on a comment you made near the concluding portion of your presentation, and I'll quote it back to you. You suggest: "In the end effective representation comes down to personal contact." I'd like you to elaborate on that a little bit. I'll put it in the context of my own personal experience. I think I'm in my sixth term now of representing people at a municipal level, and repeatedly these people tell me: "Don't come to us with all of these issues. You know how we think. Deal with it. You know more about the specifics than we do, and you know what we would say if we were in your position and knew all the details. So don't bother me with this stuff. That's why we elected you, for you to take care of this stuff."

I'm wondering if you could elaborate on this personal contact notion, because if you sit in the Legislature or hold elected office for four years, we're talking about – what? – 1,500 days, and if there are 30,000 people in your constituency, you'd have to meet with 20 different people every day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. I think we can agree that that doesn't happen. So what happens to the I would suggest 90 percent of people that you don't meet with on an annual basis, if personal contact is what representation is all about?

The reason I question you on this is because we're getting this thrown at us time and time again. Some representations say: "Well, don't dilute my vote by suggesting that the ombudsman's role in a rural area requires that they represent considerably fewer people. Give them the fiscal wherewithal or the help to represent those people from that ombudsman perspective." Then we suggest that to the MLAs in rural Alberta, and they say: "Oh, no, no. Wait a minute. They don't want to talk to my assistant. They don't want to talk to my office. They want to talk to me personally." So therein comes the problem. In rural Alberta obviously they can't talk to people as easily face to face as they can in the city. Maybe some people would disagree with that, but really what essentially the whole argument comes down to is what you've summed up here by saying, "In the end effective representation comes down to personal contact." I'd like you to give me some for-instances or expand on that, as to why you feel that that's pivotal to the whole discussion, because I think that's the essence of what this is all about and the variance from the norm.

MS HALEY: Well, I'd be glad to try and answer that. I can only speak to you as one person who tries hard to do my job well. When I speak of personal contact, I speak of the ability of people to recognize me when I'm walking on the street in their town or in my city, that they can come up and say hello to me. I don't know what kind of problems people bring to you, sir, but I can tell you the kinds of problems that I have where people come and sit in my office, they call me on the phone, they write me letters, and all of those things to me are personal contact. I have people that come to me with maintenance enforcement problems on both sides of the issue. I have people that are on AISH that are having problems and need help. I have people that are having problems with workers' compensation. I have people that come to me because their child is having difficulty in school and they can't seem to get any answers. I have people that come to me because they're worried that their father is too far down the list on the open-heart surgery portion of things. I've had people come to me because they can't get along with one of their law professors, and they think that they're going to flunk out, and what can they do?

Many things come under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. We touch people's lives in a thousand different ways.

It's not all about roads, although I get complaints about that. I have people that come to my office and complain because the neighbour's cattle are always out on the road, and what am I going to do about that. I have people that have come to me and have problems with the amount of snow blowing on Highway 2 between Airdrie and Calgary. I mean, the problems are as massive and as wide as the constituency.

No, I have not met each of my 30,000 constituents, but I'm doing the very best I can to meet as many as I can, to be as accessible to them as I can. Do I think I can be replaced with a fax? No, I do not. We have bureaucrats everywhere. We have a few elected people to try and be a buffer between the people who are having a problem with the system and the people who are working the system. It's a job that humbles me because people have confidence in me, because you don't want to let them down. I think it would be all too easy to sit in my office and have three or four assistants just taking calls all the time and pretending that that was my job. It isn't. It's understanding the nature of Three Hills, it's understanding the nature of Trochu and the controversy between the two. It's knowing the difference between Acme and Beiseker and the people that live there. It's understanding the hog industry. It's understanding the cattle industry. It's just an awful lot more than meets the eye, and if you don't personalize it, if you don't try to get to know people and be part of their lives in some way, at least to the point where they feel comfortable in calling you and saying, "Yes, I've met her, you know; I know she'll try and help you" – that's personal contact.

MR. GRBAVAC: Fine.

MR. WORTH: Just a bit of information and an observation. We did not in our matrix consider private schools or seniors' housing foundations as appointed or elected bodies.

MS HALEY: You had "Elected/Appointed Bodies," and the housing foundations are that.

MR. WORTH: That's right. Yeah. And I think we have to go back and re-examine that, because we've also heard that we should be including community leagues in the cities as similar organizations.

MS HALEY: You've got to watch that one; it's a slippery slope. I've got those and 4-H clubs and – I could give you a list about as long as your arm.

MR. WORTH: That's right. But I don't know where it'll end, and that's going to be our difficulty, trying to decide on a measure that is fair to all constituencies.

The second point or observation I wanted to make was simply that I take your point that the commission ought to apply the matrix to new constituencies to see how they rate in that matrix. I take that point, and I'm sure we'll consider it.

MS HALEY: Well, I've raised that point, sir, because if you look all the way around the city of Calgary – on part of the west side, all of the north, and all of the way down the east – you have one riding, and you have absolutely no idea what it might be like to try and represent that riding and no matrix, scale, or variance to even know what's in it.

MR. WORTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just a second. I haven't asked my questions.

You heard what Joe had said in respect to population, and you've made a reference to Drayton Valley. We made references to three constituencies. That's Drayton Valley-Calmar, Barrhead-Westlock, and Dunvegan, and they were at 16 percent. We tried to get the variance down to 15 percent, and those two ended up at over 16 percent. What we were pointing out there was that if we would have moved those to 15 percent, we'd have been disrupting communities of interest and whatnot for a 1 percent change, and the thing we were trying to point out was that there was also the good possibility of some population changes whereby they weren't 16 percent. But we didn't do that for the rest of Alberta, and basically, for our computations throughout, we used the 1991 census, which we're obligated to use. We know that the 1991 census is wrong for Brooks and countless places, but you have to use something, and that's what the legislation says.

MS HALEY: What if the matrix and variance on my new riding turned out to be about 40 percent over what it should be, you know, because we don't know?

THE CHAIRMAN: It might get that rating after the next census.

MS HALEY: I'm pretty sure it will.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to say that it won't get it this time around.

You can conclude your remarks by saying, "Leave us alone. This can all be done in the next census after 2001 or 2002." I want to say that we left over 80 percent of Alberta alone, but the court case decision said we can't leave Alberta the way it is.

8:12

MS HALEY: I understand that, but Rocky Mountain House was within the plus or minus 25 percent variance, so even at that, at this point we didn't need to do this, not on that side of the province.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, that depends upon the interpretation of the law in respect to 25 percent.

MS HALEY: Oh.

THE CHAIRMAN: We're getting rural people telling us, "Just make the cities 25 percent plus and the rural areas 25 percent minus, and there's nothing wrong; that's according to law." That's not what the court case says.

MS HALEY: No, and you don't have an MLA sitting here telling you that, sir. I haven't said that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MS HALEY: All I'm trying to say is that I'm worried about my riding, which was well within the parameters of the variance. The new riding – nobody knows – could be way over plus 25 percent.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no doubt – and the court case said that – that all of the ridings were within the parameters, but they said it wasn't satisfactory.

