



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

Calgary

Monday, January 12, 2026
1:30 p.m.

Transcript No. 30

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission

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Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings – Calgary

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1:30 p.m.

Monday, January 12, 2026

[Justice Miller in the chair]

The Chair: Well, good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to our second half-day session of the January EBC public hearings. By way of background, I'm going to be more brief than I have been in the past because I think if you're here, you are fully aware of what we're doing and what we are asking of you as presenters.

Of course, we're an independent commission established by the Legislature of Alberta, and the bios of each of us are on our website. You can feel free to check those out if you haven't already.

We've got two tasks before us as an electoral boundary commission, deal with the substantial increase in population in Alberta over the last eight to 10 years and allocate boundaries for 89 electoral districts rather than 87.

Voters in each district elect their respective member to sit in the Legislative Assembly. As you'll notice from the graph before you, the population has increased substantially, and we estimate just over 800,000 since the last report of 2017. Surprisingly, all that population increase did not move evenly across the province. That's what makes our job a little bit of a challenge. Back in 2017, when the last report was done, the average population per electoral division was 46,697, with a variance plus or minus 25 per cent as you note on the slide. This time around with our population of 4.8 million between 89 different electoral districts the average population is just under 55,000, and the 25 per cent variance up or down, as you can see, ranges from 41,000 to just over 68,000.

The task of our commission is to hear from Albertans how best we are able to draw the boundaries to provide for effective representation. That is a key word that you will see throughout our interim report, and it will be no doubt contained in our final report as well. Effective representation is the Canadian standard, and it's not one person, one vote or rep by pop as is prominent in the U.S.

We were established in late March, early April as a commission, and over that period of time we did several things. First of all, we spent a lot of time agreeing on the standard of population for the demographics for the province, and that explanation is noted in our interim report; we reviewed hundreds of written submissions that were given to us as a commission; and we held public hearings throughout late May and virtually all of June, and we travelled the province to do that. After that we worked closely with staff from Elections Alberta, basically creating maps and creating boundaries for 89 proposed electoral districts. That culminated in our interim report, and you'll see that was submitted to the Speaker of the Legislature and tabled in late October. In completing our report, we covered all the legislated criteria that give us authorization to create electoral districts. We had as our focus understandable and clear boundaries, taking into effect the principle of effective representation.

After our interim report was submitted to the Speaker, we opened it up for public submissions, and we got a lot of them from November 3 to December 19. We're wading through those publications. Some of them are short and brief, some of them are more extensive, but we certainly have heard from Albertans across the province.

Now that brings us to the stage we're at today. Today, Monday, January 12, is our first day of two solid weeks of public hearings. As you may know, we're in Calgary for two and a half days, then we move to Edmonton for a couple of days this week, and we're going to go virtual next week and hear from Albertans. We made the decision not to travel in winter although the weather may have been amenable to us. Maybe we should have travelled, but we decided to stay in Calgary and Edmonton and catch the rest of the

province virtually. So that's our task this week and next week. We have a fairly full agenda this afternoon, so I'm going to go to the list, to the first presenter, Mr. Colton Nickel.

As you come forward, please identify yourself, tell us what area you live in, and what electoral district or districts you're commenting on. It's nice to know if you presented before, and tell us if you presented in the first round, which I think you did.

Mr. Nickel: No.

The Chair: No, you didn't?

Mr. Nickel: I must have a look-alike. No, it wasn't me.

The Chair: Okay. It was your twin brother.

Mr. Nickel: We're just pulling up a presentation here, but just in the meantime now, my name is Colton Nickel. I'm the senior planner and intergovernmental liaison with the town of Okotoks. I'll be speaking on behalf of the town of Okotoks as a municipality this afternoon. I'd also note that we did submit a written submission collaboratively with our partners at Foothills county, as well as the town of Diamond Valley; however, I'm not speaking on their behalf this afternoon. I'll stick to the town of Okotoks' perspective.

Good afternoon and thank you for taking the time to listen to this submission on the draft electoral boundaries. As I noted, I just want to acknowledge that we did our written submission to the commission with the town of Diamond Valley and Foothills county as well. I'll be speaking on the existing Highwood riding, for which the current boundaries encompass the town of Okotoks, portions of Foothills county, and the town of Diamond Valley. The revised boundaries proposed in the report for the Calgary-Okotoks riding include the town of Okotoks, portions of Foothills county, and then a portion of southwest Calgary. The southwest Calgary portion includes many building-out new communities such as Silverado and the other ones named here.

I want to provide a bit of background and explain why the current boundaries generally work well, and why the proposed revisions to the boundaries should primarily look at keeping these communities of interest together – Foothills county, Diamond Valley, and Okotoks – rather than creating a hybrid division that includes the city of Calgary. I will say that it does say something when you can get all three councils to sign on to one letter. That is no easy feat, as some from previous regional work may be aware.

Oh, jeez. This is a little trigger happy here.

The Chair: Common enemy does that sometimes.

Mr. Nickel: Yeah. Not an enemy, just – okay. There's a significant number of region-specific important capital projects that Okotoks, Diamond Valley, and Foothills county town councils work on with our elected MLA to advance through provincial funding and advocacy. Examples for this include a new regional water pipeline, which we worked on together, continued advocacy for a new interchange at 338th Avenue and highway 2, as well as other general infrastructure grants. With the town of Diamond Valley we also have a lot of shared services and community connections with them as a municipality as well as lots of shared service arrangements with our partners at Foothills county.

Overall, the existing electoral district incorporates individuals and families who utilize the same area school districts, recreation centres and programs, attend similar geographic community events, and rely on the same key pieces of infrastructure. Your report notes that municipal boundaries as well as school district boundaries are

key items of importance when looking at electoral divisions, and we do have minimal overlap with south Calgary in these areas.

The south portion of the city of Calgary is simply not as integrated into the overall electoral division from an infrastructure or social-connection standpoint. It has fully different school jurisdictions, different key pieces of infrastructure that are used, and different recreational programming options. Typically, for example, hockey programs end at that border, so you don't see that overlap and, kind of, integration with different communities.

1:40

Having an MLA cover both Okotoks, south Calgary as well as the rural aspects of the county would be very challenging and have an impact on the effective representation of the communities within the riding. It's already, as the report notes well, I think, incredibly challenging for rural MLAs to attend the range of events and listen and hear the priorities of citizens in a rural area, and when you add that onto the vast diversity of communities within the city of Calgary as it builds out as well as the town of Okotoks, it definitely creates concerns from the town of Okotoks' standpoint on the effective representation piece.

The next kind of key point I want to make is on the population breakdown. When looking at the city of Calgary portion alone, there are approved-area structure plans in place that will bring the population to over 64,000 people. When you're looking at the average of an electoral division and the build-out rates of the city of Calgary over the past few years and what's projected into the coming years, it's very likely that the electoral divisions will need to be significantly redrawn at the time of the next electoral commission. So this wouldn't be a long-term electoral division, which makes it challenging for that relationship creation with the MLA's office.

We then look at Diamond Valley's population growth. It's looking at continued growth, and it's recently updated its municipal development plan and recent applications definitely look like it will be moving forward with at least a 2 to 3 per cent growth rate. The portions within Foothills county are the highest growing portions of that municipality. Then finally, the town of Okotoks, as we're starting to see a regional waterline likely come on in co-ordination with Foothills county later in 2026: that will further accelerate the population of this riding. When looking at this holistically, it seems that adding in the city of Calgary to the overall riding would result in this riding not remaining within that population average for very long, and as noted, the city of Calgary likely becoming its own electoral division very shortly.

We then looked at option two, the alternate electoral district that was proposed by the commission. The town wishes to note appreciation for the consideration of this alternate district, recognizing that not every proposed district had an alternate. While this map is preferable to the Calgary-Okotoks map, it does still result in challenges in terms of further dividing our neighbour, Foothills county, into the additional Banff-Jasper riding. Portions of the county would then shift into Banff-Jasper with this option, leading them to have additional MLAs to work with. There are fewer commonalities between these mountain communities and the Foothills county municipality, which is why the town and county as well as the town of Diamond Valley worked together on proposing an alternate map with our submission that looks to follow municipal boundaries more clearly.

For your consideration, I'll pull up the alternate map here on the screen. This generally incorporates the areas that we feel would make the most sense for provincial electoral divisions that meet the legal requirements outlined in pages 6 and 7 of the electoral commission's interim report. Primarily, this map focuses on

incorporating areas with a shared sense of community, ranging from shared services to other key community boundaries such as school divisions, key roadways, and national geographic boundary features.

As noted in the report, other provisions in the act allow for considerations of impacts to adjacent ridings, such as Banff-Jasper, in terms of population variances or size changes that may be required. Allowing these potential variances, if needed, would allow the foothills region to stay largely intact while keeping the very different mountain regions of Banff-Jasper in a separate riding that respects municipal boundaries and has more commonalities and shared funding priorities. The riding sizes and distances of what we propose are also more manageable for an MLA to effectively represent all constituents.

In closing, the town of Okotoks just wishes to outline our interests in not having the city of Calgary incorporated in an electoral division that encompasses our town as well as Foothills county and Diamond Valley. In our three communities we have many interconnections from a servicing, infrastructure, and advocacy perspective that would potentially be negatively impacted by expanding the riding to incorporate the city, which has very different funding priorities and reduced community connections.

I want to thank you for your time today and am happy to take any questions that you might have.

The Chair: Well, thank you, Mr. Nickel. Can you go back to that map, please? I'm going to take the prerogative to ask the first question. Do you have a population for your proposed electoral division?

Mr. Nickel: Yeah. I can only speak to Okotoks-Diamond Valley today. I don't have the population for High River-Vulcan. We worked with the GIS team of Foothills county, Diamond Valley, and ours, and we are about 60,000 people for Okotoks-Diamond Valley based on what we proposed here. That top one. Yeah.

The Chair: Okay. Good.
Mr. Clark?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you. I don't know who exactly to give credit to for this. As far as I'm aware, this is the first time an Electoral Boundaries Commission has proposed an option B, and I think that really reflects our struggle in trying to square the circle – right? – for a lot of the reasons that I think you've outlined. Essentially, it was us putting out to the public that we're not sure, so we've given you a couple of different options. I appreciate that you've come back and given us another option.

The other thing, I guess, I would just say is that you're exactly right. It is not entirely unheard of but it is noteworthy that Okotoks and Foothills county and Diamond Valley are coming together in agreement on a submission. That certainly carries some weight.

I did want to ask you about – and you may not know, and if you don't, that's okay – Eden Valley, the two Indigenous reserves down towards Longview and west of High River. Can you speak at all to that connection, of those Eden Valley reserves with either Okotoks or the region generally? Our thinking was to connect those with other Indigenous reserves within Banff-Jasper. That was at least the sort of rationale that we had in mind. Maybe if you know much about it, feel free to speak to it, and if not, that's okay, too.

Mr. Nickel: Through the chair, that actually did come up in our council discussions on this. There was that thought that maybe that's why the commission had put that area with the other, and I definitely respect that viewpoint and that perspective. I can't speak on behalf of the county, but I do believe there are some relationships

and work that does take place with the Eden Valley reserve. But, like I said, I can't speak on behalf of the county, just peripheral knowledge.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. The first question is: are you going to leave it behind so we can review it again?

Mr. Nickel: Through the chair, yeah. Happy to leave it behind.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. Thank you. I have a very particular question. Looking at your map, up in the northwest corner, does that include Bragg Creek area?

Mr. Nickel: Through the chair, no. It doesn't stretch up into Bragg Creek. That falls within Rocky View county, and this just wants to follow the Foothills county municipal boundaries.

Dr. Martin: Oh, I see.

The Chair: Actually, Bragg Creek would be more east, wouldn't it?

Mr. Nickel: Yeah. It's more north and east.

Dr. Martin: Okay. I'm sorry. In the very far northeast corner of your blue, the proposed electoral district, is there a village up there, a town of any kind?

Mr. Nickel: Through the chair, it's just within the Foothills county. I'm not sure if there's . . .

Dr. Martin: That's just the county.

Mr. Nickel: Yeah. That'd be part of the county.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Thank you. That's it for me.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: No questions. Thanks for the presentation.

Mr. Evans: No questions from me. Thank you.

The Chair: I've got a question that was slightly touched on by Mr. Clark. We really wrestle with several things. One of them is hybrids. The overall one is effective representation. As Mr. Clark has said, we just said that we're not sure. You know, we want public feedback. We certainly got it, which is good, and I think it's overwhelmingly in one direction.

This report was a catalyst for your municipality and others. How did you kind of get to this? How much time did you spend coming up with this?

Mr. Nickel: Through the chair, for sure. It definitely involved multiple council meetings across and working closely with Foothills county's administration and council as well as Diamond Valley's administration and council. We also utilized our intermunicipal committee, which the town of Okotoks has with Foothills county, to bring forward this presentation and have these discussions. We also worked closely with our school divisions that we have within the area, Foothills school division and Christ the Redeemer Catholic school division, which I believe you'll be hearing from after me. We wanted to make sure we're all on the

same page of understanding. Everyone had largely the same general opinion. We definitely all worked together to come to the report.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Well, thank you very much. It's much appreciated, and this presentation will be left with us, and that will be helpful.

1:50

Mr. Nickel: Thanks very much.

The Chair: Thank you. You're excused, but please if you can stay for the rest of the presentations, it would be helpful.

Our next presenter is Michael Kilcommons.

Mr. Kilcommons: Hello.

The Chair: Good afternoon. Make yourself comfortable, and tell us where you are from.

Mr. Kilcommons: Well, good afternoon. My name is Michael Kilcommons. I'm coming in from Okotoks today, and I am representing Christ the Redeemer Catholic school division. I'm an associate superintendent there. We have about 10,000 students in seven communities stretching from Canmore practically on the B.C. border to Oyen on the Saskatchewan border, but I'm speaking more so towards the Highwood electoral division right now.

The Chair: Okay. Where is the headquarters for Christ the Redeemer? Where is your office?

Mr. Kilcommons: Our main centre, about half of our population, and our central office are in Okotoks.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Kilcommons: Good to go?

The Chair: Yes, please.

Mr. Kilcommons: As I just said, our largest population representation is in Foothills county, which includes Okotoks, High River, and Diamond Valley, and then several other smaller communities within those boundaries. Wishing to speak to the proposed changes, right now Okotoks, High River, Diamond Valley, and parts of Foothills county are in the Highwood electoral district. One of the proposed changes, labelled Alberta Overview, Option A, represented the creation of the new Calgary-Okotoks district, adding a portion of southwest Calgary to our riding. Very egocentric to think they were added to us, but combined.

An argument for the change has been presented that it balances population and maintains clear boundaries, but from our point of view, just speaking on behalf of the Catholic school system, it does raise some serious challenges. The MLA for this district would have to juggle two major urban centres plus rural areas, making effective representation harder, and with Calgary's projected growth, 60,000 new residents in the next decade, this boundary will likely need to be redrawn again soon.

Christ the Redeemer Catholic schools is deeply invested in this process as we serve students and families across a broad and interconnected geographic region. We provide transportation for many rural students who travel daily from surrounding areas into these school communities. This regional service model requires careful co-ordination across municipal boundaries and reflects the lived reality of families who depend on integrated rural-urban education systems. From an education perspective, we are concerned that the first model of the proposed realignment would place our communities within a hybrid riding connected to the city

of Calgary. Such a configuration would not reflect the shared community identity, service relationships, or governance realities of our region.

The rural and small urban sensibilities that shape our communities, including approaches to infrastructure, transportation, and education, differ meaningfully from those of a large metropolitan centre and would risk being diluted within a Calgary-focused electoral division. Our school division operates within a distinct rural-urban context where community connections, shared services, and collaborative planning are essential to student success. Families often live in one municipality, attend school in another, and rely on regional transportation and services that span municipal lines. Maintaining cohesion among the town of Okotoks and Diamond Valley and larger portions of Foothills county within a single electoral division better supports effective advocacy, clear communication, and strong working relationships between MLAs, municipal councils, and public institutions such as school divisions.

