



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

Drumheller

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1:31 p.m.

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission

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Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Drumheller

Public Participants

Brian Golka
Adrian Zinck

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[Justice Miller in the chair]

The Chair: Well, good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to our Electoral Boundaries Commission public hearing here in Drumheller. We're pleased to be here. This is our third week of travelling the province and listening to presentations from concerned citizens, individuals who have input for our work. We've got the whole afternoon blocked off, and normally we curtail presentations to seven minutes, but I can tell you that I think we can go over seven minutes this afternoon, so you've got some flexibility.

First of all, my name is Justice Dallas Miller. I'm the chairman of the commission, and I also serve as a judge of the Court of King's Bench for Alberta.

The other commissioners are at the table with me, and I'll start with my immediate left. Susan Samson is a long-time resident of Sylvan Lake, an experienced municipal politician who served a four-year term as mayor of Sylvan Lake. Susan has been honoured for much of her volunteer work in the community by being named citizen of the year and receiving the Queen Elizabeth II diamond jubilee medal in 2012. She's a dedicated volunteer in her community with a focus on public health care. After the session if you want to talk to her about her astronaut career, she's more than welcome to discuss that with you.

To Susan's left is Mr. John Evans, KC, a lawyer. John practises out of Lethbridge with a province-wide firm known as Stringam. John does litigation and conducts trials across the province, and his legal ability has been honoured by way of a KC designation recently. He also volunteers as a member of the Alberta Judicial Nominating Committee.

To my immediate right is Dr. Julian Martin. Dr. Martin is a retired history professor from the University of Alberta with advanced degrees from Cambridge University. He has volunteered on many committees in the Sherwood Park area, where he lives, and also serves on provincial tribunals such as the Surface Rights Board and the Land Compensation Board. Dr. Martin, in effect, is from the capital region, Susan is from central Alberta, and John hails from Lethbridge.

At the far end of the table is Mr. Greg Clark. Greg is an entrepreneur and consultant from Calgary focusing on information and knowledge management. He has had the benefit of serving as a member of the Legislature for Calgary-Elbow for a term, and that experience is valuable to us as a commission. Currently he serves as the chair of the Balancing Pool of Alberta for energy purposes, and he consults and advises widely to various organizations relative to proper governance.

We are your Electoral Boundaries Commission, and there is a little bit of dialogue or questions about the types of the commissions. We are an independent body established by the Legislature of Alberta. If you go to the website, you will see that the Speaker of the Legislature announced this commission in late March. The commission is composed of myself as chair, two representatives from the government, and two representatives from the opposition.

Our task as a commission is to look at the existing boundaries, which have been in place since 2017, and based on the change to the legislation, which expands the number of electoral districts from 87 to 89, allocate the appropriate boundaries based on population, and our population has grown incredibly as a province.

We have a timeline, and the timeline starts from our appointment in late March. We first met as a commission a couple of times in April. We started our – I want to say road show – public hearings

across the province in late May, and we go until the beginning of next week. After we get the input from the public this first time around, we will work on completing a report. We'll all put our heads together and work on a report, that must be released by late October of this year. That is what has come to be known as an interim report. It will be available publicly and will receive comments and feedback from the public, again, through a public hearing process, through the Internet, and submissions to our website.

From late October through to late March of next year we will have an opportunity for more public hearings and then write and submit a final report, which will be submitted to the Speaker. Then the government and opposition, or the Legislature, will deal with our report in terms of whether they accept all the terms or adjust boundaries or whatever. But then it's the Legislature's responsibility.

We're on a timeline, and we are here, as I said, the beginning of the third week of our across-the-province tour. As you are aware, each electoral division or riding or constituency has one member representing it in the Legislative Assembly. The people in that constituency or electoral division elect that particular MLA.