MS HALEY: Yeah, and the only one that challenged it doesn't get changed. That's pretty neat too.

THE CHAIRMAN: Anyway, I want to thank you for coming and making your viewpoint known.

MS HALEY: Thank you very much for letting me make my presentation.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Nancy Page.

MRS. PAGE: Mr. Chairman, and members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and fellow presenters.

Mr. Chairman, you stated that this was the last meeting you were having, and I'd just like to lighten things up and say I'm glad you have the patience to sit here and listen to us. I'm sure it's been very frustrating for all of you.

I am Nancy Page. I'm the past president of the Erin Woods community association, which falls into the old riding of Calgary-East. I'm here this evening speaking on behalf of our community. We would like to voice our opposition to the proposed boundaries as outlined in the first report by the committee. The southeast Calgary communities of Erin Woods, Dover, Southview, Penbrooke Meadows, Forest Lawn, Albert Park, Radisson Heights, and Forest Heights have for the past 15 years worked in conjunction with each other in numerous projects. It has been a slow process, but it has been very satisfying and rewarding for all of these communities. Together we have a common denominator in the East Calgary Twin Arena, which provides both hockey and figure skating facilities and floor hockey during the summer months. As unified communities we also have integrated our summer sports programs and are pleased with our efforts so far.

To enable this unity, we also depend a great deal on each other for support with both city and provincial legislation affecting our areas. It is our opinion that to split the community of Dover and in turn add us to a constituency with Marlborough would be a grave mistake. Marlborough is an older, well-established community in Calgary's northeast quadrant which has finished its growth, basically. Meanwhile, Erin Woods, Dover, and Forest Lawn are still in stages of growth and expansion, with the addition of parks, homes, and green space. By including communities like Erin Woods, Dover, Southview, Forest Heights, and Forest Lawn intact and in one constituency, this constituency would have approximately 34,000 residents. This proposal represents a variance of plus 10 percent of the 30,780 residents the commission determined as the average population per riding.

It is also our request that the new proposed east Calgary constituency not be called Calgary-Forest Lawn. It is a well-known fact that the Forest Lawn area has been in a major revitalization program for the past few years to give new life to a worn-out and run-down area – albeit verbally at times – meaning that it's had a bad reputation. We're working to repair that. I think we need to continue onward with this positive initiative to upgrade and complete what we have started. We would seriously request that this committee rethink these boundary changes. We would like to see our communities forge ahead with the strong and dedicated commitment of working together, unsplit by electoral boundaries which may give us two different MLAs.

In the past we have experienced some problems where communities in this area of the city have had to cope with two different MLAs from opposing parties. This was quite unpleasant for community leaders and volunteers to deal with as the opposing MLAs could only agree to disagree when it came to any decision-making. At a time when it is becoming more and more difficult to get volunteers to give their support and dedicate their time and their effort to our worthy community causes, we would at least like to remain a unified group at least as far as dealing with MLAs.

I would like to thank the commission for hearing our points of

view, and we sincerely hope the proposed boundary proposals can be changed as we have requested herein.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine. We'll start the questioning with John McCarthy.

MR. McCARTHY: I have the city ward boundaries. Is it fair to say that Forest Lawn and Penbrooke and other areas are in ward 10 whereas Southview, Dover, and Erin Woods are in ward 9?

MRS. PAGE: They are, and the reason I included them in our report, sir, is that we do work closely in conjunction with them. The whole opposition that we have is basically to your splitting the community of Dover, which is our only bordering community. It's the one saving grace that Erin Woods has. We are a very small community with probably only 2,700 homes ever when it's completed. Our only neighbour that we really touch base with is Dover.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. You indicated that you'd like to have a different name for the proposed Forest Lawn.

MRS. PAGE: Rather than to be called Forest Lawn?

MR. McCARTHY: Yes.

MRS. PAGE: We would like to remain Calgary-East simply because Forest Lawn, as I stated, has had such a bad name and reputation that we have worked so hard to clear up. If you drive in the area or live in the area and say, "Forest Lawn," immediately the connotation is: oh, God, those people from the east side. We're trying to dispel that.

MR. McCARTHY: Thanks. Those were the questions I had.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: Thanks. No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally?

MR. WORTH: No questions, Nancy.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I wish to thank you for coming and making your views known and letting us know what a difficult problem we have. When you leave, if you would take your sign and Carol Haley's sign because we don't want the next presenter to be called Carol.

MRS. PAGE: Thanks very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Brian Norford of the Calgary-Currie PC Association.

MR. NORFORD: Thank you, gentlemen. I am Brian Norford, and I speak on behalf of the Calgary-Currie Progressive Conservative Association. There should be a written submission in front of you, and this submission has the endorsement of the executive of the constituency association.

I had the privilege of speaking to you also on November 22, and

for your convenience I've enclosed, attached to that submission, a copy of the previous submission. That submission had three main points. The first one was to suggest that there would be a need for reduction of the number of seats in the Legislature, but of course the enabling legislation for the commission provides for a set number of 83. That was one point.

The second point was to argue for equal populations for all constituencies, except for a very few special electoral districts. Of course you have two special electoral districts for which such status is very well justified. Your commission has devised a very elegant methodology to provide for acceptable variances between average figures for populations of constituencies. I'm sure that you have received several submissions which have wished to open debate on that methodology. I certainly do not wish to do so; I certainly am not competent to do so. But I do know that such methodologies are evolving processes. I'm sure that when we have lived with this methodology for a few years, it'll get better and we'll be much more comfortable with it.

8:22

The third point of my submission in November dealt with the physical nature of Calgary-Currie and its sociological character. My comments today are very specific, and they concern only the changes to the boundaries of Calgary-Currie which have been suggested in the January report of the submission to the Legislature.

You have an attached map there which shows the changes to the boundaries of Calgary-Currie. The boundaries in 1993 are in green; the suggested changes on page 17 of the January 1996 report are in magenta. These consist of firstly minor additions to the constituency from parts of the district of Elbow Park, parts of Mount Royal, and parts of Sunalta, the removal of the whole of the Rutland Park community. When I use the term "community" here, I'm using it in the terminology that the city uses. The city has a whole set of descriptions of communities, so Rutland Park community is an entity according to the city. I have given the boundaries there: 37th Street S.W., 46th Avenue S.W., Sarcee Road, and Richmond Road.

So the suggested changes would remove the whole of the Rutland Park community, the whole of the Lincoln Park community, and parts of Canadian Forces Base Calgary and the Spruce Cliff district. Together these result in a net population addition of 217 people, giving a total calculated as 35,404. Those figures of course, as you've commented earlier, are given to us by the 1991 census.

Calgary-Currie is a long-established city community, and Rutland Park is a mature community and is very characteristic of Calgary-Currie. Certainly we would be loath to lose Rutland Park. It is a very strong element in our constituency association, and I would mention as an aside that the current president happens to live in Rutland Park. However, you have to make those decisions.