We're also really concerned about the potential downstream impacts of electoral boundary changes on school division ward alignment. Our school division's ward structure has been intentionally designed to balance geography, representation, and community identity. Any shift that increases the likelihood of our wards being annexed into a metro-based school division would significantly affect our ability to respond to the needs of rural and small urban families. Metro school divisions operate at a different scale and under different pressures, which do not align with the approaches and sensibilities required to effectively support education in our communities.

Our review of the documentation provided to us suggests a second alternative district that excludes Calgary and keeps Okotoks and Diamond Valley and parts of Foothills county together. That was option B. This option better reflects our shared services and community connections, though it has a slightly higher population variance.

Our school division, representing students and families in Okotoks, High River, Diamond Valley, and Foothills county, is advocating for a third option: keep our communities together, avoid hybrid districts with Calgary, and align boundaries with municipal borders. This approach supports effective representation for our school divisions and long-term stability.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: Currently, in terms of your school divisions, do you have multiple MLAs representing your configuration, and if so, who are they, and how would it change in terms of what we proposed?

Mr. Kilcommons: Well, taking a look at just in the Okotoks area, yes, we have R.J. Sigurdson. The proposed change would have us looking at somebody for Calgary-Okotoks and somebody for the points further south.

Mr. Evans: So right now you'd have one MLA.

Mr. Kilcommons: Yes.

Mr. Evans: Okay.

Mr. Kilcommons: For this region, yes. We've got other ones down in Oyen and Brooks and whatnot, of course.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Samson.

Mrs. Samson: No questions. Thank you.

Mr. Kilcommons: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Thanks for coming. I just want you to repeat, I think, what you had said, that your domain, as it were, as Okotoks – I mean its footprint is Okotoks, Diamond Valley, High River.

Mr. Kilcommons: Correct.

Dr. Martin: Is that, roughly speaking, the catchment area for your school?

Mr. Kilcommons: That is the one that we're addressing right now, yes.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Do you have a lot of planning associated with the High River component that you didn't otherwise speak of?

Mr. Kilcommons: We do, on a regular basis, yes.

Dr. Martin: Okay. All right. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much. No, I think I got my question out of the way on the previous presenter. But really, genuinely appreciate your submission, and thank you for coming.

Mr. Kilcommons: Yeah. Excellent.

The Chair: As you can appreciate, probably from your review of our report, hybrids are a challenge for us, how we implement them. We gave you an option. But you've used a word that I don't think has been used often: metro. Now, historically it's been urban, rural, Calgary, Edmonton, the rest of the province. You've injected the word "metro." What do you mean by that?

Mr. Kilcommons: Great question. It's an education term. It's widely used within Alberta education. The metro school divisions are Calgary Catholic and Calgary public and Edmonton public and Edmonton Catholic. Everybody in education refers to those as the metros. They have – I don't even know the number – half or 60 per cent of the province's student population.

The Chair: Students. Okay.

Mr. Kilcommons: And they do run differently than we do.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you for that. I'm going to refer to that word from hereon in.

Mr. Kilcommons: It's not a slur.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Any questions arising from what I said? Okay.

Thank you very much, sir. I'll excuse you to the gallery, and please stay if you can for the rest of the presentations.

Mr. Kilcommons: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Oh, sorry. Jayne?

Mrs. Martin: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. Sorry. Mrs. Jayne Martin, please come forward. You were here first this afternoon, but you ended up having to wait till the third spot.

Mrs. Martin: No worries. Thank you. Yes, I am Jayne Martin, and I'm in Calgary-Glenmore, and I was also here for round 1.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Martin: Thank you. I have lived in the community of Palliser for the past six years, which is in the riding of Calgary-Glenmore, and prior to that I lived in the community of Kingsland for 32 years. I would like to thank the commissioners for listening to me during my initial testimony. When asked which communities I would include to increase the size of Calgary-Glenmore, I suggested Kingsland and North Glenmore Park. In your proposed boundaries for Calgary-Glenmore I was very pleased to see the addition of the community of Kingsland and the portion of the community of North Glenmore Park that is located south of Glenmore Trail southwest.

During a 2010 boundary review, Kingsland was included in the Calgary-Glenmore electoral district. Following the 2017 Electoral Boundaries Commission, Kingsland became part of the Calgary-Acadia riding. Calgary-Glenmore would welcome back Kingsland.

2:00

I agree, as per your interim report, that your new proposed boundaries will be easier to understand. Glenmore Trail would then become a distinct boundary for the northern end of the electoral district of Calgary-Glenmore. To me, it makes perfect sense to include the portion of the community of North Glenmore Park that resides south of Glenmore Trail. It is located just east of Lakeview, which is already part of Calgary-Glenmore. Furthermore, the community of Kingsland also borders Glenmore Trail SW and is adjacent to the communities of Kelvin Grove and Chinook Park, which are currently in Calgary-Glenmore.

Kingsland itself could be considered very self-sufficient, with a mixture of commercial and residential properties. There are a number of strip malls, two motels, gas stations, liquor stores, coffee shops, restaurants, and a brewery. In addition, there are medical buildings and pharmacies. There are three Christian churches, a separate elementary school, an out-of-school care club, a daycare centre, and a supportive living centre.

There is a substantial Jewish population residing in Calgary-Glenmore, which is home to three synagogues, a Jewish seniors residence, a Jewish recreation centre, Jewish Learning Institute, Calgary Jewish Federation, and Calgary Jewish Academy. Given the current global tensions, I think it is even more important that we strive to keep our vibrant Jewish community together in Calgary-Glenmore.

Many seniors also reside in Calgary-Glenmore, with access to three nursing homes, two long-term care facilities, two medical centres, a hospice, and a hospital.

The demographics are changing, with more families now residing in Calgary-Glenmore. Located within Calgary-Glenmore are 15 public schools, including a junior high for gifted children, and William Roper Hull school for students with behavioural, emotional, social, and mental health challenges. There are also three separate schools and two charter schools, including a girls-only school. Calgary-Glenmore also has four child care centres and an orphanage. There are numerous playgrounds and green spaces, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, rinks, basketball courts, a skateboard park, an athletic park and sports field, the Paperny

Family JCC community and recreation centre, and the Southland Leisure Centre.

For the most part, regardless of their age, our constituents tend to be more active and have chosen to live in Calgary-Glenmore due to its close proximity to the Glenmore reservoir, Glenmore parks, and Fish Creek Provincial Park, where they can take part in water sports and have access to an extensive pathway system where they can walk, jog, or cycle. In addition, Calgary-Glenmore has tennis and pickleball courts, a racket club, and off-leash dog parks. By including Kingsland, Calgary-Glenmore would also benefit from the addition of a twin arena, a toboggan and sledding hill, baseball diamond, and an off-leash dog park. Adding the southern portion of the community of North Glenmore Park would further enrich Calgary-Glenmore with a golf course.

Calgary-Glenmore is the perfect example of a riding sharing geographic commonality bordered by the Glenmore reservoir, Glenmore parks, and Fish Creek Provincial Park. I think it is important to keep provincial boundaries aligned with municipal boundaries. This is critical to ensure ridings do not lump disparate communities together. Your proposed boundaries for Calgary-Glenmore are very fair. It would be very challenging for an MLA to be expected to properly represent the differing needs faced by constituents living both inside and outside of urban areas in a hybrid scenario.

Thank you also for recognizing the rapid rates of growth in Calgary and Edmonton. I would like to see another additional seat added to both Calgary and Edmonton. Given the population growth of both of these cities, they are currently underrepresented.

As part of the boundaries commission, I respect that you have an important role to play in our democratic process to not manipulate the boundaries, to keep our communities intact, and to prevent gerrymandering through a fair and democratic process. I thank you all for your time this afternoon and your careful consideration throughout this ongoing process.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs. Martin.

Mr. Clark, any questions or comments?

Mr. Clark: No questions at all, no. But with our thanks. Yeah. It's nice to hear that some people feel that the boundaries have worked out.

Dr. Martin: You stole my line.

Mr. Clark: Again, thank you.

Mrs. Martin: You're welcome.

The Chair: Okay.

Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

Mrs. Martin: You're welcome.

Mr. Evans: Thank you. It's so rare that we, you know, get it right.

The Chair: Well, I have a question.

Mrs. Martin: Certainly.

The Chair: You mentioned that the large cities are underrepresented.

Mrs. Martin: Yes. I think that's where the largest population growth has taken place, in Calgary and Edmonton.

The Chair: Okay. Even in our proposed interim report, you still think that is the situation?

Mrs. Martin: I do. I think what happened in Edmonton, for instance, was one was eliminated and another one created, so really, they didn't get any additions, right? We got two. Well, I think probably Calgary's population growth has been even larger than Edmonton's. But yes, I would still like to see one more additional one in Calgary and in Edmonton.

The Chair: If we were looking at the province purely through the population lens and had a one person, one vote principle, you'd be very accurate.

Mrs. Martin: Oh, okay.

The Chair: I hope you appreciate that population is not the only factor that we have to deal with.

Mrs. Martin: Certainly. You've got your work cut out for you.

The Chair: Yeah. Squaring that circle is a challenge, certainly.

Thank you for your comments and your commendations. I'm going to excuse you now to return to the gallery, but please stay if you can and hear the other presentations.

Mrs. Martin: I will. Thank you so much.

The Chair: We may have some dialogue after. Thank you. Okay. Our next presenter: Mr. Dan Williams.

Mr. Williams: Well, good afternoon, commission.

The Chair: Good afternoon. Thank you for coming. Just take a moment, get comfortable, and identify for the record what electoral district you're from.

Mr. Williams: Sure. Thank you. I have not been to one of these before, so I'm grateful for the opportunity. My name is Dan Williams. I'm the MLA for the constituency of Peace River in the northern stretches of the province. I'm hoping to present to you orally and, if you guys see fit, maybe have a short conversation surrounding your proposed draft boundaries.

Can you guys hear me okay? That's fine? Okay.

I think you guys understand the task cut out in front of you, as you mentioned with your previous presenter. I think I made comments, coauthoring a letter on October 29 that we sent to the commission, hoping that you could see some of the concern that the northern MLAs had, myself included, surrounding the elimination of a northern constituency. I think your predecessors put it very on the nose in their final report in the previous boundary redistribution, that if we just simply removed one northern riding every cycle we went through, we'd very quickly end up with very few northern ridings left.

Inevitably, as you guys know, the challenge is that that effective representation is an essential piece to what it looks like to do this job in a fair, objective, and above-board manner, and I appreciate very much that you have a difficult task in front of you.

The current draft that you have – and I'll spend just a minute or two speaking to that before I speak to what I hope we can move towards – has either eliminated the constituency of Peace River or Lesser Slave Lake. Depends on how you want to frame it, look at it, but we are one short in the north, and the very large new riding of Mackenzie has a number of challenges along with it.

Fundamentally, the nature of what it means to represent a riding is one that is tied to the physical geography of the place. If you

know Roger Scruton, an English philosopher and public thinker, he says, speaking of the nation at this point, but it applies equally to our constituencies, it is "because we are able to define our membership in territorial terms that we in Western countries enjoy [elemental] freedoms that are . . . [foundational in] political order." He contrasts that with defining your identity in religious and ethnic and racial terms, which, obviously, we think is a challenge.

2:10

Fundamentally, trying to create ridings based on place is an extension of this principle, that we are people of place, and that the job of the representative at the provincial and federal level is to represent a people who live there. I know that you guys have a difficult challenge. But the riding where Calling Lake and Indian Cabins are in the same constituency: they may share common ethnic backgrounds, but nonetheless, whether or not a riding arena or a cul-de-sac is paved or a new water treatment plant is put in in Calling Lake has absolutely little benefit, despite similar ethnic backgrounds, to those in Indian Cabins.

It is fundamentally a question: what binds us together? When I say "we" in the Legislature, representing my constituents, it is not a question of religious or cultural or ethnic identity that makes us "we." When I represent the people of Peace River, I say "we" as a people of place, connected to a geography, and that inevitably is going to create physical limitations on how we can fairly represent them and say "we" in a meaningful way and have a connection between us. So when we are talking about a community where the southern half of my constituency is closer to the U.S. border by drive time than it would be to the northern half of the constituency of Mackenzie, then that would be a real challenge to have a sense of "we" connected to a place.

The fundamental argument that is made by the northern MLAs is that, yes, there needs to be a consideration, as the legislation puts out properly, surrounding proportional representation on population, but it also importantly allows deviation of 25 per cent as the norm. We highly suggest that you use that opportunity to use the 25 per cent deviation to achieve effective representation so that those who are represented are represented with a connection to a physical place, to their neighbours, and can have common interests across that riding.

Also, of course, the exceptions, the four that are allowed within the legislation, surrounding the 50 per cent variation: those are also an important consideration. It needs to be there under those criteria, when met, for having populations that deviate beyond just the 25 per cent. If we cannot make those accommodations – I understand the need in Edmonton and Calgary to make sure we have representation, and I want to rob none of those citizens of their important electoral voice, but the fact remains that if we continue to eliminate, as the point you made previously, Justice Miller, to your previous interlocutor, we will not have effective representation in the north or many rural parts of this province despite them being an absolutely integral part of our common heritage and, importantly, our economic future across the province.

Marrying those would be our hope, to replace the riding in the north that was lost, and find accommodation through the variations allowed within the legislation. My general rule of thumb as a conservative – I think I can say with my hat on – is conservative. Those constituencies that have been around since 1909, as I noted in my letter for Lesser Slave Lake, or since 1905, Peace River, those political associations originally built around watersheds – when there was no highway, it really was the Peace River itself that brought the vast majority of those who were homesteaders to Manning, to Peace River, and to La Crête and Fort Vermilion

through that natural community, economic, social, and since 1905 and 1909, politically.

Keeping those as much as possible in place is honouring the legacy and the institutions built up around those ridings that have existed far beyond any of us being in the province. I think that is going to make it easier and more intelligible for local constituents to continue organizing along those same lines. Obviously, there needs to be variations within that. I appreciate that there will be tweaks and changes, but wholesale upending of these constituencies that have been a part of our fabric since the creation of our province, I think, would cause more consternation and would reduce the ability to effectively represent for a number of factors, and I'll refer you again to that coauthored letter from October 29 as an important submission.

Happy to take any questions. I think I've chewed up more than my fair share of time, knowing you have others.

The Chair: Well, thank you. We always appreciate hearing from those people that knock on doors and drive house to house representing constituents in the Legislative Assembly.

I will hold my questions off. I'm going to start with Mr. Evans first. Any questions or comments, John?

Mr. Evans: I just want to make sure I understand. You're in Mackenzie? You would be in the new Mackenzie, or you are in the . . .

Mr. Williams: Well, my constituency would be divided into multiple, but a large share of it would be the new Mackenzie, the northern half. The hometown I live in is La Crête, but I also represent Peace River, with my extended family in Peace River and Grimshaw, which would now be in what was Central Peace-Notley. I'm not sure if it keeps the same name, but it extends north. It takes Manning, Keg River, et cetera, all the way up to Paddle. So my current constituency would be divided into, I think, three technically, but the lion's share would be in those two. I was largely referring to Mackenzie as that one that is sprawling across that diagonal from northwest down towards southeast.

Mr. Evans: So do I understand that there's a community of interest connectivity that we haven't taken into consideration sufficiently?

Mr. Williams: If I read the report, there was a big consideration based on ethnic background as well for the creation of Mackenzie, and it becomes so large and unwieldy that it becomes very hard to find common interest in spite of any ethnic common background was the point I was driving at.

Mr. Evans: Okay.

Mr. Williams: A community of interest is, to me, local and territorial, and if you can find common threads between people demographically that don't live near each other, it becomes very, very hard to truly, effectively represent. In the end, part of my job is getting money for a road widening on 697, and that matters a lot to the folks that live around highway 697. It does not matter to folks that live down on highway 2. So when it gets very, very large, it gets very, very hard to have common interest.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Can you help us by telling us where the communities of interest do lie?

