



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
Public Hearings

Discussion of Members of the
Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, January 21, 2026
9:02 a.m.

Transcript No. 48

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission

Justice Dallas K. Miller, Chair

Greg Clark
John D. Evans, KC
Julian Martin
Susan Samson

Support Staff

Shannon Dean, KC
Philip Massolin

Aaron Roth
Rhonda Sorensen
Christina Steenbergen
Amanda LeBlanc

Clerk
Clerk Assistant and Executive Director of
Parliamentary Services
Administrator
Manager of Corporate Communications
Supervisor of Communications Services
Managing Editor of *Alberta Hansard*

Electoral Boundaries Commission Public Hearings

Participants

Nagwan Al-Guneid, MLA, Calgary-Glenmore
Brooks Arcand-Paul, MLA, Edmonton-West Heday
Diana Batten, MLA, Calgary-Acadia
Parmeet Singh Boparai, MLA, Calgary-Falconridge
Joe Ceci, MLA, Calgary-Buffalo
Kathleen Ganley, MLA, Calgary-Mountain View
Grant Hunter, MLA, Taber-Warner
Dale Nally, MLA, Morinville-St. Albert
Nathan Neudorf, MLA, Lethbridge-East
Tany Yao, MLA, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo

9:02 a.m.

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

[Justice Miller in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the third day of the second week of our public hearings in relation to our Electoral Boundaries Commission stage two. Actually, this is the last day, and it is specifically dedicated to hearing from Members of the Legislative Assembly.

I think it's important for us to get some background as to where we are as a commission, what our task is, and where we're going. First of all, as everyone knows, we are an independent commission established by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, and we were put in place in early April of last year. You can see our nameplates before us and on the screen, and if you want to know more about our background, go to the website.

We as a commission have been tasked with dealing with two issues effectively. The first one is to deal with the redrawing of boundaries due to the fact that the Legislative Assembly is expanding for the next provincial election from 87 electoral divisions to 89. So that poses a challenge. Of course, we all know that it's the voters within the boundaries of the electoral division that elect that particular MLA to represent them in the Legislature.

The second issue that we must deal with, in addition to the addition of two seats, is the significant increase in population in Alberta. To give some perspective as to the population challenge, if we look at the last electoral division in 2017, they produced their maps based on a population of just over 4 million people. They determined the math. Based on 87 ridings, the average population for each electoral division would be 46,697. Of course, that is not the target. That is simply the average. The target for effective representation is somewhat flexible, and it ranges in the 2017 EBC context from as low as 35,000 to as high as 58,000.

Over the last nine years Alberta has grown significantly. We have gained over 800,000 people. For our calculations, for this Electoral Boundaries Commission, we are dealing with a population in Alberta of 4.8 million people. As you can see from the formula, the average, using that population base for 89 ridings, is 54,929, or effectively 55,000. Again, that is not the target. The range is minus 25 to plus 25 per cent; in other words, from 41,000 to 68,000. That is the range of population that we are using.

The task of our commission is to redraw the boundaries because of the two additional seats and because of the significant population growth such that each electoral division can be provided with effective representation.

Since our appointment we have been busy as a commission. Our first task was to determine what basis we would use for our population. We are required by the legislation to rely on the most recent decennial census. That was in 2021. Fortunately, the Alberta Treasury Board through its Office of Statistics and Information regularly updates the census results from the federal government. That resulted in a census data group that we agreed as a commission was satisfactory and the most accurate and the most consistent and up to date when we started our process. That population figure was as of July 2024.

After we initially met to go through issues like population, we reviewed hundreds of written submissions that we received from the public as to how we could best allocate the new boundaries. Then, in late May and throughout June, we travelled the province as a commission to hear from Albertans. We listened to literally hundreds of submissions all the way from Medicine Hat in the southeast to Grande Prairie and Peace River and from Fort McMurray back down to Lethbridge and points in between, of course, being Calgary and Edmonton.