As outlined previously in November, Calgary-Currie has very specific relationships to the Children's hospital, to Calgary-Currie barracks, and to Mount Royal College. We are very proud of those relationships, and we can say that the representation of the interests of Mount Royal College and the hospital and also Currie barracks has been very ably served by a succession of MLAs for Calgary-Currie.

Continuation of these strong relationships can be expected to be very beneficial to the interests of those institutions, particularly Mount Royal College and Currie barracks. As you are no doubt well aware, there are some imminent changes to Canadian Forces Base Calgary, of which Currie barracks is a portion. It may well be that there will be a different land use for much of the area now occupied by Calgary-Currie.

We understand that the changes that may be considered would

include the potential for Mount Royal College to expand northward at some time in the future. The future development of Currie barracks in whatever form is very significant to our constituency, and we feel strongly that Calgary-Currie's historic involvement will provide continuity and perspective valuable to the city as a whole and also to Alberta.

We have made some recommendations for some minor changes to the boundaries of the constituency as given on page 100 of the January report. They are shown in yellow on the map that you have before you. On the top of page 2 of the written submission there are some words which provide the details of how the boundary could be changed. The extent of this change would be to keep most of poll 27, which is called Lincoln Park, within Calgary-Currie but not all of it. The data used by the electoral commission show a population of 290 within poll 27. This revision suggested by our constituency association would add about 230 people to the new Calgary-Currie, giving a revised total of 35,634 and a variance of plus 15.17.

The result of that change would be to retain Mount Royal College within Calgary-Currie. It would also retain the site of a Francophone school that is about to be constructed in Calgary-Currie and which will be the subject of a separate representation later this evening. It may be that Calgary-Currie is one of the few urban constituencies that is suggesting an increase in its already large population. This increase is relatively minor, but it can be justified in terms of providing effective representation of an important component of the constituency.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Mr. Norford.

We'll start the questioning with John McCarthy.

MR. McCARTHY: Brian, I just want to make sure on your map that I understand correctly what you've got there. The area in yellow would be your recommended addition to the mauve lines.

MR. NORFORD: Let me just say that the area in yellow would be a boundary, so the area northeast of that, which is in mauve, would disappear. The rest of it would stay the same. It would be retained as presented by the commission.

MR. McCARTHY: As proposed. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally?

MR. WORTH: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to thank you for appearing before us again, Brian, and making a very well-thought-out presentation. I hope we can do something for you, but we're not making any promises tonight.

MR. NORFORD: Well, I thank you for the opportunity, and I sympathize with you in your task. You've mentioned people being called Carol; I think there are five Solomons in front of me.

MR. GRBAVAC: There are times, Brian, when we wish we would have been consulted before we were conceived.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Mel Wiese, president of the Dover Community Association.

MRS. ANDERSON: I'm not Mel Wiese, but I am here on his behalf.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, my sheet shows Mel Wiese.

MRS. ANDERSON: This will help.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. McCARTHY: You could have just said you were Melanie Wiese.

MRS. ANDERSON: I could have, but unfortunately I answer to my own name, not to anyone else's.

THE CHAIRMAN: For the purposes of the *Hansard* record, we'll just say that the next presenter is Mary Anderson.

MRS. ANDERSON: Thank you. I have been a resident of the greater Forest Lawn area for many years. I'm actively involved in the Southview, Forest Lawn, and Dover community associations. As well, I've spoken to a number of people from every community that is affected by this. I'm here tonight to make two recommendations to this committee and outline my reasons for them.

The first recommendation is to align the constituency boundaries to include the following communities in their entirety: Forest Lawn, Forest Heights, Southview, east and west Dover, and Erin Woods. My reasons for this request are, first, that it will amalgamate these communities that already have close ties in a number of ways. They're close in proximity, property values, school zones, transportation concerns, crime statistics, policing, and municipal and federal representation. Second, it will not divide any communities such as east and west Dover. Third, it will provide us with the necessary representation that we have felt to be distant in the past.

The second recommendation is to rename the constituency from Calgary-Forest Lawn to Calgary-East. The most obvious reason for this change is because we aren't just Forest Lawn. Each community must maintain its separate identity to attract members, fund-raise for community improvements, and identify their individual requirements. We're encouraged by the city of Calgary, notably Calgary east division, to take pride in our uniqueness so we are able to draw from the volunteer base that Calgary is so famous for. While our tax dollars are redirected out of social programs, we must replace them with community support.

8:32

It might appear that these six communities are in contention. That is far from true. We work closely together now as we have in the past. We honour each other's memberships, monitor our programs, particularly children's, to avoid overlap or duplication, and all of these communities share ownership in the East Calgary Twin Arenas. We do not anticipate these things to change because of a simple name change or different boundary lines. However, these recommendations will give us a greater voice and hopefully better representation in future decision-making.

In the interests of making this presentation brief, I have not touched on the wide variety of cultures and languages, immigrant issues, or seniors' special needs, all of which are a concern in these

communities, or the fact that we now have two MLAs who are both trying to address the needs of this area with no clear mandate over who should handle what or where. We have a population in Calgary-East, the one that we'd like to have, of 34,211 people and a population in Calgary-Fort, which is the other name that has been brought up this evening, of 33,907. Those seem to be optimal in what the committee's looking at.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Mary.

We'll start the questioning with John again.

MR. McCARTHY: I think I covered my questions with the previous presenters. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions, thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally?

MR. WORTH: Just to thank you for the reinforcement.

MRS. ANDERSON: Oh. Well, I'd like to thank you for hearing us tonight. Also, I've found a healthy respect for the task that you gentlemen have undertaken.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks for coming.

MRS. ANDERSON: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Doral Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I did it the last time and I did it this time too: I didn't get my presentation to you till 7 o'clock today. I hope that you got copies of the presentation I'm going to make.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have copies, but I can assure you we haven't had a chance to read it.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, I can imagine, especially with the length of it. I'll try to give you a nice overview so that at least you have some idea of where I'm going.

First of all, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present this time and during the first submission. I came here with two ideas in mind. The first one was to discuss the matrix that you've created. I thought it was a wonderful idea. As I read the report, I knew that you'd opened up a nasty basket there, that you were going to get a lot of people saying, well, I want this included and that included. I'm here to ask you to include less, not more. I'm very happy with your decision to include this analytical tool because I think it does add to our understanding of what makes a riding difficult to represent. I'm also very pleased to see that the average variation has been reduced from, you know, upwards of 25 plus or minus down to 15 percent, which is what the Lortie commission had recommended back in '92.