Mr. Williams: When you say communities of interest: the ones that I think ought to remain together?

Mr. Evans: Right.

Mr. Williams: Sure. I'd say the threads within my current community would be Peace River through to Manning, High Level and that area towards the northwest of the province, and La Crête. There are many challenges – I include Fort Vermilion historically in that as well – because I understand when you get . . .

Mr. Evans: Okay. Hold on. Slow down. Peace River to . . .

Mr. Williams: Peace River, Grimshaw, Manning, High Level, La Crête, Fort Vermilion would be the large centres that – I say large; some of these are very small.

Mr. Evans: Peace River, Grimshaw, Manning.

Dr. Martin: High Level.

Mr. Williams: Fort Vermilion, La Crête.

Mr. Evans: Okay.

Mr. Williams: I understand that there may be need to trade at times.

Mr. Evans: Why?

Mr. Williams: Why? Well, first off, because it is that way, and I don't think that's an unfair argument. I think that historical political relationships have existed with almost that physical geography since the creation, and inevitably when people start to align that way, those relationships don't stop. I think that is the easiest reason to say why. I think it's natural because the watershed – as I said before, the highway did not exist meaningfully until the 1950s, so those communities did organically grow up along the river meaningfully, like, until very recent in memory. Post World War II was when we started to see many of the current highways be in place. So I think that makes sense because it follows the flow of the river.

Mr. Evans: So the water flow.

Mr. Williams: I say that's the easiest historical argument, but if it were some other historical argument, I'd still say because it is. I don't think that's unfair, and I'm not trying to be cheeky.

Mr. Evans: It's like defining "white" by saying the definition of "white" is white. But I understand what you're saying.

Mr. Williams: No. I think it's saying that because we've set up those relationships, those relationships – politically, social, economic – will not be changed because of the very important work that five members on the commission do.

Mr. Evans: Yeah. It's historical based and developed over time.

Mr. Williams: And based out of that are things that are not – even though it started off as a political organization in terms of the constituency, it's now taken on other immutable qualities that are not related to your decisions, unfortunately, so you have to consider them now as facts that are not within your control. I'm sorry. That seems a bit abstract, but I hope it makes sense.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Anything other than the water flow and the historical foundation?

Mr. Williams: Yeah. I think that if you look at the economic relationships that you see, there are similar – forestry would be the common thread throughout those communities. I'd say, more than forestry, you even look at the mills themselves. The ecosystem of by-product and use is inevitable. The oil and gas service industry is

also connected for sure. Our sports leagues are connected with the north Peace sports league. Now, there are obviously some exceptions to that where you will connect into a few other communities, but by and large those communities play on the same minor sports teams. I think that it's broad in terms of the details that folks have integrated with each other socially, economically, politically.

2:20

Mr. Evans: Okay. If the chair will allow me to ask one more question. If you were redrawing – may I?

The Chair: Yeah. Succinct.

Mr. Evans: Okay. I was just going to go ahead with the question. I probably should get an answer.

If you were going to redraw the boundaries, where would you redraw them?

Mr. Williams: Well, I'll say that from the current boundaries there will always be a need to consider population, of course was the point. If you needed to extend south or east or west on the edges to include or exclude certain populations, immediate neighbouring – for example, if you looked at Peace River, there's a continuity of community going down through Berwyn and Brownvale and Fairview that are very closely connected to Peace River. Of course, they're also closely connected to Fairview and Spirit River and other areas towards Sexsmith. So there are lines that you must draw, and I appreciate that.

I'd say the same could be true of Red Earth Creek, could be included or excluded. Hypothetically, though, that does have a lot more of a connection towards Slave Lake and High Prairie, but it's plausible that could happen. As well, you could move the boundaries surrounding where Reno is or down towards Falher. Those are also possibilities. Keeping the lion's share of the same population where you need to move boundaries on the edges to me seems like it's your task. I won't, you know, pretend to know what that looks like. You guys have many moving parts.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for coming out today. I really appreciate the time to be here with us. You missed the introduction here. We got 1,100 submissions since the interim report came out, and we have felt a very big push-back against the decision we made to redraw the north, so we are going to look at it.

Some of the more positive things that had come out in those submissions were that the Indigenous population was kept together within one riding. Some large Indigenous groups wrote in and said that they really like the idea of them having one voice in one electoral district. Can you shed some light from your perspective on that?

Mr. Williams: Sure. I mean, I don't know which groups spoke, and I'm happy to take their position at face value and appreciate that. My position as the local MLA is that fundamentally I have a job to represent the whole province, not just one constituency. I have to look for the common good of every single Albertan, but inevitably part of my job also is going to be bringing attention to ministers, making, you know, suggestions in debate within legislation that are relevant to our local experience.

I think that, independent of whether or not someone has a shared Indigenous background, my experience in community is that they have stronger associations based on whether or not their kids play in the same sports teams, based on whether or not they shop at the same grocery stores, based on whether or not their parents work in

the same mill. Those things matter far, far, far more than any ethnic or racial or demographic connection that you can make.

As a local MLA I care about the welfare of every single one of my constituents as I do every Albertan, but my constituents are those who send me there, and it is so very hard for me to be concerned with many of these First Nation communities who struggle with a lack of infrastructure, a lack of resources in their communities. It becomes very diffuse. As a local MLA, when I go talk to ministers, when I make speeches in the Legislature, I am not choosing between all options on the table. I'm choosing between the best options I have in front of me, so inevitably, with limited resources, I sometimes cannot argue as hard for some projects as I do others. That becomes almost impossible to achieve if my physical geography – almost all of these services in the north are physical deficits of services.

Like I said, it does me no good if I widen a highway in the northern half of my riding or the southern half of my riding, for example, but that widening of the highway is, by drive time, closer to Montana than it is to my constituents in the northern half. They just don't care that much about something that far away. They could be very happy for us as a province that they got that. That doesn't change the fact that my job is about allocation and argument for physical resources, and when you spread it out too large – even those First Nation communities I think will be more poorly served if it's about some ethnic identity rather than a geographic, territorial cohesion around a service hub where they prefer those services. That's my argument.

I think in all charity I want to better serve, for example, all of my communities, including First Nations, and I feel like I can do that better when there's a common project that all the neighbouring communities agree with along with them. Paving 58 east, for example, towards Little Red has been a priority of mine for many years, and I think we're making progress on it. That's harder if half of my constituents say: I've never heard of Little Red or 58.

Mrs. Samson: Exactly. Good. Thank you. That was a very good answer.

Mr. Williams: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Minister Williams, thank you for coming. I wanted to ask you some questions about transportation and just preface them by saying that it's pretty obvious, by looking at the map, that the Peace has been a transportation route for hundreds and hundreds of years. The legacy we have of that are at the Indian nations along the river valley, including the very large Métis settlement, a sort of testament to the fur trade era, where the river was, of course, more heavily traversed than anything in the rest of Alberta as it came to be.

I want to ask you about modern transportation. First of all, when you leave the Legislature, what route do you take to get to Peace River?

Mr. Williams: Well, Peace River in the southern half of the riding...

Dr. Martin: The town of.

Mr. Williams: Yeah, the town of Peace River. I would head out on 16, then head north on 43, and then head north on 2 through Valleyview, and then make my way to Peace River. It depends on

where I'm going in the Peace area. It's four and a half to five and a half hours from the Legislature.

Dr. Martin: I've travelled highway 88 myself. I don't like it. And from what we heard in earlier . . .

Mr. Williams: When did you travel it?

Dr. Martin: Summer.

Mr. Williams: Okay. But it was paved?

Dr. Martin: No.

Mr. Williams: Okay. Well, it's paved. You'll love it now.

Dr. Martin: Well, it was good gravel, but I didn't like it.

We heard in our first round of presentations, not least when we were in Peace River, from people who live in First Nations east of the town of Peace River, and they were saying: "Oh, yeah. Yeah, it's dreadful. We never use that. We always come into Peace River and then go south and then cut along the bottom side of Slave Lake and go through Kinuso and the town of Slave Lake and so on." So you really don't have many transportation routes. You talk about an infrastructure deficit. This is an infamous one.

Right through the middle of this proposed footprint is a very dodgy road.

Mr. Williams: The 686.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. Up through . . .

Mr. Williams: Peerless.

Dr. Martin: Yeah, through red path, is it?

Mr. Williams: Red Earth then to Peerless and then over to Fort Mac.

Dr. Martin: Bad road.

Mr. Williams: Yeah.

Dr. Martin: And lousy in winter, I bet.

Mr. Williams: I mean, not passable often, yeah, meaningfully.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Not passable is a real fact in our deliberations because, of course, transportation and obvious roadways are a significant consideration for this panel. You don't have one, not through the middle, at any rate.

Mr. Williams: In the current boundary if I'm going to the northern half of my riding – Fort Vermilion, High Level, La Crête – I take a different path; I go up 88. Inside the constituency it's cohesive. I can take 35 all the way down or the ice bridge, and it works very well. Going in and out is very choppy. To your point, it depends on where you're going on that 88 corridor. Now, it is the aspiration of our government to pave that 686 through Red Earth and Peerless, but I don't know what timeline we have. I'm sure Minister Dreeshen could give us more on it. These things, you know, we hope to ameliorate.

But right now that is one of the problems. Realistically, if this riding were to take place, there'd be a big chunk where, if I were to be elected there, I may not even stay within constituency for most of it – right? – which is not true right now. Once I'm in the constituency of Peace River, I stay in it physically almost all the time. It's coherent within itself. Now, getting to and from

Edmonton depends on where I'm going. It's very vast. Fair enough. But this would have a problem. I would often want to leave and head into what would be Central Peace-Notley, if that's what it's called, the one to the south.

Dr. Martin: I have one subsidiary question, if I might, and that is that when you are travelling in your constituency, you're doing it by car or truck, and presumably you do a lot of your office work, so to speak, by wireless cellphone, right?

Mr. Williams: Yes.

Dr. Martin: Do you have adequate cellphone coverage?

Mr. Williams: Oh, no, but that's a bigger problem that I don't know if you can address. I'd love if you could.

2:30

Dr. Martin: Well, again, it bears on what constitutes effective representation. If your area becomes huger and huger and your cell phone coverage becomes sparser and sparser, then we have a problem.

Mr. Williams: Yeah. I think that is a concern, the drive time. People ask me, "where you been, Dan?" I say, "I've been between towns, mostly driving." Just the time consumed. Happily, the folks at the Legislative Assembly Office have done what they can to help me around virtual access at times with cell phone boosters, et cetera, in an attempt to fix it.

When I go to a grocery store within my constituency – well, I'll tell you that my wife doesn't send me out to go get milk because every single person knows me, and I'm humbled by it. I'm their voice. I'm the big deal, right? I mean, there's the cell phone consideration. There's the time consumed in driving within the constituency. For example, I was in the constituency last week. I had three days of over 10 hours of driving, which is not uncommon to have. I'm getting to and from and then within the constituency. You try and make the most of that time. I wouldn't trade it for the world. I love my role. It is just a different sort of representation.

I've worked in political offices representing urban centres. It's very fulfilling work. They have a hard job as well, but it is very different. The hardest thing is the ability to effectively meet constituents who are territorial. They want to see you. They're face-to-face people. They're concerned about those intimate things around how the salting is working on the 88 connector road or whatever it is. Those are the kinds of concerns that they have, the kind of things that municipal politicians in Edmonton and Calgary rightfully have to deal with around snow clearing after the dump. Those are often provincial responsibilities on these provincial highways. It is very earthy. It's a corporal sort of work in rural Alberta that is not the same in urban. I'm not ranking them; I'm just saying that they're different by nature.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you. I think just maybe through you to your constituents and your colleagues and other folks in the north, we hear the submissions. They were not just a significant number but very thoughtful.

Mr. Williams: Those are my constituents.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Speaking just for myself and not on behalf of any of my fellow commissioners, I'm not convinced we got the borders

right in the north. It's an intractable challenge of: okay, well, what gives? Certainly your input on the specific boundaries today has been really helpful. The letter you wrote with your colleagues is really helpful, that sort of on-the-ground information.

If the Justice will allow me, I have a couple of questions. Tell me a bit about your staff. I guess what I asked a previous presenter: would it be at least not a complete fix if you had even a substantially higher budget where you could have even more, right? I mean, in terms of, like, what you're talking about just now, in terms of the scale of the vast geography of what you represent, do you feel you have enough staff, enough budget to have enough offices, enough people that aren't you but could maybe bridge a little bit? Would that help?

Mr. Williams: Yeah. It would for sure. It's something that I've been advocating for when I sat on the Member Services' Committee. It's a formula that's derived there. I have two offices, one in the north, one in the south, which since my predecessor, Ms Jabbour, has been normal. I think that is appreciated by constituents because of the large drive times that exist between. I think that they're used to making the trips and it happens, but as a matter of effective representation it's good to be able to meet them in a hub community around where they're from.

I have one staff that is from Grimshaw that works out of Peace River. I have another staff that I'm looking to replace that is from the Fort Vermilion area and works out of La Crête. That's what it is now. I think that that would be the single best use of an increased budget for me. I understand that there are different costs for rental space with real estate in Edmonton and Calgary, for example, that are meaningfully different, but having a physical presence there is probably the best value for the taxpayer to fund. The vast majority of the things – and you know this well, Mr. Clark – that you deal with as a constituency are not partisan and political in nature. They are services. They're getting people access through provincial programming, social support networks, dealing with, you know, especially in rural Alberta, all sorts of environmental considerations surrounding use of land and land-use planning, et cetera. Those are the nitty-gritty, tangible things that you do in an office, and I think more staff helps.

Mr. Clark: Yeah, and we don't have control over that, unfortunately.

Mr. Williams: No, you don't.

Mr. Clark: I know that previous commissions have made exactly that recommendation. Maybe we'll ask, pretty please, that that gets addressed.

The other massive challenge we have in this province and what we're grappling with as a panel has been this incredible population growth we've seen in the province. Almost all of that has happened in Calgary and Edmonton, not 100 per cent but almost all of it. When you look at the data for the north, the growth is flat or in some cases actually negative. It makes it really quite challenging even with the variances to kind of balance all that out. So, I guess, do you feel like the percentages that existed in 2017 between sort of the north and the big cities: was that an appropriate percentage, or do you feel like they got it wrong as well?

Mr. Williams: Yeah. Well, maybe I'll start with a question, and I'll answer as well. I'm just wondering. Your data: I just want to understand what you use for the population data. I think I meant to look into it but I never found out. How do you guys . . .

Dr. Martin: It's July 1, 2024.

Mr. Clark: July 1, 2024.

The Chair: And Statistics Canada 2021 updated by . . .

Mr. Williams: Municipal censi, et cetera.

The Chair: . . . Alberta's Treasury Board department of OSI.

Mr. Williams: Okay.

The Chair: If you look at pages . . .

Mr. Williams: I'm sure you had it, and that's why I was asking that again.

Mr. Clark: Four million, eight hundred and eighty-eight thousand, seven hundred and twenty-three.

Mr. Williams: Ok. Good. I just want to make sure because I know that when it comes to StatsCan data, First Nations don't have very high response rates, which myself and many of my colleagues do represent. I don't know if that has more than some negligible statistical difference on it. And the municipal data for sure: I'm not sure when, but La Crête is one of the fastest growing communities in the country. It's a hamlet, and I just want to make sure that those sorts of things are considered, but I don't doubt at all, to your point, that we've seen disproportionately higher growth in that Edmonton-Calgary corridor.

I'll stipulate it: agree that they need representation, especially in the large cities. Like I said, I don't want to deprive anyone of their ability to have a voice and a say. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs, with the different hat I wear, we don't have the same stipulation of the 25 per cent and 50 per cent variation. In fact, there's next to no barrier on this beyond the decisions that a local council makes. There are some wards that are disproportionate hundreds of times different. Now, sometimes those get out of control, and it's up to the local elected officials to readjust those, but we have yet to put a firm rule on it because there are extraordinary circumstances in this province.