After we heard from Albertans and reviewed the written submissions, we then met with officials from Elections Alberta, who are skilled at map-making and dealing with the population. We spent days with them to come up with our proposed electoral division map that we included in our interim report. The legislation provides for an interim report that is to be made public, and then we receive public feedback. That report was provided to the Speaker of the Legislature on October 27. He tabled it and provided a copy to each of the members of the Legislature at that time.

Now, in completing our interim report, we considered all the factors in the legislation: sparsity and density and rate of population growth; communities of interest; municipalities and their borders; regional and rural communities; reserves, First Nations, and Métis settlements. We considered the geographic features across the province and the availability and means of communication, transportation between various parts of the province. In considering those features and in looking at the population, it led us to the electoral divisions that we directed in our interim report to provide effective representation. Our goal was to provide understandable and clear boundaries.

After the public release of our interim report, we then opened a portal on our website to provide for Albertans to respond to our report. Between November 3 and December 19 we received over 1,100 written submissions. We now are taking our interim report, taking the input and the critiques – and we will, all five of us, be the first to say that our interim report was far from perfect. We welcomed all of the input that we received in writing, and now we are at the public and virtual meeting stage to hear from Albertans.

9:10

We started last Monday. We heard two and a half days of presentations in Calgary. Then we went online and heard from people across the province Thursday and Friday, and we heard from Edmontonians Monday and Tuesday of this week. Today is dedicated specifically for members of the Legislature because we have all said that it is most helpful to hear from those individuals who have knocked on the doors, who have driven the roads in their electoral division to get the support of Albertans, and for us to have their feedback is most appreciated.

With that brief introduction, we have a prepared list of presenters, and it is only fitting that our first presenter is the member of the Legislature from Calgary-Acadia, ED 1, Ms Diana Batten. Welcome.

Member Batten: Thank you so much. Good morning. Can you hear me?

The Chair: Yes.

Member Batten: Perfect. Okay. Awesome.

It's so lovely to see you all again. Of course, my name is Diana Batten. I am the proud MLA for Calgary-Acadia. I want to start by thanking all of you for the tremendous work – goodness. Just listening to that description, you have put in so much work. It is so appreciated. I am very curious to learn all of the, I guess, insights you gained across Alberta, but today is about speaking to the draft map specifically. My time with you, of course, is quite brief, so I'm going to jump right in.

The draft map amends the constituency of Calgary-Acadia where north of Glenmore Trail becomes part of the new Calgary-Confluence riding, Kingsland becomes part of Calgary-Glenmore, and Lake Bonavista Downs joins the riding of Calgary-Acadia. These changes bring the estimated population of the riding to 56,000 and change, with a plus 4.9 variance.

Now, I hate to say this, but I am concerned that this draft map does create barriers to services and disconnects communities, and it does not account for the population increase that we are currently seeing inside of these communities. My solution would be that we maintain the 2017 boundaries for Calgary-Acadia with a small nonresidence change with the transfer of Highfield, Bonnybrook, so that area of Manchester, excluding Manchester and Manchester Industrial, which would stay with Calgary-Acadia, but the rest would go on to Calgary-Confluence.

The reasons, of course, are many, but keeping it focused here on communities, services, and connections together. The communities that make up the current constituency of Calgary-Acadia have organically grown together. The communities share common concerns associated with similar household incomes, age of housing, age of residents, school and catchment areas. They're moving through similar transitions where we have original owners downsizing but staying in the communities, which of course creates opportunities for densification. We have a lot of homes that were built back in about the 1960s with the large lots which are prime for infills, secondary suites, and laneways.

The heart of the current map is Macleod Trail, with an LRT line that runs parallel. This corridor is seemingly constantly under development, which brings in housing density, attracts new businesses big and small, and it allows for the creation of kind of that 15-minute city, where no car is needed and folks are able to walk or use transit to get to where they need to. The communities to the west of Macleod – Kingsland, Haysboro, Southwood, and Canyon Meadows – and to the east of Macleod – Willow Park, Maple Ridge, Acadia, and Fairview – are incredibly intertwined. They host events together, they share similar concerns, and these folks are truly engaged in their communities.