On page 3 I've got a graph that just sort of shows graphically how the new boundaries fit within your variance. In most cases it's nicely pushed towards the middle, though we still don't have a nice bell

curve, which is what I'd like to see. The urban and rural ridings and 'urban' ridings that some people have been talking about when they talk about Airdrie and that sort of thing certainly are moving more towards the centre. I think this range of variation is fairer and more democratic, but I still am concerned that there seems to be a clear decision to have urban ridings consistently overrepresented and rural ridings consistently underrepresented. I think that still is a concern that people have. I can appreciate the arguments that some people make in regard to, well, it's more difficult to represent people that live in a larger riding. To those people I might say, "Well, you asked for the job; so live with it," but maybe some others wouldn't see it that way.

You didn't make any explicit statement in your report that you thought the 25 percent variation was too much. I think that would have been useful. I think it might be useful in the final report to say that we think a 50 percent overall variation is too wide, and that gives some latitude for the next commission to say, well, the previous commission said that a 30 percent latitude is sufficient to represent people adequately. Most of us see the addition of seats to Calgary and Edmonton. I think that was the intention of the courts when they said they had concerns about the current boundaries.

I'm sure you've received a number of representations from people in southern Alberta that are very concerned about what you've done with their ridings, especially with the elimination of two ridings there. I imagine this was a difficult decision but I think one that needed to be taken. I think there is another riding that needs to be removed and moved into the city, but that I can discuss a little bit later.

I also noted that in almost all cases you tried to keep communities of interest together. I noticed that in Calgary-Varsity you kept all the Varsity communities together, Varsity Estates and all those various Varsity communities along Crowchild.

So overall I think the commission has done an excellent job of trying to satisfy the demands set in front of it, and I hope that you'll take this submission in the manner that I intended it: to add to the submission, not diminish it.

On to the electoral boundaries matrix. I saw the matrix as problematic not because it needed more things in it but because I thought there were maybe too many things in it, too many things that weren't all that clear as to what they were really measuring. I had a couple of questions when I was going through it. One was that I thought some of the variables shouldn't have been weighted the same. They should have been weighted on some sort of scale; like, some may have been more important than other variables. I don't think that that necessarily was considered in your first attempt. My second concern was that there seemed to be a bit of redundancy. A number of the measurements were actually measuring the same thing, so you ended up overrepresenting certain aspects. Of course, not everyone is going to agree on which variables to add. You've heard that tonight, and I'm sure you've heard that every night you've been out on the road.

I would suggest two things in regards to the matrix. One is that you try to make it simpler rather than more complex, and the second thing is that you use your considered judgment to say what seems appropriate rather than really relying on the matrix. There were a couple of things that I thought you could do with the matrix. One of them was that you had measured population three times in your matrix. You measured population, you measured population density, you measured number of households, and all three things were measuring population. But the thing that you're trying to affect, the thing that you're trying to modify is population, so to include it in the matrix seemed to me a bit confusing. I would have removed

population entirely and said: okay; let's look at the factors that will affect the representability of a riding and adjust the populations according to those factors rather than including the population within the matrix.

Number of unincorporated communities. I think you've probably heard from some other people within the city saying: what's the difference between an unincorporated community and a community association or a community within a city? Why can't you say there are 18 communities within Calgary-Varsity or 15 communities within Calgary-North Hill? Isn't that just as valid as unincorporated communities? I wasn't sure what this was trying to measure. Was it trying to measure the identification with a certain community within a riding, and the more people identified with a number of disparate ridings, the more likely it was to have a difficult time getting them all to work together? I wasn't sure if that was the intent of this. I suspect that what it ends up doing is just measuring the size of a riding, because the larger your riding is, the more likely it is that you have more unincorporated communities. So actually it's just a measure of size.

8:42

Elected and appointed bodies is the same thing, really, in my estimation, because with elected and appointed bodies you have very, very few in the cities but you have a lot in the rural areas, therefore reinforcing the differences between the urban and the rural. So in that one you're looking at whether this is an urban riding or a rural riding and giving it more weight if it's rural. It's also unclear whether elected and appointed bodies make it more difficult to do your job or less difficult, because I think you could also argue that because there are some elected and appointed bodies, people can go to those bodies rather than going to the MLA.

I think it is important to include the native and Métis issue within the matrix, but I think it's probably not one of the most important issues to include. So if I were including it, I would probably have it as a secondary element rather than a primary one.

On the issue of primary and secondary highways, again we're measuring the size of a riding in some cases, although in some cases there are actually fewer roads in a large riding. For instance, Athabasca-Wabasca might have very few roads and Cardston-Chief Mountain may have a lot. You would think that Athabasca-Wabasca would need more representation, but that wouldn't be the case if you just looked at that particular factor.

Boundaries contiguous with the boundaries of Alberta also seems to be measuring both size and distance from the Legislature.

After looking at all of those factors, I came up with the conclusion that really the two major factors were the size of a riding and its distance from the Legislature. So I would suggest to you that rather than using a large number of factors, you in fact just use those two. What I've done is I've used those two factors and weighted them equally because I couldn't think of a good argument for weighting one more than the other. I'm sure, you know, if you had a chance to consider, maybe you would come up with a different conclusion. Maybe one is more important than the other, but I weighted them equally and then thought that well, we also have this native and Métis issue where these people do need some more representation and help, so I included that as well in my matrix as a minor issue.

The way I operationalized this is on page 13. I used your matrix in some cases, and I used the distance from the Legislature. You can see in table 1 that I've got up to 150 kilometres as a ranking of 1, up to 300 as a ranking of 2, and so on. With the areas, I thought you had far too many groupings at the low end, so I consolidated the low end since your old rankings of 1 to 5 were generally all city ridings or were very, very small, condensed 'rurban' ridings, rural ridings

with a very, very large urban base in them. Then I left the other ones much as is to have a ranking between zero and 4. After I'd done all that work – and I'm afraid I didn't give you any information showing actually what the breakdown is, but I have that table on page 14 that shows you what my conclusion was and where I would have put the variances for those ridings. I have Edmonton at a plus 5 to 15 variance, Calgary and a number of 'rurban' ridings in the zero to plus 10, a number of 'rurban' rural ridings around Edmonton at minus 5 to plus 5, and so on until you get to where the special consideration ridings are, which would be at the minus 5 to 15, but of course since two of them are special considerations, we allow for more variation.

I think this is very close to what your own conclusions were, except a number of the rural ridings right around Edmonton end up in the average of a zero variance situation rather than in perhaps a minus 5 to 15 percent variance, that you may have found using your matrix. So on that basis, I suggested in my report that you in fact go back and look at these rural ridings around Edmonton since you had identified that you thought a number of them were above the variance that was acceptable, and you'd also identified that Calgary deserved another riding, but you weren't prepared to give it another one at this time.

I'm suggesting from this proposal that in fact the statistics are there to show that this indeed can and should be done, that a rural riding from around Edmonton should be eliminated and an extra riding should be given to Calgary, preferably in the south. The reason I say in the south is because if you add up all the positive variances south of the Bow River and including Calgary-East, you have a cumulative positive variance of over 120 percent. There's also a cumulative positive variance above the river of approximately 80 percent. So, clearly, if you were going to put a riding in one of those two areas between north and south Calgary, you would definitely be able to say that south Calgary needs the riding worse than north Calgary does.