I mean, I'll note that Mackenzie county is 14 per cent of the land mass of the province and the lion's share of my constituency. Inevitably that's going to have a different sort of solution than Forty Mile or, heck, Red Deer, and there needs to be a certain ability to, in extreme outliers, find an Aristotelian mean. We cannot have one rule across, and I think that there need to be those variations put in place.

Inevitably, I mean, many of my northern colleagues would like to see us replace a new constituency into the north, and I understand the challenges of what that would be, but to remove another constituency from the north, I think, is very challenging because the economic lifeblood and so much of our history is centred around the north, especially when you look at people that have disproportionately not had the same influence in society. That's true economically. It's true historically. We talk about First Nation communities as well, and I think that the best thing you can do for making sure that this bargain of Alberta continues to exist is use your judgment, allow nuance where it's needed, stick to a rule as best you can, but if we continue to remove one northern riding every single cycle, then we've got eight cycles before there's one riding in the north.

Inevitably, I mean, our great Alberta advantage is based on the territory itself. It's based on the resources that come out of our communities. I think there has to be some consideration for how that works politically, long-term, as an agreement between the north and the south, between big cities and rural communities. There needs to be an accommodation. That's why the 25 per cent variation

and the 50 per cent exemptions need to be employed, I'd say, very liberally.

Mr. Clark: I appreciate it, and I'll just end by saying this: I absolutely agree. We talked about this a lot. How do we accommodate? Just for reference sake, the seven northern constituencies on average in this report are 10 per cent under the average, which is actually better than 2017. It was 8.4 in 2017. That's not everything, and it doesn't change the geography. I tell my family in the U.K. that the northwest corner of Alberta is larger than the country of Belgium and it has 40,000 people in it. That blows their mind. Having said that, it's not just a data spreadsheet exercise; it's a very real, physical exercise.

2:40

Mr. Williams: I take your point that you continue to see higher growth, and flatlining population in the north will continue to present challenges. You see disproportionate growth in the south. I think that what's happening: obviously, we tried to create an independent commission for the purpose of trying to create a nonpartisan – and the presenter who went before me used the term “gerrymandering,” and, of course, we don't want to see that. That is political interference in what should be an above board process, but there is a political accommodation that all sides are making all the time.

Like it or not, this is a politically accountable process that will be voted on in the Legislature, so if in the end we don't calibrate that right, over time – I'm not saying this commission, but I'm saying over decades – disproportionately the north will feel isolated and alienated, and that, I think, is not a recipe for MLAs like me to say: I believe in the common interest of the whole province. Inevitably there will be a politics of trying to aggravate territorially a division between north and south, and that, I think, is to Alberta's detriment.

So if anything I truly think that getting the calibration right now and tapping the breaks before we go too hard on a population-alone consideration and really making sure that the north in particular but all rural Alberta feels like they have a legitimate and fair seat at the table for what they contribute in all aspects of Alberta's public life: I think that will be a better recipe for cohesion as a province than if we allow ourselves to become statisticians. I know that's not what you're doing, but I just really emphasize that those variations allow you that flexibility, allow you to do what municipal counties do every single year when they decide how to realign their boards in a really nuanced, localized way. This is that only tool that you have.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Williams, I've got several questions and comments.

Mr. Williams: Okay. I'll keep my answers shorter, then.

The Chair: Did I understand you correctly to say that some of your colleagues are saying that maybe we should add one more riding rather than take one away?

Mr. Williams: I'm certain somewhere around the government cloakroom that's been mentioned.

The Chair: If that was the case, then maybe we should have had more than 89 ridings to play with. I just make that comment.

Mr. Williams: I'll take that back. It's very charitable of you to put it that way. Very charitable of you to put it that way. Duly noted.

The Chair: Okay. Just a couple of factual questions. Are you saying that on average it takes you five hours from the Leg to get home?

Mr. Williams: No, it takes me about seven and a half hours to get home because I live in La Crête.

The Chair: Okay. Sorry. So five hours to get to Peace River, and how far is La Crête from Peace River?

Mr. Williams: Well, I would take a different route. As I said, two different routes: I would go up highway 88 coming out of Edmonton or Calgary, anywhere in southern Alberta, and that's about seven hours of just pure drive time. Then between the two communities, I'd say sort of the La Crête, Fort Vermilion area down to like the Peace River area, if the ice bridge is operational then it's a simple three-hour drive, but if there's no ice bridge in or if the ferry is not running then I'm going around and we're going to talk 4.5 hours. This is not an episode of *Ice Road Truckers* on History Channel. This is the day-to-day in our constituency.

The Chair: Okay. This is a naive, stupid question: why don't you fly?

Mr. Williams: Well, that same committee that Mr. Clark and I know well, Members' Services, has many limitations surrounding that. I'm allowed to fly from two points within my constituency if there's no other means of access, and there are only three or four northern constituencies that have this variation and I can charter a flight.

So, for example, when I go to another one of my communities, that is because it's fly-in, fly-out for much of the year when the ice bridge isn't in – a second ice bridge; sorry, this one's over by Fox Lake – then I can fly to that. I have once or twice before, but by and large flying leaves vehicles stranded at random, small municipal airports. There are not scheduled flights for the vast majority of this, so chartering is not allowed according to the rules, and then I end up in the middle of somewhere without a vehicle of my own, and I'm probably not going back to that airport afterwards. I'm probably going to another community, so we just drive. We're all used to it. That's what we do.

The Chair: Okay. Comparatively, by the way, since you're a bit of a history guy I sense, the 1991 Legislative committee that dealt with electoral boundaries did a fairly extensive study of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and then came up with several recommendations, and that was the basis for some of the Court of Appeal references in the early '90s. Looking at Saskatchewan, and I wish I had come prepared with the longitude or parallel, it's my understanding that northern Saskatchewan is just very simply divided into two electoral districts. I want to say it's about what we're looking at on the map right now. They take a third of the province and just say: okay; there's north Saskatchewan west and north Saskatchewan east. Have you looked at or have you thought of a model like that?

Mr. Williams: I don't know Saskatchewan well. My understanding is that the Canadian Shield does continue up into northern Saskatchewan. There are fewer road transportation networks, and there's not the same river basin that would have historically built it. I think they're largely fly-in, fly-out with a couple of connecting roads that don't have a long history with river basins. I'm not going to speak to that in detail, but that's what is a grade 4 memory of the geography of northern Canada. Effectively, the planes continue all the way up into Bistcho, like, in the lowlands. It's just a different geography. But I'll defer to someone who knows better.

The Chair: Okay. One more question. I'm not doubting your suggestion at the beginning, but can you just confirm what you said,

that the bottom boundary of Mackenzie is closer to the U.S. border than the northern boundary?

Mr. Williams: By drive time my understanding is that Calling Lake down to the U.S. border is faster than going from Calling Lake up to Zama City or N.W.T. I'd have to check my exact calculations again, but you're into a ballpark where it's a grey zone and it might depend on the weather. Yeah. It's massive. The transportation network isn't obvious all the way through once you get up to that far corner.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Please stay, if you are able, to hear the other presentations, and maybe there can be some conversation.

Mr. Williams: I'll stay as long as I can. When I'm not here, I'm watching online feverishly. Do you guys have this streamed, or did I make that up? Okay. Good. Yeah. I'm watching it nonstop.

The Chair: I can comment, Minister Williams, that you're the first person that has quoted Roger Scruton.

Mr. Williams: Wow. The fact you know who Roger Scruton is makes my heart sing.

Dr. Martin: And Aristotle.

Mr. Williams: I did invoke Aristotle and his meme, as everyone should in politics on a daily basis.

Thank you, everyone.

The Chair: Okay. We'll proceed to Mr. Williams' colleague from the Legislature, Ms Tejada. Welcome. Have a seat and make yourself comfortable. I recall very clearly your presentation last time.

Member Tejada: Do you? I'll take that as a compliment. Thank you.

The Chair: Well, it was your riding, you know, the way you described your riding. I always thought that maybe you should be the minister of transportation because of the nature of your riding.

Member Tejada: There's a lot of driving that happens in Calgary-Klein. Yeah.

I'm just going to get my notes together here. Looking at all of the maps, these are great. Okay. All right. Thank you so much. Lizette Tejada here, MLA for Calgary-Klein. I'm very, very pleased to be back here and wishing you all a Happy New Year. I'm hoping everyone got a good rest, and I'm just really thankful for all of the work that's been done through the commission and for the opportunities that Albertans have been given to give their feedback, for your careful consideration of the submissions, and for this detailed and well-reasoned report and recommendations. I can only imagine the many hours of work and deliberation, and I'm grateful for the engagement and the communication on all of your parts with Albertans in service to our democracy and to ensure effective representation.

Just in referencing the last time we spoke, I know that there was a lot of discussion there about what effective and fair representation looks like, especially in my case as it relates to municipalities and being an MLA within a municipality and how important it was to keep communities together, how the boundaries might also impact advocacy efforts around services, infrastructure access as well. We discussed the importance of keeping municipalities intact. I spoke a little bit about the role that I fill not only as a local MLA but as a shadow minister of immigration and multiculturalism and the idea

of how folks access the services that also help them integrate. I can share that when the report was released, I opened it with great anticipation. I felt like I was back at school.

2:50

The Chair: Did you read the first 60 pages before you got to your description?

Member Tejada: Well, before? Maybe not, but I did maybe, like, a little bit of selective reading. I felt like I was digging into it like a kid in school and thoroughly enjoyed how I could see that the conversations and the feedback of Albertans had informed the overall map. I got to read some of the submissions as well and, of course, looked at mine with great interest. And I'm grateful to have been able to witness some of what Mr. Williams was talking about as well and just learning about how all of these boundary changes can impact different ridings in different ways. When I look at the map as it is presented to us through this report, it seems to meet the spirit of a lot of the submissions that I was able to read and also the feedback that I received from constituents.

As it relates to Calgary-Klein, the changes are significant. It seems that any MLA for Calgary-Klein, if we're looking into the future, might not get to boast about representing three quadrants in the city of Calgary should these changes come into effect. I can say without a shadow of a doubt that it's been an absolute honour to represent all of my constituents and all of their communities. I built a lot of meaningful relationships with residents in all of the communities and have delighted in the work that they do, the community organizations, the services that are offered there. I have the Centre for Newcomers currently as well as places like Cornerstone Youth, and lots of the services that people access all over Calgary are focused in Calgary-Klein. Also, congratulations for having both hearings in the constituency of Calgary-Klein; the last ones we did and these ones. So I get, maybe, a little bit of bragging rights. No. I know I had nothing to do with that.

If you'll indulge me for a moment, I did feel a twinge of sadness at the idea that the riding of Calgary-Klein would no longer include the wonderful communities of Mayland Heights and Albert Park Radisson. The engagement that I see with our office, between neighbours, is truly an inspiration. Both communities have strong community relationships. They help each other. They're involved in a lot of advocacy. They're very, very active, and I've heard from them on everything from housing to public safety. Now, because we are in the riding of Calgary-Klein within the city of Calgary, a lot of those issues extend regardless of how the boundaries are moving.

I'll say that an argument still could be made for keeping Mayland Heights in the constituency of Calgary-Klein. I see, when I'm looking at the report and the numbers that are proposed, that we're looking at 49,666 that would be represented in the new boundaries, and the community of Mayland Heights has roughly about 5,000. We did talk about keeping like communities together, and the Community Association of Crossroads represents both Vista Heights, which is on the other side of the Trans-Canada, and Mayland community. So an argument could be made that way; however, I am also representing one of the communities in Triwood, so I'm used to sharing as I share one community association with my colleague Dr. Luanne Metz. Should these changes actually be confirmed, and, of course, if I'm fortunate enough to represent Calgary-Klein in the next election, I would be pleased to work collaboratively should additional representation happen and can promise that I'll still visit.

I'll add that the rapid population growth that we've seen in recent years – I know that this boundary reflects the numbers for 2024. We

saw the biggest spike in population in 2023. It's still growing. I also have the community of Midfield Heights, which used to be a mobile-home park. That land is slated for mixed model growth and an increase in housing, so I can see how these boundaries still make sense within that context.

In terms of the addition of Mount Pleasant, that was also a surprise but a very reasonable choice and very welcome, and I see that the rationale given was that this community bears a lot of similarity to the neighbouring communities of the riding as a whole. It neighbours on Tuxedo, Winston Heights, which is where the Midfield area is. Those are all on 16th, and also Highland Park. So not only is that accurate, that they access similar services, but Calgary-Klein currently already includes about a two-block swath of Mount Pleasant, so having that as an additional community to Calgary-Klein makes a lot of sense.

In general, I think that this particular boundary is in line with keeping communities together. If I think about Mayland Heights, Albert Park, and Radisson moving into Confluence, that also makes a lot of sense.

The Chair: You know, your presentation is ideally suited for being up at the map and showing us some things.

Member Tejada: Okay. Sorry. Yeah, sure.

The Chair: If you wouldn't mind, I'd like you to maybe go up there, just a bit of a recap, and especially as it relates to Mayland Heights. Show us where that is, and Aaron will get you a microphone so that we can hear you and record you in that regard. So keep going and repeat yourself if you wish by directing us to these areas.

Member Tejada: When we were talking about the loss of some of the communities that are reflected in this change, two of the communities that I currently represent would move into Confluence, and that's the new riding that's been added to Calgary.

The Chair: So that's south of you, then.

Member Tejada: This is 16th Avenue. On this side we have Vista Heights, and on this side we have Mayland, and then further east, I believe, are Albert Park and Radisson, which are also bordering on Forest Lawn, which I think is currently part of Calgary-East. When I'm talking about the representation of Vista Heights and Mayland Heights and how – at least the community association is in Mayland. Yeah. While I would be sad to lose those, I'm used to also sharing community associations. I think more representation is better, especially in our cities, and we've seen a lot of growth in the northeast.

I have northeast, southeast. I have northwest. This is the northwest. We have Nose Hill up here, and we're seeing a lot more of that concentrated growth in the northeast. It would be in other ridings like Calgary-North East, Calgary-Falconridge. This dividing line here of 36th Street is the C-Train line, right? So the boundary doesn't change there, and that's great. We still have lots of access. I still have lots of thoroughfares, so that's great.

Then I would say that, you know, I was looking at the history of the riding, and the boundary redraw actually more closely reflects a previous version of Calgary-Klein, right? I believe Mount Pleasant might have been part of Calgary-Klein previously. I know Winston Heights still was. So, basically, the biggest change that I saw was the removal of a couple of the communities into Confluence, but we also see an extension where 2nd Street was the dividing line. It is now 10th Street and including all of Mount Pleasant, so because I already represent part of Mount Pleasant, it

makes a lot of sense to include Mount Pleasant. It's that central, northwest, northeast area, I think, that's where we're going to see the concentration of growth in population, so it still makes sense looking at the boundary map. It's a fair map.

I would say that given the growth in some of the other ridings, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, Calgary-North East, Calgary-Falconridge, seeing – I can't remember exactly where the numbers were at, and I know that we don't have parity across ridings – the large population growth there, I think Calgary actually could stand to have another constituency added to Calgary. So I will say that.

I think that's all I have to do with the map right now, so I will go back to my seat.

3:00

The Chair: Okay. You mentioned a mobile home park. Where is that? Describe that again. Is that being built up with apartments or what? What's happening there?

Member Tejada: It looks like mixed-model housing will go there. To point out where exactly that would be, we have 16th Avenue and the Trans-Canada here, we have the Deerfoot here, and Midfield park is right here. The mobile home park was actually removed many years ago. There have been lots of plans for development, and we're starting to see a little bit more movement there.

From the plans that I've seen, it looks like mixed-model housing, so we'll have some apartments; we'll have some town homes. There's a mix. There's already the infrastructure of the larger Winston Heights community, so it makes a lot of sense. We're going to see growth there. We're going to see growth just on the side of 36th Street as well by the C-Train. I've already seen conversions of industrial to residential, and we've seen conversions even of places like hotels as you get closer to the airport on Barlow. I represent a seniors' home which was converted from a hotel previously, right? We're seeing a lot of those conversions happening. I would say, all over the city.