Now, by way of background and comparison, we want to look at the last commission, whose report came out in 2017. If you look at the graph, the commission in 2017 made recommendations for 87 boundaries based on a population of just over 4 million. The population of Alberta has grown considerably, such that we're now in excess of 4.8 million. Our task is to add two ridings and deal with the significant increase in population. Again, going back to the last commission, they used this formula. They took the estimated population of 4,062,609 people and came up with a mean average of 46,697 individuals for each electoral division if it was divided equally. However, the goal isn't to have exact equality in terms of population per electoral division; rather, we look at a target, a wide-ranging target. The target range is 25 per cent below that figure or 25 per cent above that figure. Again, those are the numbers for the 2017 electoral boundaries, that we've lived with, based on the last two elections.

Now, fast-forward to our time to date. The population that we are relying on is 4,888,723. The mean average, when you take into consideration 89 electoral divisions, is 54,929, and the minus/plus target range is 41,197 to 68,661. The population has increased dramatically, but it has not been evenly spread across the province. Our task as a commission is to come up with a set of boundaries that provides Albertans with what we call effective representation. In order to arrive at effective representation, we are considering several factors outlined in the legislation: the relative sparsity and density of populations in each electoral division, common community interests and organizations, geographic features – I'm sure we'll talk about some geographic features when we talk about the boundaries with the presenters here this afternoon – communication and transportation lines across the province.

Our goal, our task, is to create understandable and clear boundaries for the voting public of Alberta. In addition, and finally, we are entitled to take in any other considerations we think are important in compiling our report and in allocating the boundaries for the 89 electoral divisions. That's the background of why we're here and what we've been doing the last several weeks and what our job is and our task is in the weeks and months ahead.

1:40

Now we want to hear from you, and we want to hear from the presenters. This map is the current Alberta electoral map based on 87 electoral divisions, and you can see Drumheller on the left-hand side, a large geographic area. We want to hear from presenters that

are here today. I'll take any questions at all about the presentation as the presenters come up.

Is Brian Golka here? Brian, do you want to come forward? Just have a seat at the table there, introduce yourself, and proceed to give us your comments. Don't feel rushed; take your time. These sessions are recorded, and they're also transcribed. The audio recording will be on the website. The website you're probably familiar with; you've already had access to it. A *Hansard* transcript will be available in a few days as well.

Mr. Golka: Do you have just one map right now? That's the map that's current. Do you have a variety of different maps you're going to show?

The Chair: Well, what map do you want to see?

Mr. Golka: Have you figured out, using your . . .

The Chair: We're in the figuring stage. We haven't designed any new boundaries.

Aaron, can you put up the map of the current riding? It's up on the wall, but we'll also put it up on the screen.

That would be our reference point. If you want to have a conversation about changing the boundaries, we want to hear you.

Mr. Golka: One thing I'd like to talk about is that between Camrose and Drumheller: it's divided by a river. Now, maybe 50 years ago a river was more important, but I think you need to start dividing by roadways, major roads, instead of rivers. It doesn't really matter if you have a county that is in two or three different areas. For example, I live in the Camrose area, but there's a river. I live here, and a half a mile across is the river, and then I have land on both areas.

The Chair: When you say the river, do you mean Battle River?

Mr. Golka: Battle River. Sorry.

Anyway, having your land cut off by even two counties is very confusing because of the river. If you have a half section of land and part of it is in the county of Flagstaff and part is in the MD of Provost, it's very difficult to get stuff done. What I'm saying is, instead of having the Battle River cutting off Camrose and Drumheller, pick a road, pick 872, or pick an area, and do it more by roads than rivers.

The Chair: You're talking about a township road, I assume.

Mr. Golka: A township road, yeah, like 872 or 599 or any of the major roads like highway 12. Right now I have Nate on one side and I have Jackie Lovely on the other side, and I have land on both sides, so it's very difficult to work with these people. You're better off to have more straight-cut lines than a river cutting divisions.

The Chair: So you're talking about the northern border.

Mr. Golka: The northern border, yes. Right now if you look at the northern border, it's between Camrose and Drumheller, and the Battle River is the dividing line.

The Chair: The bulk of the boundary.

Mr. Golka: But if you went across, say, highway 53 and cut it off 53 to 872 and went up and took that out, I think it's a lot less confusing.