On page 16 I showed the variances noted on the map. On page 17 I showed you the negative variances around Edmonton, and most of the serious negative variances are on the north and west sides of the city. The south and east sides seem to be fairly acceptable variances. They're fairly close to the zero to plus 5 or the minus 5 to plus 5 percent variance.

My conclusion in at least the first half of my submission here is that I think that you should go ahead: one, reduce the number of factors in your matrix until you have a better idea of what these factors are in fact measuring and how much time or in what way it impacts on an MLA's ability to do his job and, secondly – this should in fact be done – that an extra riding be given to Calgary and one taken away from around the north and west parts of Edmonton.

In the second part of my submission I was looking at the map of Calgary, and I think you've done an excellent job of trying to address as well as you could keeping communities together. I've heard some people in northeast Calgary suggesting that those riding boundaries were probably not appropriate, and I would have to agree with them. On page 23 I've got a map that I've drawn of the whole city. I wasn't really looking at one riding in particular, but what I tried to do was use a number of guidelines in setting up the maps. I think I have a little list of the guidelines that I was using.

The guidelines that I used when I was looking at the maps. One, compactness: trying to keep a riding as compact as possible, not spread out, because if it's spread out, it's more difficult for people to understand what riding they're in. Two, keeping communities and development areas together: if a certain number of communities are all developed at the same time, it makes sense to keep them all together. A third guideline was respecting and using clearly

identifiable natural and man-made boundaries; for instance, trunk roads like Deerfoot Trail or 16th Avenue in Calgary or 14th Street as well as rivers. I think it's important to take note of the rivers as well. I think there's only one boundary in Calgary where you cross the river, and it's Calgary-East, the one that you've currently got, but all the other ones seem to respect the river boundary as much as they could. Using postal districts where it was appropriate: one riding, Loughheed, could be slightly changed to include all of one postal district rather than taking in two, as it currently does. Keeping population variances low: by that I mean not just overall; I mean within clusters of ridings. For instance, in the northeast, trying to keep all those variances as close as possible but respecting the boundaries that are there. Using previous boundaries where appropriate. My last guideline was to start with downtown rather than – I think the 1993 commission went from the outside and worked in, but I think it's far more appropriate to start from the inside, where the city isn't growing very quickly, and move outwards.

So I have a number of riding boundaries that I've proposed, some minor changes to the boundaries, and I'd be happy to go through that. I've got a couple of discussions about how I decided to put those boundaries down, but I think most of them are fairly clear in their description.

8:52

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Doral. We'll start the questioning with Wally Worth.

MR. WORTH: Doral, it's a very impressive submission in terms of the amount of time it must have taken to put it together.

MR. JOHNSON: Oh, I know you guys have spent far more time than I have. I can appreciate how much work you've been doing.

MR. WORTH: I'm not sure there are many individuals who would spend this much time on a submission, and I commend you for it.

I just want to ask a couple of questions about your proposals on the matrix. It seems to me there are two main messages here for us. One is that we should keep population out of the matrix. Is that one message?

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah. I think you should be modifying population after you determine which ridings need to be represented.

MR. WORTH: So conceptually I guess you're saying that we should start from the assumption that all constituencies should be equal in population.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. WORTH: Then we vary them positively or negatively based on the analysis provided by the matrix.

MR. JOHNSON: That's exactly right. That's what I was intending.

MR. WORTH: Okay.

The second message you're sending us, I think, is that we should apply the principle of parsimony: keep it simple.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. WORTH: Okay.

Now, the two that you thought were key in the matrix, then, were

area and distance from the Legislature.

MR. JOHNSON: That's right.

MR. WORTH: You had earlier commented that you thought the matrix was sort of biased in favour of rural constituencies in the sense that we wound up with more rural constituencies with a negative variance. My question to you is: if you just use area and distance from the Legislature, aren't you continuing the same bias?

MR. JOHNSON: It does bias, yes. Exactly. There were two problems. On the one hand, I wanted to come and say, "Just make them all the same." I appreciate there are some considerations. I saw some of you shaking your heads when I said: "Well, too bad. You asked for the job; you've got it. You have to represent this riding that's more difficult to represent." In some ways I'm of that attitude. A person that runs for elected office is saying, "I'm willing to represent you." End of story. If you're not willing to represent this group of people based on the fact that the riding's too large, then maybe you're not up to the job. Maybe you don't want the job that badly. Maybe it's not something you really believe in. On the other hand, I can appreciate that you say, "But we should make it fair to everybody." So that's why I've said okay. My concern is not that we're giving rural areas more consideration than the others. It's that it's consistent.

The MLA for Three Hills-Airdrie was here, and I wanted to say to her: "Well, okay; let's make sure that all the boundaries are fair, but then you're going to have a population of 40,000, but we'll have the boundary so that it takes in all of these particular communities. Will you be happy with that?" Now, that's not fair to her because that gives her more work as well.

I don't know if that point is a good point to even make. I'm just concerned that we don't do it consistently over the whole thing, that it's not that consistently urban people are underrepresented and consistently rural people are overrepresented. I think it should be a little bit closer.

MR. WORTH: I think you're also saying to us, if I understand your comments, that we have to use our own judgment or intuition in some instances to take into account some of these factors that can't be quantified or included in the matrix.

MR. JOHNSON: It's hard to say how much time you'll spend on it. Contiguous boundaries: how much time will you spend on it? I mean, do we need to start sitting down and saying, "I spent 3 percent of my time on it"? As a factor becomes more refined, is that what happens? You know, I've got 13 ethnic groups in my community. Does that mean I need an extra 1.3 percent more representation.

MR. WORTH: Well, as you're probably aware, we've received a number of suggestions about our matrix and how to modify it. I think one of the things we've learned from this is that whatever we do include in the matrix is going to have to have a demonstrable or a logical connection with difficulty of representation for it to make it in there so that's it readily apparent to anyone who reads the document that that is a factor they would accept and most other people would accept as something that influences representation.

MR. JOHNSON: And that's why I went and removed some of those, because it wasn't clear to me.

MR. WORTH: Sure.

Thanks, Doral.

MR. GRBAVAC: Doral, I want to commend you on the amount of work you obviously put into this presentation. I'm impressed to a fault almost. It makes me question what your background is. Do you have a particular inclination or an educational background in political science?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, since my last submission I've been considering going and talking to some people over there and taking some graduate courses or something. I did a bachelor of arts at the University of Calgary. I was never interested in this particular area of politics until someone twigged me, and I said: "Well, that seems very interesting. I'd like to learn more about it." The more I dug into it the more interesting it became. I try to do other things besides. I try to go out dancing besides this. This is not my life.