I know that I hear from lots of constituents that transportation is a big concern, especially where we're seeing conversions where the bus routes don't exist yet, right? Usually you hear about that in the more suburban areas as we sort of increase our sprawl, but we're seeing real issues with that right now, especially with aging populations – right? – being able to access transit. I know that's a municipal issue.

Yeah. Any other questions for me while I'm up here?

The Chair: No. I think you can come back down. While I make use of the time, you say that Mayland Heights is only about 5,000 people, so you could take that back and just get up to the average then. Is that what you're saying?

Member Tejada: Yes, very possible.

The Chair: And you want it back. Politicians don't want to give up the great people they represent.

Member Tejada: I mean, I know my colleague, if he's still here – oh. I have my other colleague Court here. Of course, right? You develop those relationships with your community associations, and when I'm at Crossroads, I don't differentiate between who's in Vista and who's in Mayland Heights. I would love that for reasons that, you know, it's already represented. It's represented by the same community association, and it makes sense if you're talking about just, like, the services, the roads, everything that people access from those two neighbourhoods. They're very interconnected. But it also makes a lot of sense, the changes that are happening right now.

I haven't done a count yet on how big Mount Pleasant is. I know that it's quite dense. I'm fortunate enough to have worked for an MLA before becoming an MLA, and I helped represent exactly that area, Mount Pleasant, through the work that I did with the MLA for Calgary-Mountain View, and it makes sense. I've gotten to know both of those communities. That makes a lot of sense to have those included in the boundaries of Calgary-Klein.

The Chair: Okay. I actually just looked at my watch. I've been lousy at keeping time.

Member Tejada: I was going to say.

The Chair: I've been dialoguing with you.

Mr. Evans, I'll throw it open for questions.

Member Tejada: But I learned a lot from the last presentation, too.

The Chair: Mr. Evans, any questions, comments?

Mr. Evans: No. Thank you.

The Chair: I was just waiting for voter turnout.

Go ahead, Susan.

Mrs. Samson: We did hear about Mayland Heights in the ridings after the interim report came out, so I'm glad you addressed that. That is something I think we'll have a further conversation on.

So moving Mayland Heights doesn't tie us to Albert Park Radisson? There's not a connection there. It's more the other way, into Vista.

Member Tejada: Right. It's more connected with Vista. Now, Albert Park and Radisson: the commonality that they would have then with Mayland Heights is Memorial as the dividing line as well and access to the C-Train line because the C-Train line goes from 36th and then switches into Memorial, right? So they all access the same transportation.

Mrs. Samson: I can't see considering both based on where you're sitting in the big picture.

Member Tejada: That's true.

Mrs. Samson: But if there was one, it would be Mayland.

Member Tejada: Right.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thank you.

Member Tejada: That makes the most sense, I think.

The Chair: Okay.

Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. Thank you for your presentation and its level of detail. It's always fun. I want to quote you, your own characterization of your riding, when we saw you in the spring. Well, my crappy notes: "This is a very highly diverse district. We have residential all the way through to industrial zones. We have lots of major road arteries. We have LRT. We have bus lines. There are lots of new residential units throughout. Also, we have affordable housing in the eastern light-industrial areas." Those are the things I picked out from your characterization. Has anything at all changed about that characterization with the new interim story?

Member Tejada: I don't think so.

Dr. Martin: I posit that the same story would be told, right?

Member Tejada: Yeah.

Dr. Martin: The difference is about – well, it's a loss of community of people you know and love, but it's about population rather than anything that is a significant characterization of the district.

Member Tejada: Right. Absolutely. Yeah, I don't think anything has changed in that respect. Happy to represent all of those communities. That was a little bit of a sentimental addition.

The Chair: It's amazing how sentimental MLAs are. I've noticed that.

Member Tejada: It is. I'll be quick. Mayland Heights, specifically the young people in Mayland Heights, are very, very community minded and active. A lot of the cultural communities gather in Mayland Heights at Crossroads Community Association, and some of them are classmates of my kids, so they attend the same schools. We know that we need more. But yeah, they're great communities. I think if we're looking at the riding of Calgary-Confluence that's been added to Calgary, those communities being together still make a lot of sense.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. I will just say thank you for being here. Our GIS magic tells me that Mayland Heights is 6,600.

Member Tejada: Oh, is it? Okay.

Mr. Clark: According to what we have, anyway.

The Chair: But I think she still wants them.

Mr. Clark: It's clear that you would be happy to have them back if we were to move them back in. Yeah.

Member Tejada: At the same time, though, having that additional riding and having those communities together makes a lot of sense, too. Like I said, I already share a community association with another MLA, and I feel like more representation is better with all of the population growth that we've seen. We hear about it in the news all the time. I think it's great to have more representation.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, Ms Tejada. Very much appreciate it.

Member Tejada: Thanks so much.

The Chair: Please stay if you can because I think we might have time for dialogue.

Member Tejada: I will.

The Chair: We're running way behind time, I noticed. We are now supposed to be at 2:30, I think. So readjust your clocks, everyone. It's 2:30.

Mrs. Angela Aalbers, are you present? Good afternoon. Have a seat, and make yourself comfortable.

Mrs. Aalbers: Aaron does have a copy of the presentation, all the materials, but if you would like a hard copy, I brought them. I cut a few trees down. So if you'd like them, then that's possible.

The Chair: Sure. Give them to us before you leave or now. Yeah. We don't want to waste.

3:10

Mrs. Aalbers: While Aaron is getting stuff ready, anyways.

Okay. Well, good afternoon, commission members. Thank you very much for having me. My name is Angela Aalbers, and I'm the reeve of Mountain View county. This is my fourth term as an elected official and my fifth year as reeve of the county. I'm here today to address two matters, first on behalf of my council and the residents of Mountain View county and secondly on behalf of rural Alberta more broadly.

Mountain View county is currently in two electoral divisions, Rimby-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre and Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. This representation has worked extremely well and has served our community fairly and effectively. The current provincial boundaries reflect the needs of our residents and align with the type of representation our county requires.

Importantly, the current provincial boundaries also align with our municipal governance structure, which recognizes significant differences between the eastern and western sides of the county. At the municipal level we have four elected officials representing the west and three representing the east. I've provided a map of our electoral boundaries at the municipal level.

This distinction is intentional and necessary due to fundamental differences across the county. These differences include agriculture. The eastern portion of the county is primarily focused on cropping and confined feeding operations while the western portion specializes in livestock and forage production.

Crown land and recreation. Crown land and associated recreational activities occur exclusively in the western portion of the county.

Emergency response. Fire departments in Sundre, Water Valley, and Cremona require very different training than those in Olds, Didsbury, and Carstairs. Western departments must be equipped for forest fire response and backcountry and river rescue.

Renewable energy development. Provincial focus on renewable energy is most likely to occur in the eastern portions of the county, where open priority landscapes are more suitable. This continues to be a contentious issue for rural Alberta.

Infrastructure and economic development. The western portion of the county relies on the highway 22 corridor, including communities such as James River, Bearberry, Water Valley, Sundre, Cremona, and stretching out to Rocky Mountain House. The eastern portion relies on the QE II corridor, including Carstairs, Didsbury, and Olds.

Water and waste-water services. Eastern communities such as Olds, Didsbury, and Carstairs have access to regional water and waste-water systems. In contrast, western communities, including Cremona, Sundre, and areas north to Rocky Mountain House, rely on stand-alone infrastructure such as lagoons, reservoirs, and local treatment facilities.

Forestry. A western-aligned electoral division preserves this cohesive forestry community of interest and supports effective representation by aligning boundaries with forest management areas.

While we understand the commission's rationale for proposing a single riding encompassing all of Mountain View county as outlined on page 71 of your draft report with the creation of the Mountain View-Kneehill riding, we believe there is far too much diversity across the county to be adequately represented by one MLA. Representation should reflect common interests and shared realities, not solely municipal boundaries or population counts. We

believe we've clearly demonstrated why the existing east-west division of ridings is both logical and necessary.

Although the commission has noted agriculture is a dominant industry in the proposed Lacombe-Rocky Mountain House riding as outlined on page 67 of your draft report, we respectfully submit that the type of agriculture matters. There is a meaningful distinction between cropping-based systems and livestock- and forage-based operations, and these differences drive policy priorities and representation needs.

We also ask the commission to give significant weight to the following factors: economic development and access to major transportation corridors being the highway 22 corridor and the QE II corridor; water and waste-water infrastructure, particularly the differing needs of communities accessing regional systems versus those on stand-alone systems; access to Crown land and recreation, which represents both opportunities and challenges unique to our western side of the county; emergency services, including wildfire response and the extensive need for municipal and provincial collaboration within the forest protection areas; and, finally, the forest industry. This needs aligned municipal and provincial advocacy.

Mountain View county respectfully requests that the commission revisit the proposed boundary alignment and, based on the information provided, revert to the current structure of representation that our ratepayers deserve, naturally being a more westerly alignment and a more easterly alignment.

I know that I'm close to the end of my time. However, I would be remiss in not taking the opportunity to address the reduction of rural ridings in Alberta. The reduction in rural ridings proposed in the draft report reflects a dynamic that Canadians already are familiar with at the federal level. Just as population concentrations in eastern Canada have long resulted in western Canada having a diminished voice at Parliament, population growth within our urban centres is now reducing the relative voice of rural Albertans in our own Legislature. Rural regions are geographically large – sorry. I lost my place now.

While representation by population is important, it cannot be the sole measure of fairness. Rural regions are geographically large, economically significant, and face complex responsibilities related to agriculture, resource management, emergency services, and infrastructure. Fewer rural MLAs representing larger and more diverse areas risks undermining the principle of effective representation, which requires that the geography, community interest, and regional realities be meaningfully reflected at the table where the decisions are made.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs. Aalbers.

Mr. Clark, any questions or comments?

Mr. Clark: Thank you. I appreciate your presentation, and I also appreciate you sharing the written presentation with us, so we've got that. Yeah. I mean, I think you've really hit on one of the big challenges, and if you've been kind of listening to some of the previous presenters, we really struggle with the significant population growth that we've seen, the massive influx. It's all – not exclusively, but almost all of it – in Calgary and Edmonton. It doesn't mean that Mountain View county hasn't grown at all relative to the big cities and the surrounding areas. It hasn't grown as quickly, so it makes for a challenging exercise.

What I'm curious about is that you've mentioned Clearwater county, the pieces of Clearwater county that are sort of part of this. Can you tell me about the sort of connection or not with Clearwater county?

Mrs. Aalbers: Yeah. There's a large connection with Clearwater county. Things like the forest management programs, how we look at tourism on the west country. Mountain View county works with Clearwater county on their Sasquatch program, which is really trying to bring more awareness of how to use the west country in a more sustainable and effective way. We have regional mutual aid agreements with Clearwater county on fire services.

The other big one that I know I've mentioned is the forestry industry. Probably twice an election cycle we try to get together with Clearwater county. They have the big LDF plant; we have West Fraser Mills in Sundre. So the sharings of how we can best lobby on behalf of our forestry. We did this when it came to the mountain pine beetle, when we had the outbreaks. We worked very, very closely with Clearwater county to lobby on behalf of the forest industry through our Rural Municipalities of Alberta and through our MLAs. So it's been a great collaboration with Clearwater county.

Mr. Clark: Did you say that was the Sasquatch program?

Mrs. Aalbers: It's called the Sasquatch program, yes.

Mr. Clark: Is that named after the actual sasquatch?

Mrs. Aalbers: It is, and they've got a lovely logo. They've done great work in trying to raise awareness for the west country and keep it pristine.

Mr. Clark: Great. Beautiful. Thank you.

Mrs. Aalbers: You're welcome.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you and thanks for the handout. Lots to chew on there, but the key for me is your distinction on many different themes between the east side and the west side of your county and why that's of significance to us because of the way our interim map was presented.

3:20

Again, you and your colleagues do see a very clear distinction economically as much as culturally between the east and west side, and that's key to the different types of agricultural production and resource management issues that east and west severally have to look after, and they're very distinct. Is that something that's baked into the policy of the council? You've got to have several of your councillors from the west side and several from the east and you from the west as well. How do you prioritize issues?

Mrs. Aalbers: I guess in how it would impact provincially and how we lobby provincially, things like the issues right now with canola, for instance: that very, very much impacts the eastern side of the county. So we're very thankful that we can have an MLA who's very focused on the canola production. It doesn't impact the west as much, so it gives us an opportunity for our MLA, who's very focused on that type of agriculture, to look for that, whereas, you know, when things like wildfire seasons come to fruition, unfortunately, every year, we're focused more with our MLA in Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. It's a mouthful; I'm sorry.

Dr. Martin: No. We apologize. Our predecessors stuck that label on.

Mrs. Aalbers: We're focused on that. Things like when the mountain pine beetle comes through and impacts our forest

industry: then we can work directly with that MLA, where the other MLA now is focused on issues like canola and export.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Mrs. Aalbers: You're welcome.

The Chair: Mrs. Aalbers, you are heading up a very interesting county.

Mrs. Aalbers: We are very, very lucky.

The Chair: If I said to you that you are going against the grain of most other municipalities, what would you say to that?

Mrs. Aalbers: Probably not unusual, but we think we do have a very strong case for why we're bringing this forward. We're not bringing this forward for the sake of being difficult.

The Chair: That's not what I meant.

Mrs. Aalbers: When the federal riding came through and we went from being represented by two MPs to three MPs, we thought that was going to be a complication but realized that it was a huge opportunity. The more voices you have representing your communities, the more opportunities you have for access to ministries, the more time you have as focused items.

Again, I appreciate very much what the commission is trying to do and that you may see one MLA as a positive. However, we believe that we're so diverse and there are so many issues coming up, and they continue to come up – renewable energies is a very large one for rural municipalities. It will be very focused on the eastern side of the county, not so much on the western side. So having those two MLAs that we're able to give those key differences in those issues to is extremely important for Mountain View county.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Susan.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. It was most interesting. Am I correct to understand that the eastern edges that are now new to your electoral district, Trochu and Three Hills: would you suggest that they fit in well with those that are bordering on highway 2, like in terms of agriculture?

Mrs. Aalbers: Yes, very much. We do have a very large distinction between the QE II east and the 22 west.

Mrs. Samson: Right.

Mrs. Aalbers: And then we have kind of the grey zone and kind of it fits all between the 22 and the QE II corridor.

Mrs. Samson: Right. I see the same thing occurring. Like, when the map was redrawn and it took more to the north towards the North Saskatchewan, there weren't any large municipalities or towns in there. We felt that it might be easier to be absorbed in there. What are your thoughts? I know it's new to this, but is that acceptable?

Mrs. Aalbers: To move more east?

Mrs. Samson: We're talking west now, because now you go all the way. Before you stopped at Sundre, and now you move farther north, taking in the North Saskatchewan. Is that not new, that far?

Mrs. Aalbers: I thought it was condensed west to west.

Mrs. Samson: Okay.

Mrs. Aalbers: Oh, I see. You're going – that's the . . .

Dr. Martin: Clearwater county.

Mrs. Aalbers: Clearwater county.

Mrs. Samson: Yeah. We took more of Clearwater county into that riding.

Mrs. Aalbers: Yeah. Taking more of Clearwater county into the riding, I think it fits very well with the whole area between sort of Clearwater county and Water Valley. That whole area there is very distinctive. I think that would fit very, very well.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Mrs. Aalbers: Yes. You're welcome.

The Chair: Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: What kind of working relationship does your county have with the city of Red Deer?

Mrs. Aalbers: We have very little to do with the city of Red Deer as Mountain View county. We are part of a waste-water commission that feeds waste water into the city of Red Deer, but Mountain View county is a very small portion of that because we don't actually have any lines. We just have, essentially, a dump into. So we have very little to do with the city.

Mr. Evans: Are you in any discussions with respect to annexations or anything like that?