Now, the community that includes Manchester and Manchester Industrial, which is just north of Glenmore, is also closely connected to these communities. However, their connection isn't quite so obvious. It isn't directly through, like, a community association but instead through individuals. This area is home to the Dream Centre, which is, of course, a recovery centre for men, several affordable housing towers, the Mustard Seed, Parachutes for Pets, Calgary housing, Sharp Foundation, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and vintage alley, which is on 58th. These services are accessed through the riding and, of course, are supported through the constituency office of Calgary-Acadia.

When considering the draft map, the transfer of Kingsland, which has over 60 per cent rental properties, a transient population, and is strongly connected to Acadia and also to Haysboro, by transferring it over to Calgary-Glenmore, which is a more affluent riding with very few social services, I do worry that folks will be disconnected from their communities and they will be disconnected from the services they currently access. The same argument can be made for maintaining Manchester and Manchester Industrial as part of Calgary-Acadia as those folks are tightly knit with the rest of the community.

The second piece, of course, being population considerations. We had spoken a little bit about what shovels were in the ground last time we met, so I wanted to make sure that the commission considers and is aware of shovels in the ground right now that have happened since last time we spoke. Just looking at the community of Haysboro, Haysboro, of course, has that lovely connection where we've got Heritage and Macleod. On that kind of section there, we've got the old Y site finally under construction. It's supposed to open early 2027. We're looking at 200 affordable dwelling units, one to three bedrooms. Estimated residency when it's open is 700. We then have a luxury – it's called Heritage-MacLeod luxury condos. It is due to open completely by 2028. This is 501 units, one

to three bedrooms. About 1,750 residents are expected there. Then just a little bit further south from that is another set of towers that they're looking to put up. Again, the groundwork has already been started, which is looking at adding another 631 units, about 2,000 residents when it's fully up.

In addition to that, all the way through, actually, the entire riding, what we see along kind of the main drag – in this case in Haysboro, if we're talking about Elbow Drive, what we're seeing are a lot of single-family homes that are getting transferred or converted into five dwelling units plus five secondary suites, so we're looking at, like, on average about 30 additional residents there. This is, of course, in addition to some other larger single-family changes that will look up to, like, maybe 24 residents in them. Kind of the general thing inside of the community of Haysboro right now: just with the ones that, you know, I looked at yesterday, we're looking at about 4,902 residents being added to the community of Haysboro in the next three years. That alone brings the riding, whatever map we're using, up over 6,000 residents.

Now, there might be a question of: how am I figuring out how many people are actually going to live in these places? A little bit of gentle math. Basically, what I did is for every first bedroom I assumed two residents; every second bedroom or third I assume one resident. So it's a conservative estimate, but I think it captures kind of that middle ground on how many residents to expect.

I, of course, could go through every single one of the beautiful communities and tell you about all of the things they have in the ground going on right now. Another example – I'm recognizing time here – would be Acadia. When we spoke last, what is now known as the Mintoff condo development, where Blackfoot Trail trailer park used to be, is now very much under construction. When it is done, it will house about 600 units, one-to three-bedroom luxury condos, which will house about 2,100 residents.

When we're thinking about what Calgary-Acadia is going to look like even in the next two, three years, we know there is going to be an incredible population boom. When I look at the draft maps, my solution is that we keep it the same and that we maintain Manchester Industrial and Manchester, keep them connected to the rest of the constituency so they can still access those services and be connected to those communities. By all means, release the rest of what I was calling Manchester before so that – now I'm lost. Highfield and Bonnybrook: that area, as we discussed, has great potential but nothing in the ground right now.

With that, I realize I've got a handful of minutes here. I believe this also includes questions. Is that correct? I think so. So I will pause and answer whatever questions you have from what I've shared and anything you want to know about Calgary-Acadia.

9:20

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, Ms Batten.

Of course, there are many advantages of having this venue online, but one of the disadvantages is the actual map. I'm not sure if it can be brought up. If it can, Aaron is working on that.