The Chair: Aaron, is there any way we can get the north riding up on the screen? What number is that?

Mrs. Samson: Fifty-three.

The Chair: Fifty-three?

Okay. Sir, if you want to go up to the screen and just show us.

Mr. Golka: Going across and then, see, Hardisty – that's where I'm from – is stuck between Nate here. People have land on both sides. If you had to cut off 53 to 872 and then went up this using a road, like, here it's not bad. They're using township lines and stuff. It makes it cleaner is what I'm trying to say, instead of having a river divide boundaries. Even counties and everything, I think there's a lot. Yeah. Square it up, basically, is what I'm saying.

The Chair: Okay. So 53 would be the complete northern boundary. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Golka: Yeah. You could have 53 as a northern boundary, and then you could have 872 up, and then that cuts – or you could even come over if you wanted to make it bigger. You could come to 36 and go over, depending on population. I mean, you're still going to have to deal with how many people are in our area. But what I would say is: 53 over, 872 up, and then you could go up. I guess it's 870.

The Chair: Do you have any idea as to villages and towns that would be added?

Mr. Golka: Well, Hardisty would be added to Drumheller, then.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay.

Okay. I've been monopolizing things, so other commissioners will have some questions. Go ahead, Julian.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, Judge. Thank you, Brian, for – I didn't catch your last name.

Mr. Golka: Golka.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Well, sir, I like the whole concept, and I want to press you further on this general concept of following road lines. You know what? My last visit to Drumheller was by canoe. I went on a real nice paddle down the Red Deer. It really hadn't occurred to me that for a long time, I guess, the boundary straddles the river. It goes to the west side of the river, which is kind of a precedent because, as you had alluded to, people think in terms of the river as being the boundary. Here's a clear instance where it hasn't been for an awful long time, I think.

I wanted to press you further on what could be done a bit north of Drumheller. As you know, Drumheller has not had a growing population, so we as a commission struggle to keep these things more or less in balance, right? I wonder, then, given your notion that the roadways are more important than the river in this instance: what do you think about a notion of going to the west flank of the river against Stettler or against Camrose itself?

Mr. Golka: Yeah. I mean . . .

Dr. Martin: Would the same logic apply? I mean, you know the ground. I don't, but I just think that the principle is very interesting.

Mr. Golka: The principle of trying to keep away from using the river as a boundary because then it cuts people's lands in half. You know, it's like counties. We have the same problem with the county of Flagstaff and the MD of Provost. It cuts in half, and then of course there's land that's taxed differently on both sides.

Dr. Martin: But we have no control over that.

Mr. Golka: You have no control over that, but I'm trying to say that if you started with electoral boundaries like that, then maybe these other people will follow. I'm just saying that it makes life a little easier for people because they're not having to jump across the river to – like, if my land is on one side and I lived on the other side, well, I'd be in Drumheller. I'm basically right on the boundary. I'd rather have it more defined by roads than rivers is what I'm saying.

Dr. Martin: Can I – indulge me – ask one more question? To give a more concrete example, has Alix got more to do with Stettler than it has to do with Red Deer?

Mr. Golka: Yeah, but, like, Hardisty has got more to do with Provost than it does with Camrose.

1:50

Dr. Martin: Okay. But it's just, again, an instance of: if you move that boundary, I mean, are you doing violence to some people's sense of how their property works?

Mr. Golka: Well, that's what I'm saying. If you move the boundary off the river to a more defined road system with a major road – like, 872 is a good one because it's a major, and 53 is a major. Those are fairly definitive roads, and I think it makes it more clean.

Dr. Martin: Well, it does that. Thank you.

Mr. Golka: Yeah.

Mr. Clark: All right. Thank you. I appreciate you coming. It's really one thing to look at it on a map, and it's another to talk to someone who literally knows the lay of the land, right? The literal lay of the land.