MR. GRBAVAC: You raised one issue in terms of density of population. We felt we had to recognize the way that the population was distributed throughout a constituency. We felt it was a factor. I'm still not quite clear as to whether or not you apply that consideration prior to the development of the population variances or as a part of developing it. The difference escapes me. It still seems to be that if you recognize it as a consideration, the application either prior or during ought to have the same result.

MR. JOHNSON: If I can just address that. Population density broadly defined is just population divided by area. So we get into this issue again that we're using an area.

MR. GRBAVAC: Okay. I understand, then, where you're coming from. I was taking a broader interpretation of that. Fair enough.

MR. LEHANE: I just wanted to echo, Doral, the comments of the other members of the commission and commend you for all of the excellent work. Unfortunately we didn't have a lot of time to review it before your presentation.

MR. JOHNSON: I apologize for that.

MR. LEHANE: No. No apology is necessary. We'll take it back and certainly take a hard look at it. I want to just say how happy I was to hear that this is not your life.

MR. JOHNSON: Because it's certainly yours, at least right now.

MR. LEHANE: We're looking forward to a day at the end of June when it won't be our life either.

THE CHAIRMAN: John?

MR. McCARTHY: Just a question. How much time did you spend putting this together?

MR. JOHNSON: Do you include the time I spent or the time that my girlfriend and my dad and . . .

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. Well, it was a joint effort then.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah. I had a lot of help with it, but I would probably say 30, 40, 50 hours maybe.

MR. McCARTHY: Have you got a little more detailed map of Calgary?

MR. JOHNSON: I did. You know I had a lot more stuff. I probably had twice as much. I just didn't have time to put it all together. Is there any particular area, because I couldn't tell you just from my head.

MR. McCARTHY: No, I just want to make sure. I'll talk to you after, and I'll get the street names of some of these boundaries. Then that'll be good enough for me to use as a reference when we take a look.

MR. JOHNSON: Some of it is described in the back here as well but not all of it. I didn't have a chance to go through all the way.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: The last time you were here, if I remember, you told us you worked for Coca-Cola. I know Brian Robinson who used to run Coca-Cola. He phoned me and asked me for a copy of the preliminary report. I was just wondering whether he was the fellow who twigged you.

MR. JOHNSON: Who was it that put me on to this? Maybe it was the thing that you guys had sent out originally in the mail. Maybe someone in my family received something. But I know Greg Dixon who's now the operating superintendent at the Calgary plant here.

9:02

THE CHAIRMAN: You made one comment that I want to comment on, that we should say that 25 percent is too much. I personally would like to say that, but I don't think we can say that. First of all, the Supreme Court of Canada said that the 25 percent variance was acceptable.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, in the Saskatchewan decision.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Alberta Court of Appeal said that it's acceptable but it must be justified. We, as you'll notice, reduced basically the variances that were plus 25 and minus 25 to roughly 15 percent, with three at 16 percent. The province of Saskatchewan has now passed legislation stating that the variance can only be plus or minus 5 percent. I'm told Manitoba has passed or is passing that kind of legislation, so is B.C. So I don't want you to give up hope with respect to the 25 percent variance, because it looks like all of western Canada is changing its figure. It's obvious you think 25 percent is too much, but the people who have to change that figure are the politicians.

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I'll leave it to them.

THE CHAIRMAN: No. I think it's up to you and the people to say that 25 percent is wrong and see if you can convince them that they should change it.

I want to thank you, as the other members have, for the work you've put into your presentation and for coming here again.

MR. JOHNSON: Thanks for having me.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's nice to see this kind of interest from an individual who just comes from the outside and is not getting anything for all of his work.

MR. JOHNSON: Maybe I should come and see if you'll give me some money or something for it.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, we're not.

MR. JOHNSON: Thanks very much.

MR. McCARTHY: I was going to suggest to the member of the Legislature here tonight that she mark your name down as a candidate for the next commission.

MR. JOHNSON: I hope not.
Thanks very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
The next presenter is Ben Van de Walle.

MR. VAN de WALLE: Good evening, Mr. Chairman, commission members. My name is Ben Van de Walle. I'm making this presentation on behalf of la Société du Centre Scolaire Communautaire de Calgary. The society is a nonprofit organization responsible for the construction of the Francophone community centre being built adjacent to the new school, Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys, which is adjacent to Bishop Carroll senior high school. Both schools are near another educational institution, namely Mount Royal College. These are all within the existing Calgary-Currie constituency. The address of the centre will be 4825 Richard Road SW, which is located west of the Crowchild Trail and north of 50th Avenue SW. The sod-turning ceremony for the centre was held February 24, 1996, and completion is expected in 1997. This project began in the late 1980s, and it is only now, in 1996, that construction could begin.

The consultative and collaborative process to date highlights many community needs being met, new alliances and relationships being developed, all within the Calgary-Currie constituency and surrounding area. Thirty-plus Francophone organizations operating in various facilities around Calgary are planning to make use of the new community centre. While this project is primarily volunteer-based, all levels of government are contributing to the centre's realization. Relationships continue to be developed within the surrounding community associations – Calgary-Currie constituency, Lincoln Park Development Committee, and others – as part of being a good neighbour, contributing to the growth of Calgary, our province, Alberta, and our country, Canada.

One of the complexities of the evolution of this centre is the fact that the process has taken so many years. Different individuals have been involved in different capacities with different organizations, and there have been different contributors to this project over time. The net effect has resulted in a longer decision-making process, with the necessary progress being made through goodwill and perseverance. It is the society's opinion that the centre is well represented in the Calgary-Currie constituency.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
We'll start the questioning with John.

MR. McCARTHY: Then Mr. Norford's suggested map will include that?

MR. VAN de WALLE: Yes. It's in that area.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. Thanks.

MR. VAN de WALLE: What I've included is a map highlighting the area.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. That map is consistent with the one Mr. Norford gave us. Correct?

MR. VAN de WALLE: Yes.

MR. McCARTHY: Okay. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Joe?

MR. LEHANE: No questions. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: Nothing other than a personal question, Ben. Are you any relation to Walter?

MR. VAN de WALLE: Yes; he's my father.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wally?

MR. WORTH: No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I don't have any questions. I think your request is quite simple. You're telling us in what constituency you want the school, and as I understand, it's consistent with Mr. Brian Norford's request, so we'll have to deal with your request. But as I said earlier tonight, no promises.

Thanks for coming.

MR. VAN de WALLE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next presenter is Robert Anders. I guess Robert Anders must have got tired of waiting. Does anybody know him? Has he just stepped out? Corinne, is Robert Anders here?

MRS. DACYSHYN: No, he just left.

THE CHAIRMAN: He just left?

MRS. DACYSHYN: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh. Okay.

Well, that's the end of the listed presenters I've got. If anybody wants to appear as a walk-on – you do? Will you come forward?

MRS. DACYSHYN: That's Bonnie Laing. Sorry. That was an oops. I guess we forgot. Sorry, Bonnie.

THE CHAIRMAN: I gave this lady more responsibilities today, and you see what she does to me?

You're Bonnie Laing then.

MRS. LAING: Yes, I am.