Let's start with questions. Mr. Clark, any questions of this presenter?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you very much for joining us. Just so I'm clear, a couple of things. You're saying: keep it as it was in 2017 because there's lots of growth. Sort of the short synopsis, I think. At the very beginning you kind of rattled through quite a few – like, a pretty rapid-fire list. I wonder if you could just step me through that just sort of at about .75 speed of what you did last time. I was trying to keep up, and I'm afraid I got lost.

Member Batten: No, no. My apologies. I do tend to speak quickly when I know my time is limited, so my mistake.

Now you've got the map up, which is great. This is the proposed map. What I was describing when I was talking about the Macleod Trail corridor there: in the current map it starts right at the top, so Glenmore and either side of Macleod. We have Kingsland, Fairview. We move down, we go Haysboro, Acadia, Southwood, Willow Park, Maple Ridge, and Canyon Meadows. That's where the riding currently ends. Those are, of course, all the neighbourhoods who benefit from that Macleod Trail corridor there. It connects, allows for that high densification around the LRT stations and that kind of 15-minute city.

When I was referring to north of Glenmore, I refer to that whole section as Manchester, but correctly the section is actually Manchester and Manchester Industrial. It goes from the southern border, Glenmore. Then it is Macleod, 42nd Ave, to Blackfoot. It's that square just above the map we're looking at right now, and that is where the residents actually live inside of that larger space. Partially because it's so industrial, there hasn't been a lot of development there. We did discuss that a little bit in the last meeting, about the great potential that could happen there, but as of right now, to the best of my knowledge, there's no shovels in the ground per se. We're actually seeing the growth of that area is inside of Manchester.

I didn't go into the details of what we're seeing there. I absolutely can, but I want to pause to make sure that (a) I've slowed down enough and that (b) I've answered your question.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. I appreciate sort of situating us. That, you're saying, is logical to be north of Glenmore as a boundary then?

Member Batten: What I'm suggesting is that, actually, it would be north of 42nd because the reality is that that is where people reside, south of 42nd. What I'm suggesting is we keep Manchester and Manchester Industrial, which runs from 42nd to Blackfoot and Macleod. It's just a chunk that is currently inside the riding and is where folks are currently residing and connecting to the rest of the communities. Is that more clear?

Mr. Clark: Yep. That sounds good.

Then what else were you suggesting south of Glenmore?

Member Batten: Oh, so then Kingsland, which is currently part of the riding: I was suggesting keeping it with Calgary-Acadia. The biggest reason for that is the population that's served and their connection. Kingsland has over 60 per cent rental properties. It is seeing immense densification. I can certainly list off the different towers that are going up there. It is very distinct from the riding of Calgary-Glenmore, that is simply more affluent. They're more affluent than Calgary-Acadia, and their social services are very different than what we find inside the riding of Calgary-Acadia. My suggestion would be to keep Kingsland with Calgary-Acadia if for nothing more than they have similar concerns, the connections are already there, and geographically it still makes sense.

Mr. Clark: Good. All right. Then anything south – I think our current boundary now is all the way down to Canyon Meadows. Again, part of our challenge is that it's a numbers game, right? The growth in Calgary has happened in the far north and in the far south. Really, what we're trying to make sure we can do is balance out areas that are more in the middle that are a little more stable. Although not saying that you're not growing – it's growing in an absolute sense. The pace of growth relative to other parts of the city is always a question. That's part of the reason that we made the changes we did and then trying to keep it as rectilinear, I guess, as

square as we possibly can. Clear and understandable boundaries is what the act says.

Member Batten: Beautiful. If I could just comment, one, on the southern addition on the draft map, so the Lake Bonavista and Lake Bonavista Downs, that section: it is distinctly different from Calgary-Acadia. When I say that, I mean it is single-family homes. The household income jumps about \$50,000 when you jump over Anderson there. All of the things that I've described about the Macleod corridor and all of that: it does not apply south of Anderson there. There's kind of a chunk where Macleod becomes very – well, there's not as much density there, and it picks up again.