I'm curious about Hardisty itself. What is the trading relationship with Hardisty sort of up and down highway 13? Like, does it belong – I think you just sort of said something that triggered me here a little bit. Do the people in Hardisty or that whole area look a little west towards Camrose? Do you they look a little east towards – where is their sort of natural trading area, natural kind of shopping, family, whatever?

Mr. Golka: Have you ever been to Hardisty?

Mr. Clark: I have. I've seen the tanks. Yeah.

Mr. Golka: What happens in Hardisty, for people that don't know: 4 million barrels of oil leave there every day to go to the U.S. We create \$83 billion worth of economic value to Canada. We trade everywhere. We have people from Provost, Lloydminster, Camrose, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer; you name it. It comes to Hardisty.

Mr. Clark: So it kind of belongs anywhere. What we've heard in some of these, especially ones that are fairly close to a boundary one way or the other, is something similar to what we've heard from you: you know, this place really doesn't belong with those places it's lumped with; it actually belongs with these places, right? We always know that this place orients east or west or north or whatever, but what you're saying is that Hardisty is sort of the United Nations of this whole thing. It's sort of with everybody. So if we were to move a boundary one way or the other in Hardisty, it's not going to cause, in your opinion anyway – I'm not going to put words in your mouth – a lot of upset.

Mr. Golka: A big problem? No.

Mr. Clark: Okay. That's really, really helpful. Thanks.

The Chair: Roughly, do you know the population there?

Mr. Golka: In Hardisty?

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Golka: There are 550 people that live in town. There are another 250 that live in acreages and stuff around.

The Chair: What about the – those are permanent people?

Mr. Golka: Yes. We can have them anywhere, if you want to talk about the shadow . . .

The Chair: Yes. That's the word I was looking for. Thank you.

Mr. Golka: . . . from 500 to 2,000, all depending on what's going on.

The Chair: Okay.
Any questions?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. Yeah. I just have – I don't know if you can shed a lot of light on this, but one of the issues that we're tasked with, as the chair alluded to, is that we need the population. The mean number is 55,000, and we can go plus or minus 25 per cent either way on that. The Drumheller-Stettler riding, with the 2024 StatsCan number, is sitting at 41,600. It is just about at the lowest mark of the 55,000. I think one of the things we're hoping to hear today would be that the riding is quite large, but we need more population in it because we're looking for that fair representation for the voters. So I like the idea of Hardisty, but quite frankly 500 people isn't going to solve the problem.

Mr. Golka: I agree a hundred per cent with that, but the unfortunate part about east-central Alberta: you got to go a long ways. Like, you get over in the Oyen area and Acadia, and there's nobody there.

Mrs. Samson: I know.

Mr. Golka: So you'd have to go north. You'd have to go into Garth's riding a little bit to get Wainwright, Irma, you know.

The Chair: Can you give the people's full names?

Mr. Golka: Oh, sorry. Garth Rowswell.

The Chair: Okay. And that's the Camrose riding?

Mr. Golka: No. Jackie Lovely is the Camrose riding. Garth Rowswell is Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright. Yeah.

Mrs. Samson: So moving north.

Mr. Golka: Yeah. Moving north is probably your only – see, I was thinking, depending on where you have to go to do new boundaries, maybe Drumheller would be better off going in a new area or in the south because it's a long way. For me to drive, it was two, two and a half hours to get here, so it's a long ways across. If you go more north, maybe – I don't know. I don't envy your guys' jobs, put it like that. I mean, you've got a tightrope to walk.

The Chair: So are you saying that from Hardisty to Drum is two and a half hours?

Mr. Golka: Yeah, it was two hours to here.

Mrs. Samson: There's no straight shot on this on your . . .

Mr. Golka: No. You go over 53 – yeah. I know.

Dr. Martin: It's – what? – an hour and a half to Stettler?

Mr. Golka: An hour and 10 to Stettler. Yeah.

That's the trick. If you go a little bit north, you're going to get more people from the Irma, Wainwright area, but then you've got to do something for that riding, too.

Mrs. Samson: The ripple effects keep going.