THE CHAIRMAN: MLA from where?

MRS. LAING: Yes – I forgot my sign – from Calgary-Bow.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Go ahead.

MRS. LAING: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and commissioners. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the commission this evening. Having gone through the previous boundary review process, you have my sympathy and my empathy. It's a subject which I know is quite emotional for many people, and I know you've heard a range of views and ideas. The sifting-out of the proposals and reaching a consensus will not be an easy task, and I wish you well in your deliberations.

One of the first things I'd like to mention is on page 17. There's a concern that I and my constituents have, and that is that we need a correction to the recommendation for Calgary-Bow. By west of 14th Street my entire constituency has been removed. Hillhurst is east of 14th Street, and it reads: "Hillhurst, in particular all the area west of 14 Street NW, has been removed." So that means that I have the smallest constituency in the whole province. It should be east, please, and I'd like to have that correction made.

MR. McCARTHY: I agree with that.

MRS. LAING: Thank you.

So not only was I off the list, I was out of the text too.

MR. McCARTHY: But our maps are consistent with the . . .

MRS. LAING: The maps are fine, yes, and I think the legal description as well, but I just would like to have that corrected. Thank you.

Actually, Calgary-Bow is an area, as was mentioned by the Calgary-Bow PC Association in the first round, of slow growth, as it's bounded by the rivers and by major highways such as 16th Avenue NW, 10th Street in the east, and the city limits on the west. The only area at present that is an area of growth is Valley Ridge, and it really hasn't got too much farther to go. We were very happy with the current boundary that we have and feel that as you set plus or minus 15 as a variance, Calgary-Bow at this point is plus 14, so it would fit that range, and it would be our wish to retain the present boundaries.

I'd like to make sort of some personal observations of my own, having completed that part for the association. On the question of effective representation – and it is key to the constituent boundaries – mention has been made by many people of the greater use of technology by MLAs, especially those in the rural areas. But changes to technology certainly have a price to pay. In my urban constituency office we receive anywhere from 25 to 40 calls per day. Some people are seeking information, some are seeking assistance on a problem, some ask for guidance through the bureaucracy, and almost all of the calls require some type of follow-up.

9:12

Fax machines are great, but there goes with the fax machine the expectation that many people have that they'll get a very quick response, and this puts sort of pressure on you as an MLA to get the information back quickly to them. Cellular phones are a major concern that I have. Many of my rural colleagues often talk of the long drive home as being the opportune time to return calls, and it's a miracle, I think, that we don't have more MLAs involved in accidents because they have spent a week in Edmonton of long days and long nights. I realize that, you know, they asked for that job, but again sometimes the convenience of the technology causes other problems. People have mentioned the Internet, that MLAs should now have access to the Internet and its systems, and again that

means upgrading skills and trying to find the time to hone those skills. Again, it adds more task to the load that they already have.

I'd like to speak now about the addition of one electoral division in Calgary. As an urban MLA I also feel that we do not need more MLAs in the city of Calgary. I feel that we have enough. There are 20, and sometimes it feels like there are too many. When you look at the correlation between the aldermen and school board trustees, there certainly are fewer people to serve the same numbers. I realize that there is a concern about the balance of the voting parity, but I think that when you look at the larger caucus in Edmonton, the fact that we have 17 Calgary government MLAs does lend us a certain amount of strength and co-ordination that might be lacking otherwise.

The rural and the urban MLAs are very comparable. They have each a different perhaps circumstance such as the distance in the rural areas. The urban MLAs have the numbers of people and groups to serve. Both the rural and urban MLAs put in long hours. Six to seven days a week are certainly common, and we love it, as we say.

In keeping with the changes around the time, there has been a real change in the last two or three years in the role played by the private MLAs, and that is that there are certainly more opportunities now to debate and set policy than in the past. We often hear delegations and meet groups and have to make recommendations with their presentations and submissions. We now review budgets and programs and legislation which in the past was often done by, you know, the civil servants and the cabinet, but the private members are now brought more into the process.

There's the ombudsman role, which I think Carol Haley went over very well, and even in the city we certainly have that. Although we're in closer proximity to our constituents, many people are intimidated by the government, by the bureaucracy, so they often do phone and seek help from their MLAs. It's important that they receive the help that they do need.

We also now have part of the legislation as standing committees. That was an old role, but again it's still there, and the other ones are on top of it. Often MLAs now are sent out on a task force to investigate, fact-finding on things such as Bills or situations; they're often appointed to do those types of jobs.

They have become more involved in the consultation with the public, if you think back to when the heritage savings trust fund committee went around. The Lotteries Review Committee went around. There was a young offenders committee that went around. Those were all MLAs, both government and opposition, who were involved there, so that adds a bit more challenge, I think, to the role than there was in the past. Often private members are asked to chair committees and so again accept more responsibility.

So there are perhaps more opportunities for private members to have a leadership role, and as there are fewer cabinet ministers, some of those spin-offs have come to some of the private members to help with some of those tasks. So there is a bit of a change in the role of the MLA. Along with that there again is the constituency work, and I'm not going to repeat all of that because you certainly had a very good submission from Carol Haley.

There's also a monitoring role. Sometimes we're asked by a minister to drop in and look at something. For instance, they might say, "Could you visit a nursing home?" that somebody phoned them about or wrote a letter about. So although it's not official, we often do just go to visit and just sort of get a feel for things. If we feel there's a problem, then we report it to the proper authorities, and a proper investigation will be done. So there is that type of role as well.

I think that both urban and rural constituents deserve good service and effective representation. I know we're still struggling with what that is, and I do feel some concern for some of the ones in the south who are going to be rearranged. It is quite emotional for many of the constituents in that area. I realize also that you were given the restrictions of the current legislation, and you certainly will need the wisdom of Solomon to make the crucial decisions that are necessary.

I would just like to thank you very much for your patience and your attention. Given the hour and the other presentations that you've had, I will keep it short. So thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want you to know that we're prepared to work till 10 o'clock.

We'll start the questioning with John McCarthy.

MR. MCCARTHY: Well, your comments are interesting, but you know, we're kind of in a trap in a way. We're trapped between the judiciary and the Legislature. The Legislature has given us this legislation that created this commission and told us to work within 83 constituencies. The legislation says that this is the only review between now and the 2001 census, and then the courts say, "We reject any suggestion that the present divisions may rest until after the 2001 census." So the courts are essentially indicating that change is required. The Legislature says: you have to do it within 83 seats. Most people say that they don't want more seats in the city, and that's where the overpopulation or the underrepresentation is. So we're in a bit of a trap.

However, as you know, we were created by the Legislature. Our mandate is to make a recommendation, which can be accepted, rejected, or modified. We still have a little work to do, but hopefully the solution, while it's not necessarily a perfect solution, is a manageable proposal to a difficult problem. I guess that's what we're looking at. We're not looking for perfection. We're looking for improvement. It's a tough mandate to deal with.