Mrs. Aalbers: No. We went through a big annexation probably eight to 10 years ago with our towns, our current towns, mainly Olds, Didsbury, Carstairs, and Sundre, and they haven't yet reached the potential of the growth that was in those annexations.

To Mr. Clark's point: I understand that the urban growth is great. The concern that rurals have is that the more focus and the more representation we have in the urban centres, the more we're going to stagnate the growth in the rural opportunities. We need to find a way as a province to really generate some of that growth in the rural, and the less representation we have, the more the growth will even slow down.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, and again thank you for your written presentation. As you know, we are dealing with mountains of information here, and this is helpful and interesting perspective. I won't drive up highway 2 between Calgary and Edmonton without thinking of this presentation.

Mrs. Aalbers: Well, please come visit us. Come visit us in the west country. It is something beautiful to be seen if you haven't already been there.

The Chair: I haven't been to the Trochu museum yet.

Mrs. Aalbers: The gopher museum? You've got to go.

Mr. Clark: To Torrington.

Mrs. Aalbers: To Torrington. Yeah.

Mr. Clark: Our U.K. relatives: it's absolutely a big part of the tour.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you so much.

Mrs. Aalbers: You are very welcome.

The Chair: We are now at break time or well past break time. Mr. Ellingson is here. I'm not sure other presenters are here. Okay.

If we don't change the boundaries, maybe you need an MLA that knows the county well.

Let's have five minutes only, okay? Five minutes only. Thank you.

[The hearing adjourned from 3:29 p.m. to 3:35 p.m.]

The Chair: Okay. I'm going to have to call the commission to order. I've just looked at the time, and we have a very limited opportunity to hear at least four presenters. We can reconvene.

Mr. Court Ellingson, MLA for Calgary-Foothills, as it's now named.

Member Ellingson: Currently named Calgary-Foothills.

The Chair: Yes.

Member Ellingson: So you have obviously read my letter.

The Chair: Yes. It was a very helpful letter, by the way.

I think we're going to be a little bit more strict with the time limits now because we've got bleed into the evening, et cetera, et cetera. Thank you.

Mr. Ellingson, please proceed.

Member Ellingson: Thank you. I will not exceed my six minutes. I'm used to putting a timer on so that when I'm in the House, I know that I'm getting close to the end of my speech.

First of all, I wanted to really thank the panel for the work that you have already done. I wholeheartedly recognize just the volume of data that you guys are going through, qualitative data and quantitative data. I know that in the first round you had a ton of letters and presentations and that you incorporated all of that into your work. I note that in the second round now you're getting another large volume of data and that you're going to do your very best to incorporate that into your work as well. I just wanted to say that I really – I want to honour that. It is a lot of work, and I think you guys are really taking that on. I really appreciate that.

I wanted to thank you in your initial round of work for acknowledging the population growth on Calgary's northern edge and northeastern edge. That obviously factored into the first cut of draft proposal that you sent us, noting kind of, like, the changes that you had proposed were clearly taking into account that very high level of population growth on the north and in the northeast. As part of that, I also wanted to acknowledge that with what is currently named Calgary-Foothills, it is proposed to remain an urban riding. I do think that that's important.

I think I talked about in the first boundary commission submission the diverse nature of what is Calgary-Foothills. I think it is important that it remains an urban riding because I think that you will see, like, there are significant demographic differences between the communities of Calgary-Foothills and the rural communities that are north of Calgary. In Calgary-Foothills those suburban communities are very ethnoculturally diverse. I think you will find that if you go north of the city into the rural area, you'll find very different demographics, and you'll find very different approaches to what is important and the work that they're trying to do and what they would expect from representation from their MLA. So I wanted to recognize that, to me, that's important, that it

did stay urban and that that draft proposal noted that it would stay urban.

I also wanted to talk just very briefly about, like, the attachment to the constituency. You've heard that from a lot of MLAs. I will say that it's interesting for me because I only moved to the constituency four months in advance of the election in May of 2023, so the last three years have been a real growth and opportunity for me to come to know the neighbourhoods and the constituency, the relationships between different parts of the constituency, where they go to gather, how they come together and gather.

I wanted to use that as a little bit to talk for a moment about that proposed name change that I threw out there. I wanted to say that just one of the things that I've had the real honour of is spending a lot of time with the communities of Kincora, Sherwood, Nolan Hill, and Sage Hill as they work together in addressing the recreational needs of the communities of northern Calgary. They're all working together on a combined proposal to build something called Symons Valley park, which would be physically located in Kincora, but it's a collaborative effort of four different communities, and it would be absolutely accessed by the neighbourhoods of those Symons Valley communities. Now, the newer kind of Symons Valley communities that are coming along like Glacier Ridge would all be kind of working together for that park, which would benefit all of them.

I also wanted to talk a little bit about, like, the gathering points. There is one really important gathering place. I'll talk a little bit about, you know, the potential of us losing Arbour Lake and how much that means to us, that we would be losing Arbour Lake.

Symons Valley United church is a critical gathering point culturally for faith groups, for just different communities, where they come together and are using Symons Valley United church. One of them is the Al-Makkah Islamic Society, that also has a prayer group that prays on Fridays at Symons Valley United church. That place is a gathering place for all of those communities coming together at Symons Valley. It's a Christian building, but it's a place of gathering for both Christians and for Muslims. That's just kind of representative of how those communities in Calgary-Foothills are coming together.

Yeah. I see that I'm at five minutes and 40 seconds. I'm going to throw in one thing that I didn't put in my letter and I didn't talk about in the first round, and that is that while the draft change would put Evanston together, because Calgary-Foothills currently represents a sliver of Evanston, maybe there's an opportunity here for the new map to keep Citadel together.

We have Citadel Green and Citadel Grove east of Nose Hill Drive, but that little sliver of Citadel: their membership gives them access to the Citadel Community Association. The community news comes in the Citadel community newsletter, not the Hamptons community newsletter. If, for example, as an MLA, as the MLA representing that little sliver of Citadel, you were representing Hamptons but you also had that little sliver of Citadel because it's west of Nose Hill Drive, you're going to pay to put your stuff into the Citadel newspaper. So you're incurring that. Just to reach those few hundred people, you have to go through the Citadel Community Association and the Citadel newsletter. It may be of interest. Like, it's a matter of a few hundred people, but it might make sense to keep it with Calgary-Foothills instead of the proposed Calgary-Beddington if that makes sense.

I've gone over my six minutes, so I'm going to stop.

The Chair: Okay. Can you go right up there and tell us where Citadel Green and Citadel Grove are? As you're there, I'll open it up for questions as well.

Member Ellingson: Sure.

The Chair: Just point to where they are.

Member Ellingson: Oh, actually, I guess it's Sarcee that I'm talking about. Nose Hill was down here.

The Chair: Oh, good.

Member Ellingson: Sarcee is what I'm talking about. Sorry about that. It's this little piece off of Sarcee Trail. Just east of Sarcee Trail. It's got no physical road connection to the Hamptons.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Thank you.
Questions?

Mr. Clark: I found it on our map here. I see it, and we'll make a note of it.

Mrs. Samson: So it's just Citadel you're looking for and the Hamptons?

Member Ellingson: I mean, I went over time, so I didn't go into my argument about how, as I said in the first round, with Arbour Lake we have only two community associations with halls where we can go and, like, book that hall and use it as a place of gathering. Arbour Lake is one of them, so by losing Arbour Lake, we lose one of our critical gathering, meeting places. Yeah. It leaves us with only Citadel, or then we have to go outside the riding to bring people together.

The Chair: So getting back Citadel gives you a meeting place.

Member Ellingson: Well, keeping Citadel. Your proposal does include Citadel, so it does leave us with one community hall.

The Chair: Okay. Questions? Very quickly.

Mr. Clark: I don't have any questions, but thank you very much for coming. I appreciate it.

Dr. Martin: I recall our previous conversation about gravel pits and the like. A large part of your footprint is not residential.

Member Ellingson: There's a ton of industrial, and as I have commented with my colleagues, there are almost as many prisons and now recovery centres as there are schools.

Dr. Martin: Right. And then the area north of the gravel pit area is undeveloped, large acreages. Are they acreages or are they farms out towards the city boundary?

Member Ellingson: They are, like, a mix of some of them, kind of practising farms like acreages. But there are practising farms there just north of the city boundary.

Dr. Martin: You mean working farms, not attempting to be a farm.

Member Ellingson: What I will say is that I think because of the activity of the gravel pit, I'm not sure that that area is designated to ever be kind of, like, more fully developed residentially. I think there are plans to keep a buffer zone between the gravel pits and more dense residential, if that makes sense.

3:45

Dr. Martin: It does. Thank you.

The Chair: Mrs. Samson.

Mrs. Samson: No questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: No, thank you.
I appreciate your presentation.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much. We did read your letter and it stood out and we're considering that.

Member Ellingson: Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Oh, I'm sorry. We cut you off too soon, but are you in agreement that you wanted Calgary-Symons Valley?

Member Ellingson: Calgary-Symons Valley is what I would propose as the name.

Mrs. Samson: S-y?

Member Ellingson: Why Symons Valley?

Mrs. Samson: No, the spelling is s-y?

Member Ellingson: Oh, the spelling is s-y. Yeah.

Mrs. Samson: Because I had some people who said: s-i-m.

Member Ellingson: The spelling is s-y. Yeah.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Clark: There are 293 people in that little part of Citadel.

Mrs. Samson: Okay.

The Chair: You can absorb that.

Member Ellingson: Well, then maybe I would be close to the 55,000 target, because you noted that I would be slightly under.

The Chair: You want to be one that's right on, right?
Thank you very much.

Member Ellingson: Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: The next presenter is Mr. Bakaraju. Please come forward. Have a seat and get comfortable and please correct me if I was wrong on your pronunciation.

Mr. Bakaraju: Yeah, no worries at all. It's Pranav Bakaraju.

The Chair: Bakaraju. Okay. Thank you.
Tell us where you're from. You presented last time.

Mr. Bakaraju: I did present earlier.

The Chair: You work in a constituency office?

Mr. Bakaraju: I work for the gentleman who just finished presenting.

The Chair: Oh, so you're tag-teaming. Okay.

Mr. Bakaraju: You'll find this presentation is, if not identical, very similar to what you just had, so I will also be brief. I'll say the same thing that Court did. Thank you so much for the work that you're doing. We do understand it's a lot of data that you're taking in and a very important process for our democracy, so much appreciated.

My name is Pranav Bakaraju. I'm MLA Court Ellingson's constituency manager in Calgary-Foothills. I do live in Calgary-Buffalo in downtown, but I regularly go to the northwest to work, and I'm very familiar with the riding and, sort of, do that case work within the office. I'll kind of high-level cover some of the comments I did in my previous presentation, but I won't go into too much detail because you already have that info.

Similar to what the MLA just said, I will echo our thanks for the acknowledgement of the growing population of the northern part of the city, and specifically our northwest area, along with the fact that the proposed boundaries remain within the city of Calgary. We do hear from constituents. I hear directly from them often about how, you know, sometimes the Calgary suburbs are seen to be very far away from the city core, and they don't like that perception. They want to be a part of the city, so having a provincial boundary jurisdiction within the city of Calgary boundaries, having that aligned is very valuable for them. I've heard that both anecdotally, and it makes sense objectively as well when you think about community associations and how they interact with representatives both municipally and provincially. It's just helpful to have that alignment, so thanks so much for that.

Around the kind of cultural connections, as the MLA also pointed out, there is a very diverse demographic within Calgary-Foothills, within the boundaries that currently exist and that are proposed whereas if you start heading a little bit more west into Cochrane or a little bit further north into more of that rural area, the demographics are quite different. The sort of shared values of the communities would be different. If there was any kind of advocacy that was being done, you would almost have two elements of people who live more in the urban area of the riding versus the rural area of the riding. In this manner that you've proposed it, we avoid that problem, so that's very appreciated as well.

As Court mentioned, we have a very strong Chinese community, a large community of African-Caribbean Black communities that live in our area, Muslims, and Hindus as well. So it's very, very rich in its diversity, and they're all represented through these various community associations. We brought up one of the challenges in the previous presentation with Evanston being sort of split off. I see in this proposed map that Evanston is now removed from our riding, and of course, we'll be sad to not represent them anymore. That being said, it makes sense from a logical sense. So thank you for that.

Secondly, I will echo what the MLA was saying around Citadel. We were just looking at the map and identified those streets as being east of Sarcee Trail, the ones that he was mentioning. Moving that to be part of the Citadel Community Association group would be very helpful within the riding.

I think that last time you sort of joked about whether we should change the name or not, and I said that I like the name Calgary-Foothills for the aesthetic. But as you can see, I have lost that fight internally with our office and with some constituents who have said – and I do agree with them completely in the constituency office. Sometimes I get e-mails that are intended for the Foothills hospital, or I get e-mails for the Foothills federal riding, which is south of the city, and I have to remind them and kind of share that difference. So if we do change this name, it would make a lot of sense to avoid that. Calgary-Symons Valley – it is Symons with a Y – I think that's an apt name considering the neighbourhood communities.

Actually, I learned a little bit more about the history of Calgary-Symons Valley. I did not know that was the original name quite some time ago, so I think that it goes back to . . .

The Chair: For the electoral district?

Mr. Bakaraju: Not the electoral district, just that neighbourhood, that area of communities. There are some people that were quite passionate about that is what we learned.

I'm just going to quickly check my notes here, but I think that kind of covers everything. I don't want to repeat too much.

The Chair: Okay. Quick question. If we were to take in the area east of Sarcee . . .

Mr. Bakaraju: That's Citadel Grove.

The Chair: Citadel. What would the boundary be on that little sliver?

Mr. Bakaraju: The boundary would remain Sarcee Trail, but there would be a bit of a cut-off, so we have to describe that cut-off almost.

The Chair: Yeah. We have to describe that cut-off, so what would that be?

Mr. Bakaraju: Got it. I mean, do you mean just . . .

Mr. Clark: I've got the city map there. It backs onto a park. So it's one just little . . .

Mrs. Samson: Citadel Green.

Mr. Bakaraju: Citadel Green N.W. and Citadel Grove N.W. There's only two streets, and it would kind of be almost like a triangle kind of angle.

The Chair: I get that, but Sarcee Trail couldn't be the boundary, right?

Dr. Martin: You'd have a bump-out.

Mr. Bakaraju: Yeah. You'd have a bump-out. Exactly.

The Chair: Yeah, so how do you describe – what street is that?

Mr. Clark: That's Citadel Green. It's actually a park.

The Chair: So we just need a name for that.

Mr. Clark: We'll figure that out.

The Chair: Okay. We'll leave brighter minds to figure that out.

Mr. Bakaraju: No worries. I'll echo the point that the MLA mentioned, that Arbour Lake has been our primary meeting spot, so that is a bit of a loss for us. But we understand that, you know, you've got to do what you've got to do. In the north there's just a lack of community association meeting spaces, which is a bit tough, but we'll have some events out of the riding, I guess, is what that means.

The Chair: Okay. Questions.
Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: No, I don't have anything.

The Chair: Mrs. Samson.

Mrs. Samson: I'm good. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Even I have nothing more to add.

Mr. Clark: There is a first time for everything, but I think it's fair to say that Calgary-Foothills has been well represented this afternoon. So thank you very much.

Mr. Bakaraju: Thank you. Much appreciated. Thanks for your time.

The Chair: I thought it was Calgary-Symons Valley.
Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Carra, make yourself comfortable. Identify yourself and what area of the city you represent.

Mr. Carra: Hello, everyone. My name is Gian-Carlo Carra. I am a private citizen right now. When last we spoke, I was presenting when you were setting everything up. I think I took some time out for my son's soccer game and was sitting in my car talking to you. At the time I was the city councillor representing ward 9 in east Calgary, which involves a number of MLA constituencies.

I bestirred myself to speak to you because I think I was talking about how we were organizing the city and what we've experienced in terms of the city's electoral boundaries and growth trajectories and the importance of trying to skate to where the puck is going, and I'm standing before you today to say congratulations. I think you did a good job with what's proposed. I imagine there are probably people who are happy with it and people who are unhappy with it, and I thought I would lend my voice to people who are happy for it.