Mr. Golka: Yeah. I'm also on Damien Kurek's board of directors, which is Battle River-Crowfoot. It takes him three tanks of gas and three days to get across his riding – it's so big – which is the same riding as Drumheller.

It is a problem, but maybe going north on our end and trying to take Drumheller, so they get closer to the people that – I don't know. Every time I talk about Drumheller, people say, "Well, we more associate with Calgary" whereas we associate with Wainwright, Irma, Provost. A lot of stuff comes from Provost to our area.

That's the thing. Maybe going to 14 and over, but then you might have to go more north. Lloydminster is growing quite dramatically, so that'll help out that area. Vegreville and Vermilion are doing not bad. Hardisty is about the only one that's really growing in the county of Flagstaff. It's about the only community that's growing. They're all losing. County of Flagstaff, between the census they've had: we've lost 300 people.

Mrs. Samson: That's significant.

Mr. Golka: That's big. Hardisty is the only town that grew at all, and they will continue to grow depending on what happens in the next – could we have the ability to grow?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: John?

Mr. Evans: No questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Any rough estimate if we were to take highway 53 as largely the northern border and then cut up – 872 or 870?

Mr. Golka: 872, yes.

The Chair: Which includes Hardisty. Do you have a rough estimate? Would that be 1,500 people, maybe?

Mr. Golka: Probably, yeah.

Mrs. Samson: You could get Forestburg, too.

Mr. Golka: You could get Forestburg as part of that. You get Alliance that comes in there, Galahad. There are a few little small towns.

The Chair: And then Camrose loses a little bit there.

Mr. Golka: They lose a little bit, yeah.

The Chair: Have you had any conversation with people in that riding?

Mr. Golka: I'm on the Camrose EDA, so yes.

The Chair: Okay, so tell us about pushing their border out north.

Mr. Golka: I don't know. See, it used to be Wetaskiwin-Camrose back in the day. We used to be with Wainwright, Hardisty-Wainwright, and then Wetaskiwin-Camrose had their boundaries there, but now they've moved.

Camrose is growing, too, of course. Tofield is growing, which is in that area. Bashaw: I'm not so sure about what's happening there. I don't know if you split the difference with, you know, going toward Ponoka more or even up in that Hay Lakes area.

The Chair: What if we just went and used Highway 13 up to Camrose and didn't take in any of Camrose?

Mr. Golka: Yeah. You could do that, too. Or you could go up 36. You could go up 855 to Daysland. It gets big, but then Camrose starts to lose. But Camrose, if you cut it off, they could take some of the stuff lower. Maybe it should be Camrose-Drumheller.

Mrs. Samson: That would be huge. A huge riding.

Dr. Martin: How about going west from Camrose to Bittern Lake? Just take it back north-south, back up near New Sarepta, perhaps. Anyway, that north side of the road on the west side of the current boundary: add that to the Camrose division. It would give them a bunch more people, and it sort of extends the thought that we were having. These would be the west flank of the Red Deer River, so that might work, too.

2:00

Mr. Golka: Yeah. And that's probably more . . .

Dr. Martin: As long as it's along a known range road in this case.

Mr. Golka: You know, the people in Bashaw and Camrose maybe are more suitable. They're more – I don't know. Like, Camrose is, of course, more retirement, and they do have the farming there, which is background. The big thing with Hardisty, the area, Provost and Wainwright and so on: we have a lot in common with that area, more than we do – we have more in common with the east than we do with the west. A lot of kids play hockey. They go to the east, you know, instead of the west or the north to Irma.

The Chair: But you would acknowledge and recognize that no matter what happens, these ridings are going to get bigger geographically.

Mr. Golka: Well, of course. They have to because we don't have the people.

The Chair: Yeah. Fair. And the rural are going to have to really – okay.

Mr. Golka: Yeah. It's a different ball of wax than being in downtown Edmonton on the street corner. You could see all your constituency in half an hour sitting at a Starbucks. But in rural Alberta you get in your vehicle, and you drive.