My concern there is that the services that they would want to access or the connections that they already have would be severed as well. That group, based on my research, is more similar to, say, Queensland and Deer Run and so on, which they're currently a part of, relative to their similarity to what's inside of Calgary-Acadia. I worry, again, about kind of the disservice that we'd be doing bringing in that. Well, they're distinctly different.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Good. That's helpful. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much.

This is a very interesting discussion. My colleague pre-empted my query about Lake Bonavista. In general, by asking to restore, so to speak, Manchester Industrial and the like on the more northerly parts, that would, in your view, bring this set of communities into more coherent connectivity all around?

Member Batten: Yes.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your time this morning, Ms Batten. Really, what you're asking, if I can just paraphrase in my own mind, is that the riding is high right now, and you're looking at wanting Manchester back, and I suppose in lieu of that, it would be giving up Lake Bonavista's area. Would that be safe?

Member Batten: Yes, I feel that's a safe summary.

Mrs. Samson: Okay. Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: No questions for me.

The Chair: Ms Batten, you've done a lot of the legwork, obviously, for your presentation. If we did not change these boundaries – I think you told us, but just maybe repeat it for those of us who are slow at taking notes – what's the projected population increase based on your research, say, in – what are we at? – 2028, two years from now?

Member Batten: Okay. Two years from now, based on what shovels are in the ground right now, if I do some quick math . . .

The Chair: Give me the figure that you have calculated if it's two years, four years, or whatever.

Member Batten: Yeah. Well, honestly, I got so in the weeds, because that's me, I don't actually have a magic number for you, but what I do have are a few that we can look at. Haysboro: the numbers I was looking at, about 4,902 addition in the next two to three years. Acadia, with the park, is looking at another 2,000. If we

move to Fairview, Fairview, of course, is where we're going to have that midtown station. It seems to have been paused a little bit, so I don't know exactly when it's going to be open. Last I heard was closer to, like, 2040 type deal. But when it's fully operational, we're looking at 10,000 people minimum. And then Kingsland: the diversity we're seeing there is towers. In the ground right now are two additional towers, and we're looking at another 2,000.

What I'm finding is that between 2,000 and 4,000 residential spaces are already in the ground per community, like, kind of on average. So with the nine communities, I mean, there's our math, right? What is that? We'll say another 18,000 on that. I believe we're just at, like, 54,000 under the current map, not the proposed map. To clarify, are you looking for the number on the proposed map or on the current map?

9:30

The Chair: Yeah. On the proposed map.

Member Batten: On the proposed map. Okay. Well, on the proposed map, if I drop Kingsland and drop Manchester, let's see.

The Chair: So very roughly – very roughly – you're looking at up to an 18,000 increase. When that will happen: not sure. It could take as long as six to eight years. Is that fair?

Member Batten: No. About 2,000 per community is what's already in the ground and anticipated to be full occupancy in the next three years, so by, like, 2029, I guess, is the next three years. But when we look at what that does, even if it's 18,000 to the 56,000, I mean, we are now very much on the far, far edge of kind of that allowed variance. Obviously, you guys know what's going on in the rest of Calgary in terms of density, but this is distinctly different than when we spoke last.

This, to me, demonstrates, like, that we have huge investments happening, especially down Macleod Trail and all of those areas. This riding is becoming kind of that inner-city, still affordable space for luxury apartments. I just really want to make sure that that is considered, obviously, with the new map.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Well, thank you very much. As we say to many presenters, we make no promises except that we will take this and all the other information into account in our work in the weeks ahead.

Member Batten: Perfect. Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you for presenting. I believe you can remain to hear the other presenters. That's correct, Mr. Roth? Yeah. Okay. Thank you very much.

Member Batten: Awesome. Thank you so much.

The Chair: Our next presenter is Mr. Joe Ceci.

Mr. Roth: Joe is not on yet.

The Chair: Oh, okay. Very well.

Mr. Nathan Neudorf is kind of floating and trying to get in an empty spot, and we have an empty spot. Mr. Neudorf, welcome.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you. Good morning.

The Chair: Good morning. Tell us where you're from and what you wish to comment on.