The Chair: Are you referencing any particular riding?

3:55

Mr. Carra: No. I'm referencing what you did.

I mean, you know, the fact that we're under a water advisory right now has a lot to do with decisions made by our representation and investments and things like that.

The argument I was making to you is that we are becoming a much more urban province. Our cities are growing very quickly, and they have to balance investing in accommodating that growth with also maintaining the very expensive and extensive infrastructure systems that we had. And we got into a conversation that dealt with that.

You know, I want to thank you for creating an extra urban riding. I think what we've heard from the MLAs that have presented is how important it is to keep cultural communities and communities of interest intact, and I think you did a very good job of balancing that. Creating an extra seat really helps. I do think that we are going to continue to grow very quickly as a city. We need to invest in that city, and we need political representation to do that.

I think that you guys have done a very good job of balancing all interests in this. I just wanted to take time out of my private life right now to thank you for that work and to encourage you to hold the line, you know, in the event that there are more political forces trying to push you back to certain status quos. I think that this is an important change. I feel like my comments were very much heard by this commission.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.
Dr. Martin, any questions or comments?

Dr. Martin: I was just looking in my notes to find out the conversation we had in the spring, but I can't . . .

The Chair: I remember it was out of Edmonton. We were in Edmonton, and you were . . .

Mr. Carra: Yeah, I was phoning in from my car next to a soccer field.

The Chair: Yeah.

Well, Mr. Clark, any questions?

Dr. Martin: Yeah, please. I'll come back if I find . . .

Mr. Clark: So you were on council when the blanket rezoning discussion was happening.

Mr. Carra: I was.

Mr. Clark: I don't mean to sort of poke at potential – I mean, that's obviously an ongoing topic. As a private citizen, though, someone who has got a lot of background in this area, do you have any sense of where that might end? Like, what's the upshot of all that going forward? If we don't have blanket rezoning, do we have targeted density? Does that whole idea go out the window and we sprawl on the edges? What do you feel is a most likely scenario?

Mr. Carra: I believe that our conversation went in this direction, and what I talked about was how in 2009 the city passed a municipal development plan that very clearly identified that we couldn't continue sprawling endlessly and that we had to strike a better balance between outward growth and upward growth.

In 2010 I became a member of city council. My professional expertise was really in helping cities across North America achieve better balances in terms of how they grow. So what we tried to do was affect what the MDP was talking about. What the MDP was talking about was that over the 60 years of the municipal development plan's life the intention was to strike – instead of 100 per cent growth occurring on the city's edge, you wanted to do 50 per cent of the growth on the city's edge and 50 per cent within the established areas. So over the next 15 years it was really sort of a battle to move from a regulatory system, a marketplace that was focused on outward growth to a system that better accommodated both.

What we tried to do at first was really sort of go community by community. We basically split the city into 41 multicomunity areas, and we attempted to work with every community to figure out where their share of the growth would go. What we found was that every time we had a conversation about that, the derailing conversation – you know, not: "Where do we put the parks? Where do we put the rec centres? Where do we put the main streets? Where do we put the transit stops?" It was: how dense is the area right around my house going to get? That was always a derailing conversation.

I think in an attempt to get back to the more meaningful conversation, which is, "Where are the major receiving areas supposed to be?" let's establish a new floor for density across the city, and then we can roll up our sleeves and have the more important, more thoughtful conversations. We did that knowing that there would probably be political backlash, but we were sort of stalling out.

From 1999, when we first identified that we couldn't continue to grow the way we were growing, to 2009 the city's growth was 103 per cent on the edge, minus 3 per cent in the established areas. Two thousand and nine to 2019, which was sort of the heartland of the work that I did as a city councillor, we managed to go 10 per cent redevelopment, 90 per cent growth on the edge, which means that over the next five decades in order to hit a cumulative 50-50, 58 per cent of all growth has to take place in the established areas and 42 per cent has to take place on the edge. Now, that 42 per cent number reflects, I think, the natural limits of growth. While we do live in a prairie and we're not bounded by mountains and oceans, we do bump up against municipal neighbours, and there are limits to growth. The established places where you can continue to grow

really represent 42 per cent of all growth possible, so that means 58 per cent has to take place in the established areas.

I think that the universal upzoning was intended to create an environment where about 30 per cent of that 58 per cent would take place, and then the other 70 per cent would have to take place in major receiving areas for growth, things like the East Village, things like the bridges, things like the University district, like Truman's West District. You know, I think we need 40 or 50 of those over the next five decades, and that's really the planning challenge. You need to have representatives both at the municipal level and the provincial level who understand that and understand the role of public investment in helping provoke the necessary private investment to get those outcomes.

Mr. Clark: Great. That's really helpful. Thank you.

Dr. Martin: I found my notes. We were talking precisely about this in the spring, and I just want to press you a little further.

Mr. Carra: Happy to opine.

Dr. Martin: You offered some more granular information on that. What we were discussing then and what you outlined, really, is what I understand to be quite classic modern urban planning theory. It's key to high-transit nodes, collector nodes for populations that can use high transit so you can go up. Absolutely classic. What you've just described about the relative proportions of the building isn't consistent with that, is it? I mean, there's an awful lot of struggle to get the densification along the LRT nodes.

Mr. Carra: Yeah. I would say that there are a number of barriers to get the kind of development we want to see along that, and some of it – I mean, whenever I'm talking about change to people in cities, I always sort of use the example of London as a food city, right? You know, London has been famous for hundreds of years as being an imperial capital with the worst food culture imaginable considering the breadth of their empire, and in the last 30 or 40 years London has gone from the laughingstock of the culinary world to one of the great food cities of the world.

There's a tipping point that happens in that situation where you need to get a critical mass of people who know what good food is and want to buy it, you need to have a critical mass of restaurateurs who know how to produce that and can cater to that clientele, and you need to have an entire supply network of suppliers who can bring high-quality ingredients to the table. Until you get that critical mass, you're not over the hump. I would say that the transition that we are seeking in cities across North America – and, you know, I would say that Calgary is an exceptional example of that transition – is to move from the postwar city of the automobile to the much more multimodal city and the polycentric city. It's a very difficult thing because you need customers who want to buy, you need developers who are willing to develop, and you need a regulatory system that supports that.

If I've learned anything in my 15 years on council – I think when we arrived at council, there were a number of councillors who were very interested in negotiating a new deal with the development industry wherein growth would pay for itself. If I've learned anything in 15 years, it's that there is no growth any time in the history of the world where growth has exclusively paid for itself; it's always been creating as beneficent a relationship between public investment and private investment. I think when it's done wrong, it's a public subsidy in private profits, and when it's done right, you are creating, you know, as sustainable – economically, socially, financially from a jobs perspective – a city as possible. It's really important, backing up to the job of this commission, to create

political representation that has a fighting chance of being cognizant of that in their representation of their constituents.

4:05

Dr. Martin: I want to do one follow-up if I may. That's that in your description of the relative percentages over the last couple of decades between growth in the central part of Calgary and on its periphery, the percentage change has moved, yet there's still going to be considerable growth on the periphery going forward. I don't want you to speculate. I understand there's been a complete changeover in the city council's thinking around this whole matter, which could only, I suppose, accentuate growth on the periphery.

Mr. Carra: I would say that most councillors and mayors who come in might have a more, I will say, suburban mindset, a more traditional or conventional approach to growth in mind, and as they spend time in the seat and they look at the numbers – I mean, let's take a look at the water system. Like, our expert panel just came back and said, you know, "You have 15,000 kilometres of pipe inside city limits," which is a ridiculous amount of pipe for our relatively low population, right? We have way more pipe in the ground, we have way more lane kilometres of asphalt road, we have way more curb and gutter than our population would – we're out of whack. We're significantly more than Edmonton, and then we're oceans more than places like central Vancouver and Montreal.

Dr. Martin: You're kind of like Denver.

Mr. Carra: We are, but the difference, of course, between us and Denver is that Denver is a metropolitan region and the city of Calgary is one jurisdiction, right? Like, anywhere else you go in North America and you have an urban agglomeration the size of Calgary, you're dealing with multiple city councils and mayors, you're dealing with multiple tax bases, you're dealing with multiple fire departments and police departments. Our unicity model, which was bequeathed to us in the 1950s by the provincial McNally commission, you know, really did us a favour in terms of creating as maximally efficient a governance environment for that postwar, automobile-scaled city. That gets back to the work of this commission, which is that it is our job to create a regulatory and governance environment that maximally sets us up for success as we move into the next city we have to build, which is a much more mixed-use, multimodal, and polycentric city.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Samson, any questions?

Mrs. Samson: No. Thank you for coming out.

Mr. Carra: My pleasure.

The Chair: Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: No questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Yeah. Thank you very much for coming again and in person.

Mr. Carra: Well, it's really important. If I've learned another thing in my 15 years, it's that governance is really important, and the work that you do has, you know, repercussions that echo through history. So I appreciate the work that you've done, and I just wanted to say: good work and please hold the line.

The Chair: Thank you.

Michele Moore, the next presenter.

Ms Moore: Good afternoon. I'm sort of keeping my distance because I'm afraid I might be getting something, so I will do my thing and then I will leave. I did a written submission to you in the first round, so I will just bring up my comments for this round. First of all, I'd like to say thank you for the work you did. I've read your interim report. It seemed to be quite good all around, and I appreciate you guys all stepping up to do the job you're doing. It's not an easy one, so thank you.

I come from Calgary-Glenmore, and everything we've seen in the Calgary-Glenmore plan looks pretty good. I'd like to thank you for preserving the particulars of that riding in that it's, you know, definitely a very cohesive community of interest.

I noticed in your interim report that you gave very serious consideration to the comments you received in the first round. Clearly, there was a consistent theme on the need for bringing effective representation to this growing province or to continue to provide that. I saw in the report that you also recognize the importance of redrawing the electoral boundaries to recognize that increase in population, so thanks for the additional seats to Edmonton and Calgary.

Really what I'm here to do is talk to you about the proposed hybrid riding of Calgary-Okotoks. The reason I'm here to talk to you about that is because I lived in the county of Foothills for many years, decades actually. Raised my family, ran a business, and owned land there right up to a few years ago. I was also an elected representative for the county of Foothills. In those days it was called the municipality of Foothills for division 6, which is exactly the area being proposed to be included in the Calgary-Okotoks hybrid riding.

I wanted to speak to that because, you know, if you refer back to my notes for my first submission, I was talking generally about how I saw the differences between rural and urban experiences of life. Of course, I've been living in Calgary now for 15-plus years. I said, as many other people did and it was really reflected in your interim report, that there is a very significant difference in general between urban and rural life. We all know that, and it was recognized in most of what you proposed. I'm concerned about the Calgary-Okotoks riding as a hybrid proposal because of my experience out there, and I'm still very strongly connected to people out there. I just don't think it's a good place to try out a hybrid riding.

Now I'm going to try to go straight to my notes and stay within that six minutes. I'm speaking against creating that Calgary-Okotoks riding, but I'd like to first say that I understand there are instances where hybrid ridings really can work. Fort McMurray seems to me to be the best example that I could pull from what I was looking at in the report. Knowing Fort McMurray as I do, which is not personally but through my work as an elected person and beyond that in some political science work, it's evident that there's a lot of commonality between the people who live in the periphery of the city of Fort McMurray itself and the Wood Buffalo municipality. Basically, that's because everyone more or less works in the industry, right? There's a lot of commonality there, and I can see how a hybrid riding could work there, but the same cannot be said for the Foothills county and the city of Calgary residents.

If you were to drive south on Macleod Trail and it becomes highway 2, you'd pass Calgary's Legacy neighbourhood on the east side of highway 2 at 210th Avenue, and you'd pass the Belmont and Creekside neighbourhoods on the west side. These are all typical high-density urban neighbourhoods – right? – tons of shopping centres and so on. The opportunities and expectations in those neighbourhoods are what every dense city neighbourhood has, and people expect certain things there. But once you're south of 210th Avenue, you're going to see the landscape change dramatically, like very abruptly it changes.

Some of those acreages that you see right from the highway were there in the '70s and '80s; they haven't even changed. They have not been subdivided. Of course, there's the odd one, but generally it looks very similar. And that's just what you see from highway 2. You continue south along highway 2. You hit the corridor to Dunbow Road, which is where I lived, or you can keep going to 552, and both of those corridors run east into the countryside. You'll see, at the very beginning of both of those corridors once you turn east off highway 2, some of those kind of classic two-acre parcels with the big nice cut grass and the huge house planted in the middle of it. But that is not really the nature of the vast majority of that area that's proposed to be included in this hybrid riding.

Most people out there truly do live a rural life to this day. Even the people that are on five-acre parcels are raising chickens or they have a couple of horses. A lot of the larger parcels, 40 acres, used to cut oats when I was there. We did it ourselves. I think there are still some of them, lots out there, that are 40 acres when you get further east sort of to 80th Street, when it really begins to change into those larger farm parcels, where people are quite serious about what they're doing even though it's not their main living. Then you hit 128th Street East, and it's big agricultural operations.

4:15

It's as you quoted Ms Littlewood in your interim report. She said that many of these rural residents belong to agricultural societies. They volunteer for the fire department. They eat a lot of hot dogs to raise funds for local things like they have out there: Foothills hospice, the Seaman Sports Park. That was brought in after I left. That is still the lifestyle out there. It is not a bedroom community by any sense of the imagination. Differences in the lifestyles were well described in my previous submission and by others.

What I'd really like to address specifically in this area with your report is the suggestion that hybrid ridings can lead to greater understanding and less division between urban and rural populations. My experience as an elected rep in the county of Foothills tells me that this is not a likely outcome and that it would be – if you got any of that, it wouldn't be pronounced enough to ensure effective representation.

In the interest of time, I'll give you one example from my experience as a councillor. Of course, on a council like in the county, it's seven divisions. I was the representative of division 6. We had to represent our constituents. We had effective representation, in my view, out there at the time. My division 6 took in all of Dunbow up to 80th Street and 552 to 80th Street. Beyond that, it was the big farms, and when I first came out there, there weren't a lot of five-acre parcels. There were some. We bought 40 acres ourselves. It was at the beginning of the subdivision process into smaller parcels.

As farmland was being subdivided right at the very west end of highway 552, just east of highway 2, people there who were occupying those acreages wanted the speed limit reduced on highway 552, but the farmers, large and small, from 80th Street on did not want that. They weren't even happy that there were acreages being developed on that land, and they certainly didn't want anyone telling them that they couldn't drive 100 kilometres an hour to go to the feed store.

Fortunately, I didn't have to represent both those voices, because division 5, Mr. Groeneveld – I don't know if anyone here knows the Groenevelts from out there, but Flores was my co-worker at the time. He and I were able to talk about this as two different councillors within the framework of the council committees that we had, right? Farmers won out on that one, but my constituents understood that I had represented their interests and made arguments for them and that, you know, the county council as a

whole voted to support the arguments of councillor 5 from division 5. If I'd had to represent both, I would have had one group very mad at me, and I wouldn't have been able to show up in local shops. I would have had them on my back. Trust me. I had that happen to me in other matters where I was having to deal with two conflicting opinions within my same constituency.

It's really important to recognize that we have these structures for a reason and that the biggest reason is that we learned hundreds of years ago that people really operate on emotion; they don't operate on logic. The best outcomes for collaboration and finding understanding between rural and urban populations is when their representatives are speaking to each other in a structured environment. I really believe that. I experienced it.

MLAs already have to deal with conflicts between constituents that are based on far more discrete differences than what I was describing. The understanding between rural and urban populations comes when representatives for each distinct community of interest consult within semiformal or formal structures created for exactly that, structures like the Calgary metropolitan region board or the various government committees or, if we're very lucky, in the Legislature itself. Those frameworks provide the parameters within which different viewpoints can be presented and policies can be hashed out with civility between MLAs and put to a vote where appropriate. Our entire government structure has evolved to provide a place where different communities of interest can be represented effectively and mitigate the inevitable conflicts that arise between different populations.