The Chair: Just to give you an idea, sir, if we combined Drumheller-Stettler and Camrose, just for a thought experiment, that would be 87,000 people. That's about what Edmonton-Ellerslie is right now in terms of population.

Mr. Golka: Yeah. Oh, I know. I realize it.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Golka: I realize the problem you have. Yes. Believe me, I door-knocked in some of those city ridings this year, so, yeah, I

know where you guys – it's not easy. That's why I'm here trying to help in my way, I guess.

The Chair: We're also tasked with naming the ridings, but I think it'll be relatively easy once we figure out the boundaries. In this one it's no catchy name. It'll just be the major centres, likely.

Mr. Golka: Yeah. Exactly.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay.

Other questions or conversation? I mean, we've got time.

Mr. Golka: Any other questions?

The Chair: Okay. Any other presenters? Adrian Zinck.

Okay. Well, thank you very much, Brian, and please stay to hear the rest of the conversation because we may end up bringing more people in.

Mr. Zinck, come forward, please.

Mr. Zinck: Yeah. My name is Adrian Zinck. I'm just going to follow up with what Brian said. I wanted to kind of second his comments. When you made reference – I'm in the Camrose constituency as well and have an acreage in Hardisty.

If you were going to move Hardisty into Drumheller per se and if Camrose was going to make a gain to pick up any slack, I want to make a follow-up point to Dr. Martin here. If you wanted to tailor Camrose off the Battle River-Crowfoot federal riding for boundaries, yeah, you can move Camrose west to the village of Bittern Lake, which would then – you could still keep it coming down highway 21 to Bashaw like it is, but you could move it over, I guess. Then going north, if you were going to go up north on 21, we would go up north to, say, New Sarepta and then come across . . .

Dr. Martin: Along with the railway.

Mr. Zinck: . . . with the railway, exactly, and then use that kind of to pick up the east end cut-off of Hardisty if you were going to move Hardisty in wherever the boundary cut-off would be between Killam and Hardisty, for an example. You could move, balance it off by taking the western end of Camrose by going out to Bittern Lake, which now would be in Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin. But then I don't know how their population looks on that side.

Yeah. Going back to prior to the last boundary change, we were Wetaskiwin-Camrose, right? I do believe that the way it's set up now does work better for everybody, Camrose being separate from the Wetaskiwin riding. But, you know, if you were to look at the Battle, the Bittern Lake hamlet or the little village there, and then follow it up highway 21 north to, say, New Sarepta, the Hay Lakes area, you could use that as a pick-up for a few extra numbers in population.

The Chair: Do you know what region – oh, it's in Wetaskiwin.

Mr. Zinck: No. New Sarepta right now would be Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin, I believe. They kind of dog wag over there in a weird fashion. Right now the boundary comes to highway 21. We actually go on highway 21 south to the east, and then they're on the west, and then we go up highway 21 north to – and by then it kind of veers off again going east, and it runs in through Tofield, Kingman area. If you brought that out and, much as Brian was saying, using a roadway, if you used highway 21 as a boundary line – but then I guess that wouldn't take in Bittern Lake, but it would kind of alleviate a few pieces without making a huge ripple effect off everybody else.

Dr. Martin: We don't need to worry about the details; we're just working with a big crayon right now. The concept is, I think, the thing, and I appreciate your thoughts about that. We've got clever people among us who could work out the population numbers without asking us to build a footprint.

Mr. Zinck: Right. Because then the Camrose county border line, again, is just west of Bittern Lake, so that would be another, right?

Dr. Martin: That sounds more and more plausible.

Mr. Zinck: I just kind of never even thought of this side of it until you guys brought up the map.

Dr. Martin: Well, like I was saying before, you see, Drumheller is both sides of the river. I mean, that precedent was set a very long time ago. Now we're in a circumstance where population figures become significant issues, so we've got to revisit that precedent and see if we can work with it in a way that isn't too stupid.

Mr. Zinck: I don't know what our exact population is in the city of Camrose, but if you were to cut it off on the eastern end, like you were talking with Brian, we could easily make up those gains, or it would probably balance it out on the western side of the riding boundary.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Did you have a question?