Mr. Neudorf: Wonderful. Thank you very much. I'm from Lethbridge-East, but I'm joining you online today from McDougall

Centre in Calgary. I just had a few quick comments. I aroused much comment from my earlier submission to your panel. Even though it was just a letter, it was in much of the media despite my intentions.

What I basically just wanted to share with you today is the significance and importance of representation by population for a democratic society. Having been elected in Lethbridge-East and serving Lethbridge-East for over six years now, it is continually a challenge to represent the third-largest city in the province of Alberta with two representatives. There are many jurisdictions throughout the province from Medicine Hat, Lloydminster, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, on and on I can go, that also share two representatives, but the population of Lethbridge in many cases is 45,000 to 55,000 people larger with the same number of voices.

It has been challenging in many instances. I have just two off the top of my head. During COVID there was an effort to send out rapid COVID tests at a period of time and continually through the entirety of the COVID period. The first round of whatever would go to Calgary, Edmonton, and Red Deer, and I would always inquire: "Why not Lethbridge? Lethbridge is the third largest." "Oh, you'll come out in the second round with the other mid-sized cities." Very frustrating as a centre in the south to continue to have that fight.

The example I wanted to bring forward was that at one point in time, when the rapid tests came out, Red Deer was given 72,000 rapid tests at 31 locations, and that served their community quite well. They could have used a lot more. At the very same time Lethbridge received 2,000 rapid tests at one location, and we were out of rapid tests in under 10 minutes. It was just an extreme frustration to be treated as such with a population larger than Red Deer, yet not get the sufficient resources.

More recently, as we've been dealing with challenges for immigration and immigration placement, the job openings and assignments that the government of Alberta has control over: places like Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray are receiving 230 to 250, maybe even 300 job placements through the immigration programs. Lethbridge gets 28 even though we have more than double the population of some of these other sites.

So it has been a very challenging ability to truly represent Lethbridge without a larger voice, which is why I submitted what I did for the commission earlier on, to say that the population in Lethbridge as a centre in the south on virtually every single file, be it education, health care, mental health and addiction, public safety, on and on down the list. All those communities around come to Lethbridge for service, yet we struggle to have the resources to meet those needs. I believe that having more representation and a larger voice in Edmonton to advocate for that would be beneficial, be that three, be that four. I leave it to the commission to determine how population can be represented most effectively.

One final thought, and then happy to answer questions, is that due to the nature of our city in the south, we have a very strong collaboration on every sector, whether it's manufacturing, whether it's trucking, whether it's food processing. The county and surrounding areas produce the produce and bring their trade and their service into Lethbridge, and it's a very symbiotic relationship. I think it'd be very natural to make some of those potentials work.

Those are my thoughts very quickly this morning. Thank you so much for taking the time to hear me and fitting me in quickly. Happy to answer any questions if you have any.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your presentation this morning and taking time to talk to us. Really, the dilemma comes down to splitting urban up into hybrids, and I'm not going to open up that conversation because I think I've heard all aspects of: the city, the urbans are so different. They're talking about homeless, and you can talk about water. But, you know, Lethbridge is using the water

for municipal reasons, and the rural is using it for irrigation, so how can we generally govern?

But I hear you loud and clear, sir, that four MLAs certainly would be better than two, I would think. Yet at the same time we've heard around the province that two, in some cities where there are two, is not necessarily better; they haven't seen the benefit. I think this is something we have to grapple with as a commission, and I believe we have the information in front of us to challenge us with that decision. Thank you.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: Yeah.

Good morning, Mr. Neudorf. Thanks for your presentation. I'm wondering if you could speak to the idea of hybrid ridings and the concerns that we've heard from some individuals about the difficulties in ameliorating the needs of the various community interests in a hybrid constituency.

Mr. Neudorf: Sure. Appreciate that very much.