I think it's really important to remember that when you're looking at hybrid ridings and to imagine what it would be like for an MLA, never mind for the people who are being represented. Somebody is going to be left very disappointed, but the MLA as well is going to be in trouble. They're going to be attacked when they go to businesses inside the constituency. I've experienced it. It does happen. Nothing has changed. People have been this way forever, you know.

To summarize, I would agree that there are certain geographic areas where hybrid ridings can work such as Fort McMurray, but this cannot be said at all, I don't believe, for Foothills county and the south city of Calgary residents. They're distinctly urban, distinctly rural. Very different expectations, and I would encourage you to maybe not go that route on that proposal.

Thanks again for allowing me to share my views. I would like to congratulate you and thank you for the tremendous work you're doing. I agree with the people that spoke before me. Overall, it's just been excellent work, and I appreciate everything you're doing.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms Moore. We'll mark you down for option 2, then.

Ms Moore: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Well, because you've read it, you realize that it was not easy. We threw it out, and we welcome what you just said.

Ms Moore: Yes. Absolutely. I really appreciated it. I felt that your interim report was extremely balanced and realistic and encompassing of all the different things you have to think about. I do really appreciate the work you're doing.

The Chair: Any questions from Mr. Evans on it?

Mr. Evans: Yeah. If you've had a chance to look at appendix F of the interim report, there would be 18 existing hybrid ridings that

aren't ones that are proposed hybrids. That's in the next column over. For example, Airdrie-Cochrane, Airdrie-East. You mentioned Fort McMurray. Brooks-Medicine Hat, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Leduc-Beaumont, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, Grande Prairie-Wapiti, the riding named Grande Prairie – there are 18 of them.

I was interested that you chose Fort McMurray because Fort McMurray isn't really representative of anything else in the province in that the city itself runs as a municipality.

Ms Moore: Yeah. Wood Buffalo, right?

Mr. Evans: Yeah. So what I'm suggesting is that that wasn't a really great choice in terms of your argument. I understand what your argument is. You know, taking your argument and the important points that you've made, how would you apply them to Grande Prairie, for example? The other one that I think would be an interesting one to examine from your perspective would be Medicine Hat.

Ms Moore: Yeah. The reason I spoke specifically to this hybrid riding is because I'm very familiar with both. I'm not familiar enough – I played slo-pitch in Medicine Hat. I interviewed the mayor there once when I was working for the Canada West Foundation. I've driven through Grande Prairie, but I don't feel that I can speak to them.

The reason I felt I could speak to Fort McMurray is because I also interviewed the mayor of Fort McMurray back in the day and learned a little bit about that area and came to that conclusion on my own. Of course, the fact that it is one municipality: to me, that just sort of inherently gives you some of that structure already, right? You're going to have wards or divisions. But I acknowledge that, you know, it may not have been the best choice.

I don't think I can comment enough on the others because I really don't know how people live on the outskirts of Medicine Hat. There's lots of farming – right? – lots of oil and gas on the farms. Medicine Hat seems to be an urban town, but it's certainly not urban to the extent that Calgary is. That's about all I could say. Yeah.

Mr. Evans: Thank you.

The Chair: A very quick question. You've given us a written report or submission earlier on. You've obviously done a lot of work on this. Have you come across any academic material that coincides with what you're saying? Like, have you researched that far into academic journals and things like that?

4:25

Ms Moore: You know, I couldn't name something directly now, but I can say that I've studied political science at the university level. I read extensively, so when I made that sort of broad statement that our democratic system has evolved over time for the exact reason that I said, to avoid conflict, I think I've just absorbed that. I've come to that conclusion from past studies, but if you like, I would definitely look through my material.

The Chair: Hybrids are a real option and one of only three options that the history and the jurisprudence gives us. That's probably the biggest struggle we have in terms of: how do we best utilize all three options?

Ms Moore: Where they apply. Yeah.

The Chair: Yeah. The courts have said historically that you've got to do more hybrids if you're wanting to avoid losing rural support. It's a real conundrum, and you've touched on a very – I don't want

to say "sensitive" – really raw issue that we have to struggle with. If you come across anything academically, please send it.

Ms Moore: I'll send it.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Thank you.
Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: No. Nothing from me.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: No. Just thank you. That's a fantastic submission. I made very careful notes. I thought it was a really good example about the speed limit issues.

The Chair: And thank you for following us throughout. Like, written at the first stage . . .

Mr. Clark: Tell your friends.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Evans: Can we mark you down as a fan?

Ms Moore: Absolutely. Or maybe I'll just wait to see what you do with the final report.

Mr. Evans: Good call. Don't commit too much.

Ms Moore: All right. Thanks, folks.

The Chair: Okay. It is now 4:30, a half hour past the time we were to close, but we have one more presenter.

Ms Eremenko.

Member Eremenko: Thank you so much. Nice to see all of you once more. I realize I'm the only thing in the way of dinner, so I won't take up too much of your time here. Hopefully, the exceptional presentation from the constituent of Calgary-Glenmore and then the former councillor, Councillor Carra, took all of your tough planning questions so that I can deliver and extend my thanks and talk a little bit about the riding that I am very honoured to represent in Calgary-Currie.

Good evening, everyone. Good afternoon. Nice to see all of you again. I'm Janet Eremenko, the Member of the Legislative Assembly for the riding of Calgary-Currie. I appreciate this opportunity very much to participate in the second round of consultations led by the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I'm here to support a fair and effective electoral map for Calgary, one that reflects how our city is growing, respects municipal boundaries, and ensures that residents continue to feel heard and represented as their communities change in really unprecedented ways.

I want to thank the commission for the thoughtful work reflected in the proposed electoral boundary changes. I'm heartened to see that Calgary-Currie remains a cohesive, intact riding under the proposal, and that matters deeply to residents of my constituency. I encourage the commission to ensure Calgary-Currie's boundaries remain the same as they're currently proposed. Calgary-Currie is a diverse inner-city riding with a mix of long-established communities like Scarboro, Bankview, Sunalta, and Glendale alongside rapidly evolving areas such as Shaganappi and Currie Barracks. About half of the households rent and half own, and housing ranges from beautiful century-old homes to new multi-unit developments. This diversity is a defining feature of the riding.

What unites these communities is shared infrastructure, shared schools, transit lines, and a strong sense of place. Natural and built boundaries such as the Bow River to the north, Glenmore Trail to the south, and Sarcee Trail to the west help residents understand where they belong and how they engage civically. When boundaries align with how people live their daily lives, participation in community and trust in each other are strengthened. Disruptive boundary changes can often have the opposite effect, which I know is something that you have wrestled with, I'm sure, in the most meaningful of ways. I regularly hear from residents who say that they are just getting used to the school trustee, to their representative, to their community, and they don't want to see that change again. Stability matters for civic engagement, especially in growing and changing communities, so thank you once more to the commission for proposing that Calgary-Currie remains intact.

I also want to thank the commission for respecting existing municipal boundaries wherever and whenever you could. Thank you for drawing a fair map and upholding the important democratic principle of effective representation by not creating hybrid ridings that straddle urban and less urban or rural communities frivolously. It sounds to me like great consideration was made in what is truly a challenging decision that tries to forecast and look into the crystal ball of population growth that none of us particularly know a hundred per cent. Although this is not something that directly impacts Currie, all changes must be, of course, considered as a whole.

I want to acknowledge the commission's recognition of Calgary's rapid growth with the addition of an extra seat. This decision reflects the real population pressures our city is experiencing and will help ensure representation remains fair and balanced as Calgary continues to expand. While the additional seat is welcome, Calgary's growth is far from slowing down, and to truly reflect this reality, I urge the commission to consider adding another seat in Calgary based on population growth. We know that across all sectors – schools, roads, health care, public safety – population growth influences funding allocations. As such, I encourage the commission to add an additional seat in our province's largest city to adequately address its population growth. Calgary-Currie is a clear example of how population change is accelerating. In my riding it is not just because of sprawl but because of intensification and redevelopment.

For example, since the last redistribution in 2017 my riding has seen significant brownfield development, including the redevelopment of the Viscount Bennett school site, which alone will eventually add over 1,200 housing units; ongoing development to Currie Barracks, where Canada Lands corporation projects roughly 2,000 new households over time; increased transit-oriented development supported by four C-Train stations, a north-south BRT route along Crowchild Trail, and a main street development master plan on 37 Street; and widespread infill in multi-unit housing, replacing single detached homes with multiple-titled units and secondary suites. These changes mean thousands of new residents will be added within existing neighbourhoods, placing pressure on numerous public services and programs.

I'm going to cut to the end here. I just want to sincerely thank you for your time, your care, and your public service. You have put a lot of miles on in the last year or so. Your work has real impact on how people experience democracy in their everyday lives. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this process and to provide feedback in support of a fair, forward-looking electoral map that continues to serve Calgary's growing population well.

Thank you so much for this opportunity. I'm happy to take any questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: Okay. Everyone wants me to ask the same question I've asked everybody else. What are your feelings on the eligible voter numbers as it relates to an electoral district in addition to the general population numbers that we're using as factors to determine proper representation?

Member Eremenko: May I just ask, so that I'm clear on what you're wondering about: what is the percentage, particularly in inner-city ridings, of ineligible voters?

Mr. Evans: No. Eligible voters in conjunction with the population that we're using: in this case was it 58,000?

Member Eremenko: Fifty-eight.

Mr. Evans: So looking at that and then looking at also, as a factor, determining adequate representation of the electorate in that area.

Member Eremenko: Yeah. I understand that we're roughly at about 4 per cent over the average relative to other ridings, which I think is well within that window of what is acceptable. It seems as though the new map has certainly balanced that out significantly in terms of bringing some of those much higher ranges down to a realm that is more legislatively in line with what is required. I'm not sure I totally understand your question or if I've answered it; I apologize.

Mr. Evans: The population is everybody that exists, that's alive – right? – in the riding. The eligible voters would be only those that are 18 and have citizenship such that they can vote. Those two numbers are not going to be the same. So, then, which number would you say is more important, the general population or eligible voters, or should eligible voters be a factor that should be considered? If so, how much should it be weighted?

4:35

Member Eremenko: Oh, that's a great question. Yeah. I don't mean to be taking the political answer out by saying that it should be a combination of the two.

Mr. Evans: But it probably is the right answer.

Member Eremenko: It really is. I would expect that for a riding like Calgary-Currie, for example, that's experiencing tremendous pressure on its public programs and services, recreation centres, roadways, schools, those individuals are accessing those services and programs regardless of whether or not they're voters. I would expect, as a result, that the decisions that I need to be making as an elected representative are not exclusively for the people who are actually able to cast a ballot. It is in fact for every member of every community. So when it comes to some of those challenging funding decisions around whether or not services and programs are actually rising to meet the demands of a community, whether or not they are eligible voters or not doesn't really play into whether or not it reflects the demand. A percentage: you know, I suppose it's going to vary riding by riding based on the demographics and based on the rate of newcomers that are coming in who are eligible or not to vote.

Thank you for the clarification; I understand that far better. I think ultimately my job is to serve the constituents of Calgary-Currie whether or not they are voters. As such, it is a number that I would weight more heavily than the eligible voter figure.

Mr. Evans: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mrs. Samson.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for coming out and the kind words. I appreciate it because we're not done yet. At least we got some things right. Thank you again.

The Chair: What's acceptable for Calgary-Currie? You're at 58,000 now. Could you take some more as the MLA?

Member Eremenko: Well, I think we already will. We know with some of the forecasted growth that those numbers are already going to be coming up. I appreciate that this is a domino effect, so what happens in Calgary-Currie . . .

The Chair: "Cascading" and "domino" are words we use a lot.

Member Eremenko: I would imagine so. Of course, whatever is going to be impacting in Calgary-Currie and whatever changes to the boundaries may be impacted there, I think less so than the number because clearly we're still, you know, we've got a lot of wiggle room as far as what the number is. Less so than that, it's, I'd say, community integrity, and it is adhering to and following the natural boundaries that already create some kind of psychological integrity for the sense of community and where we spend our money, where we send our kids, where we frequent, you know, the third spaces in the riding. Less so than population, Hon. Justice, I would suggest that it is more about respecting the integrity of the communities. If we were to grow – I think we likely could – let's not cross over Sarcee Trail. Let's not split up Rutland Park. I think that that would be of greater priority for the individuals on community associations and for neighbours than anything else.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Dr. Martin, any questions?

Dr. Martin: Thank you. I was looking at the old map and the current one as well as this interim map, and they're the same.

Member Eremenko: Yes.

Dr. Martin: The boundaries are identical. Lucky you, because I think there are only two or three places that we haven't tinkered with, and this is one of them.

I wanted to come, though, to a remark you made characterizing Calgary as a whole and its growth. You said, and I'm paraphrasing: thank you very much for the additional seat, but I'd like another seat. What I would like to suggest to you is: where would you put it? This is a trick question.

Member Eremenko: I know. I was worried you were going to ask that. I have to see what other representatives are in the room, so I don't upset anybody.

Dr. Martin: I think you're safe.

Member Eremenko: It is indeed a very challenging dilemma. I think given some of the work that you've done in the inner city, for example, where you've split Buffalo and Confluence into two . . .

Dr. Martin: See, that's the trick because you've already got a second riding.

Member Eremenko: Yes, of course. Of course.

Dr. Martin: Really, I want to ask you where in your mind's eye as a Calgarian – you travel around; you talk with all your colleagues, not only other MLAs but everyone else that you know around the city – do you think, you know, the growth warrants another riding?

Member Eremenko: Yeah. I realize that it would require some significant readjusting on all the fronts if it was to be on the edges of town, where we would expect there's going to be significant growth. But, of course, that would have significant ripple effects for all of the surrounding areas as well.

You know, the individual here was speaking to the riding of Calgary-Okotoks. I drove down south into Okotoks just the other day, and the growth is phenomenal in and around the South Health Campus and in and around Seton. I think that given what the forecasts are likely demonstrating in terms of demographic growth in those areas, I would expect an additional riding could certainly be accommodated.

The Chair: In the south.

Member Eremenko: Whether it be in the south or in the northeast.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Interesting. I've just looked at it. Currie is currently the 15th largest, 15 of 87, by percentage of variance. So you're already pretty big; 6 per cent over. I don't know if we would necessarily want to give you a whole lot more. I won't ask what you would give up because that's unfair, so I won't ask that.

I am actually interested in some future development. You mentioned the Viscount Bennett development, Currie Barracks, but you didn't mention Westbrook LRT, so that's a big blank space. I know there's been a bit of to-ing and fro-ing on that. I recall there was some change recently. Is there a plan to build something, I mean, that's transit oriented? It feels like a real opportunity. Is it real? I mean, where's that at? Do you know?

Member Eremenko: You know, the only reason I've excluded it from the report is because there's nothing really specific that we can yet point to. The big change that was announced probably about 18 months ago now is that the city bought that land back. The developers had been sitting on it for a long, long time, probably upwards of about a decade, and the city finally got fed up and said: you know, we can't just leave this absolutely prime piece of real estate sit vacant any longer, particularly, of course, given the stresses on the city and given its proximity to the C-Train station. So it's back in the hands of the city, but as far as I am aware, there has been no specific development in terms of what's actually going to go there. Once upon a time, I think probably two councillors ago, they talked about putting some soccer amenities on that site. So for that reason, I haven't included it in my comments here simply because whether it be residential or something else is to be seen.

Mr. Clark: Great. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Sorry to be in a rush. We have to have something to eat in the next 45 minutes and be back here.

Tell me you're happy with the name.

Member Eremenko: With Calgary-Currie?

The Chair: Yes.

Member Eremenko: Oh, sure.

The Chair: Good.

Member Eremenko: Of all the things, no problem at all.
Thank you so much. Nice to see you.

The Chair: Thank you.
We'll be back at 5:30.

[The hearing adjourned at 4:43 p.m.]