Mrs. Samson: I have a question with regard – and this is a question that we're faced with in other ridings. What's your opinion when you get cities but they're not even the mid-size cities – they're cities, but they're the smaller size, so they're somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 – and you combine, for example, Camrose and Wetaskiwin together? How do you feel about the MLA representing not only a large rural area but, too, what I would consider to be small urban areas?

Mr. Zinck: Well, speaking from past experience when we had it in the last go-around prior to where it is now, I think this system works much better, having an MLA focusing on a main – if you want to call Camrose more urban than what it would be rural, they would have Camrose as the main urban centre point and then branching off to the smaller communities. I think that is much more of an advantage over having Camrose and, say, Wetaskiwin, right?

Mrs. Samson: Right.

Mr. Zinck: Even though they're about 40 kilometres apart, they both have very different needs. The way we have it set up now, being separate from Wetaskiwin or being separate from another major city: I think that it works. I think we have fair representation that way.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you. That's what I was looking for. I was guessing because my own riding, the town of Sylvan Lake, at 17,000, is the largest centre, and when there are distances between two large centres but only one MLA, that's a different problem.

Mr. Zinck: Right. And I think that if you take Camrose, you can still have Camrose and have proper representation going to Tofield because Tofield is, again, much smaller than what Camrose would be, if you're using it as an example, whereas prior, when we were Camrose-Wetaskiwin, it always seemed like we were competing with each other.

2:10

Mrs. Samson: Yes, I get what you're saying.

Mr. Zinck: If that makes sense.

Mrs. Samson: That's why I'd like to know. I was speculating on that. I didn't know for sure, so thank you.

Mr. Zinck: Right. Again, if we're all Camrose city and Camrose county, it seems to flow better as opposed to being separate to Wetaskiwin county. And I'm not using that to be critical to Wetaskiwin, but just basing it off facts from the way it was to what we have now, I think it's a much better split.

Mrs. Samson: Right. Thank you.

The Chair: Was it you or Brian that mentioned the federal electoral district?

Mr. Zinck: We were both involved when the federal electoral district split up.

The Chair: Okay. So you know the geography of that riding?

Mr. Zinck: Correct. Massive.

The Chair: Yeah. Okay. Would a realignment of this be about 50 to 55 per cent of massive? It might be getting up there, right?

Mr. Zinck: It'd be getting up there. It just depends, I guess, on what you're looking at. Rural folks are used to driving. It's nothing for us to jump in our vehicle and drive two hours. Like, it was two hours to get here from Camrose. Same as Brian; two hours.

The Chair: Right.

Mr. Zinck: We're going to Three Hills when we leave here for another. I guess we're used to driving because being in the rural setting, that's what we've done. If we wanted to go anywhere, we jumped in our vehicles and we drove, right? But, again, with these smaller towns getting smaller, the population is not here, so we have to be cognizant that we're going to have to drive.

The Chair: Prepared to drive. Yeah. Okay.

Mr. Zinck: Unlike in Edmonton, where you just walk to where you need to go.

The Chair: Okay. Well, this has been most helpful.
Any other questions or conversation?

Mr. Clark: I appreciate that you guys see that this is a challenging endeavour, but it makes it so much better for us to have people who are actually from the communities offering, like, really thoughtful input. I think in the public conversation, certainly online but even in person, it often isn't like this.

Mr. Zinck: No.

Mr. Clark: I just really appreciate you coming out and making the trip and sharing your knowledge about your community. It makes a huge difference. It really helps.

Mr. Zinck: And it's a tough task for you guys. I mean, as much as I'd hate to see Hardisty go from Camrose, you know, for an example, we have to be realistic and look at the big picture. We can't be focused on one certain subject in front of us.

The Chair: Well, thank you for your realism.