MR. LEHANE: Thank you for your submission tonight, Bonnie. I for one happen to agree with you. I think that for the most part all of our MLAs, whether they're urban or rural, are very busy people. While it's popular to suggest that we've cut back everything else in government but we haven't cut back MLAs, it's ludicrous to suggest that we should be attempting to save money if it takes away from effective democracy, because you can't put a price on that. The suggestion by an earlier speaker was that if we cut the MLAs back substantially, we could save between \$4 million and \$5 million. It's a very small part of a big budget, and I for one happen to think that we get a pretty good bang for our buck in terms of all the work that the MLAs do, whether they're urban or rural representatives.

We particularly got the viewpoint from the rural areas that because they have significantly larger geographical areas and they have for the most part further distances to travel back and forth from the Legislature, they're going full out. I wonder if you could comment on that.

9:22

MRS. LAING: They really are. In Edmonton I've been buddied up with a rural MLA for the last two terms. They certainly are very, very busy, and I know that travel is part of it. For instance, my friend in Fort Macleod has a five-hour drive to get to Edmonton, you know, whereas I can hop on the airbus. Well, I could, but when they move it, it'll require second thought. So there's that type of thing. Quite often they drive to Calgary, maybe two hours to Calgary, then fly up. So they've still got that extra time added on.

I think that in the rural areas, because of the smaller community,

they certainly know their MLA more personally, so as Carol suggested, they're phoning for a lot of things, a lot of reasons. They know them personally, so they expect a quick answer to their problems and their questions. We have similar in the city. Like, I probably have more phone calls, perhaps, but they're not quite the personal types of things that they might be asking about. So there is a slight variation there.

MR. LEHANE: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Robert?

MR. GRBAVAC: No questions.

MR. WORTH: Bonnie, from our earlier discussions you're aware of the fact that we've had many suggestions about how to modify our matrix and what sorts of factors influence effective representation, and in that context I found your comments about the role of a private MLA illuminating. I know very little about your constituency. In fact, I probably know next to nothing, except one thing: for some reason it sticks in my mind that about 50 percent of the homes in your constituency are inhabited by the owners.

MRS. LAING: Yes.

MR. WORTH: And you're saying: now, of what significance is that? Well, it occurs to me that that is a statistic that may speak to the degree of stability or lack of transiency in a particular constituency, which has some validity as a factor that may influence the workload of an MLA in a particular constituency. Now, in terms of your constituency, do you see it as a fairly stable constituency or one with high transiency when you have about half of the homes owner-occupied?

MRS. LAING: No. It is made up of communities that are fairly stable. Many of them are older communities, so we have a large population of senior citizens. About 14 percent are senior citizens. You know, we have our pockets where you have rental accommodations and people who perhaps are more transient, but the majority are a more stable communities and older communities.

MR. WORTH: I see. Would you think that's a reasonable indicator of stability or mobility?

MRS. LAING: I would say so. Yes.

MR. WORTH: See, Calgary-Buffalo has less than 10 percent, and some of the other constituencies in Calgary approach 90 percent.

MRS. LAING: Yes, and some of them are much newer than our communities too. Valley Ridge is the only basically new community that we have. Some of the areas like Parkdale are rejuvenating, where the seniors are moving into the residences and getting a bit more freedom in their lives, and young families are coming in. So we have that type of thing as well. In Hillhurst there are some in-fill homes being built where you have younger people coming in, and the lots are being split, so you're getting two families for the price of one in the past.

MR. WORTH: So your constituency in terms of the demographics and the age distribution is changing year after year?

MRS. LAING: Yes, it is slightly. Yeah.

MR. WORTH: Thank you very much, Bonnie.

MRS. LAING: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, Bonnie, I want to make an observation. You're probably the last speaker. We have traveled Alberta, and I want you to know that as we traveled rural Alberta, I have heard 200 and some times, I think, and maybe more, that Calgary and Edmonton have more MLAs than aldermen, and they don't need any more MLAs: why are you giving them more MLAs? The inference is also: our MLAs work very hard; they have to do this and they have to do that; they have to go to wedding anniversaries and weddings and funerals and whatnot. The impression that the rural people – I'm not saying the MLAs – have is that those city MLAs do next to nothing, they have the easiest job in the world, and they should maybe be charged with fraud for taking their pay. I should say this: I'm going to wake up a year from now still hearing those statements in my dreams.

If I were to run another Electoral Boundaries Commission, I would like to take somebody like you with us the next time to tell the rural people that the city MLAs don't have it as easy as they think they do. I don't know what solution there is, but I'd like to tell the urban MLAs to hire a media public relations firm to get their message across to the rest of Albertans, the people in Alberta, that you do do some work and quite a bit.

MRS. LAING: Well, often, although we don't have the number of other political bodies to deal with – like, we have one council and two school boards – we certainly have a lot of other groups that we have to deal with and talk to and work with too, community groups, all kinds of different groups like that. Plus there's a lot of issues in the city that the urban MLAs get involved with. I'm quite active in the housing and the homeless types of situations even though it's not right in my constituency. You sort of have the bigger constituency of Calgary as well. You have your constituency plus those things that are citywide as well. You have kind of two levels of issues to deal with.

I think we all work very hard, and I think the committee has worked very, very hard too, and I congratulate you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you tell the Premier that the next time you're talking to him?

MRS. LAING: I will. I'll tell him how hard you worked.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we worked till almost 11 o'clock in Lethbridge one night.

Thanks for coming.

MRS. LAING: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, is there anybody else that we've overlooked, missed, or that wants to say something?

Do you wish to present, Corinne? You've been traveling with us.

MR. PIEPGRASS: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could make an observation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Come back.

MR. PIEPGRASS: Doug Piepgrass, president of the Calgary Southeast PC Association. I don't know that this has any bearing on representation, but in the two constituencies that were proposed this evening, we have a daytime influx of workers that doubles basically the population of our two constituencies, next to downtown which has about a 100,000 influx. It's quite a phenomenon when you have that much movement of population. This does put a greater workload on MLAs because we virtually have thousands of businesses in the two constituencies, and downtown there are virtually thousands of businesses that are not to a degree represented by an MLA. I don't know whether this is a basis for representation or what or even a consideration, but it's an interesting observation.

I haven't heard it stated before, but in the daytime the influx to the downtown area probably triples the population of the constituency, and in our area out there it at least doubles, the Foothills industrial area, the Manchester area, all the industrial and commercial areas out there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I want to say this. Nobody has brought that to our attention. What you're saying is quite correct, and I guess the rule is, even though it's not written in Alberta or anywhere else in Canada, that you vote where you sleep and not where you work.

MR. PIEPGRASS: Oh, I realize that. That's true, but it does increase the workload of the representative. I just wanted to make that observation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thanks.

Did you want to make a presentation, Corinne?

MRS. DACYSHYN: No, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, then, we're closing the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and we're now going to convene to do our report.

Thank you.

[The hearing adjourned at 9:31 p.m.]