One other thing I can point out. As I said at the beginning, we're going to do an interim report, which we'll have filed by late October. Then you will see what we've come up with across the province. You mentioned driving. We'd be interested in your feedback on that first report, that interim report, but you're probably going to have to come to Calgary to give us the feedback because we can't go to all these smaller centres for the next stage, or we'll do it online because it's going to be smack dab in the middle of winter. So watch for that and take a look at what we've done and, before you yell and scream at us, you know, book a meeting for the second public hearing. We'll be interested in carrying on this conversation.

Mr. Zinck: We appreciate that.

Just for closing, like, if you were going to get away from the river as a boundary line out on the east, I think I would strongly encourage looking at the Camrose county line as a pick-up – if we were to change, right? – because it seems like it works really well on the federal side. We just came through a federal election. We were on the road lots, and it worked really well with that concept.

The Chair: Okay.

Brian, anything you want to add as a result of this?

Mr. Golka: No. If you want to know anything else, feel free to call us or get a hold of us.

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Golka: We're out in the public all the time, with our involvement in the EDAs that we go to.

The Chair: No one said anything about municipal or county politicians and contact. Any concerns, you know, in terms of the challenge of the MLA?

Mr. Golka: I don't think so. If you've got a split county, where it's half and half – like, I know some guys have three MLAs in one county because of the way it worked out.

The Chair: Yeah. Right.

Mr. Golka: I don't seem to think it's a big deal.

The Chair: So you've adjusted, or they can adjust. In fact, three voices may be better than one.

Mr. Golka: Well, a guy told me the other day, here – we were talking about, you know: if you have three voices at the provincial level, that's three voices versus one. It's just like these cities that are, like, say, Medicine Hat: wants to have one MLA. But why have one MLA there? If you've got two there, then you get two voices at the table, not one, and I thought, well, that was very interesting.

The Chair: Yeah. We'll hear from them on Friday.

Mr. Golka: If you have to split some of these bigger cities, well, like Calgary: there's a bunch of them there, right? If you split them up a little bit, then there's, I think, more hope.

Dr. Martin: That's a really interesting point, you know. We've heard MLAs saying: well, you know, I've got nine counties, and I go to meetings, and all in all, there are 128 councillors or reeves or mayors and whatnot, and it's all very confusing. But then on the flip side, all those people have a voice that they could talk to, so it cuts both ways, I think. You have richer conversations about the fine,

granular business of the day, but if there were two MLAs, they'd have two voices as advocates.

Mr. Golka: At the table. Yeah. You've got two voices now at the big table in Edmonton.

Dr. Martin: Yeah.

Mr. Golka: It makes sense to me to have that.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

Mr. Zinck: Thank you. You're welcome.

Just one final comment going back to the two cities. I do think that we should stay away from combining two larger urban centres in one riding because I feel that we are in a much better place the way it is now as opposed to when Camrose and Wetaskiwin were merged together.

The Chair: For example, you mean large urban centres being Camrose and Wetaskiwin together.

Mr. Zinck: Yeah. I guess I know from past history, knowing both ridings really well, that they both seem to work better separated, apart than what they did under one boundary.

Thank you, guys.

Mr. Golka: Yeah. They both have different interests, is the other thing, too. Like, they both have different agendas.

Mrs. Samson: Yeah. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you so much for coming and presenting. Safe travels. Having driven up here just this afternoon, I get a sense of the vastness of this place.

Mr. Zinck: I just flew in from Nova Scotia this morning.

Mr. Clark: Are you headed to B.C. tonight? You'll see the whole country.

Dr. Martin: You were in Nova Scotia?

Mr. Zinck: I flew out on Thursday. I only came back this morning. Yeah.

Dr. Martin: Wow. You're a masochist. That's nasty. Unless you flew first class, it'd be all right.

Mr. Zinck: No. No.

Dr. Martin: Tough man.

The Chair: Okay. Well, we'll adjourn this hearing. We'll stay around in case other – there were a couple of other people that had signed up, and they may come later. We'll reconvene if they show up, so we'll stay here for the next hour or so.

[The commission deliberated]

[The hearing adjourned at 3:01 p.m.]