I can understand that being a challenge in other areas, but I know Lethbridge and area: we have that relationship, like I said, on nearly every file. If it's agriculture, you're growing the crops outside the city and bringing them in. If it's trucking, same thing. The maintenance and trucks are sold within the city of Lethbridge and they're utilized all around. Same with repairs, with manufacturing, with health care, with education. The Holy Spirit school division in Lethbridge has schools outside of Lethbridge and inside of Lethbridge, and they bus back and forth. For many years the Holy Spirit school division and the Lethbridge public school division shared bus routes to maximize all of these different routes and getting these children to different schools inside and outside the city.

9:40

Lethbridge has had for, I think, 14 years a concept called Team Lethbridge, where they bring all of these agencies together and come and advocate in Edmonton because it is so difficult often to get representatives of the government or ministers down into Lethbridge to have these vital conversations.

The polytechnic: most of the students that they bring in are from Alberta, but not necessarily Lethbridge city proper, all across rural and urban. The university is the same.

We've often for many, many years had this culture of urban and rural working together for the betterment of the city and for the surrounding areas. The former Speaker brought up water. All the water for that southern region is treated and the waste water is treated in Lethbridge, but it's shared broadly. If you don't collaborate and work together for the benefit of others, you have those many challenges in terms of growth, subdivision growth, commercial, and industrial growth. I think there is a great spirit of collaboration within Lethbridge and its city to work together. And populationwise, whether it's a city, a smaller city like Coaldale or Raymond, those relationships are there within the region.

Again, that is why I didn't try to draw maps. I believe that is the commission's challenge – and very well put by the former Speaker on how to make all those work – but that collaborative spirit exists very strongly in the south and has for many, many years.

Mr. Evans: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Clark, questions?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you very much.

Good to see you, Minister. Thank you for being here. We've heard some feedback on Lethbridge, as I think you probably know, and it has definitely been a hot topic. You know, I compare it to Red Deer. I think you raised Red Deer. I've pulled up the government of Alberta regional dashboard that allows us to compare municipalities. I'm struck by how similar Lethbridge and Red Deer are. They're almost identical in population. Lethbridge, 113,000; Red Deer, 115,000. Much of the demographic makeup is very, very similar. So I'm just curious why you feel Lethbridge should be treated differently from Red Deer. Red Deer has two fully urban constituencies, and there really has been no call to blend Red Deer with surrounding areas. Any insights as to why that might be?

Mr. Neudorf: Certainly. I think the insights are that they get the funding that they request on every ministry, and Lethbridge doesn't. I'm trying sort of a last-ditch effort to say that. I do know those numbers go back and forth. Apparently right now, according to your data, Red Deer is larger. The data I had last is that Lethbridge was 114,00 and Red Deer was down to 108,000, but that's splitting hairs.

On the cath labs, both jurisdictions have been advocating and requesting funding for a cath lab for many years. Red Deer is an hour and a half to two major centres with cath labs, north and south. Lethbridge is two hours from only one centre, Calgary to the north. Red Deer got several hundred million dollars to enhance their hospital and get a cath lab to provide that service to their patients. Lethbridge so far has received \$2 million to work towards planning towards some future time to have a cath lab.

I can go through both the postsecondaries, university and college. Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton, the north: they receive somewhere from \$26,000 to \$27,000 per student. Lethbridge Poly and University receive \$18,000 to \$19,000. Great disparity. Just ask the University of Lethbridge and the polytechnic in Lethbridge how much \$7,000 per student would make a difference in their funding. I can go through education. Similarly, we face those challenges. We talk about health care. I can talk about job training grants. When they come out through different ministries, different programs, almost always Lethbridge is given the same amount as Medicine Hat, not the same amount as Red Deer. So it is a point of contention. It is a great disparity across nearly every ministry.

The only ministry that I'm aware of in my six and a half years that's distinctly different is that Lethbridge has received a huge amount for mental health and addictions to challenge at times the single most visited consumption site in the world. I'm very glad that we were able to change that, but other than that – that would be the basis of my argument. If Red Deer is receiving everything they're asking for or close to it based on their population, why would they need to change representation? But Lethbridge is not, and that is across multiple different governments and different political regimes. Again, I think that this is another way of looking at that to see if that advocacy and population can be better represented.

Mr. Clark: Okay. I just want to point out. I mean, we have, again, had a lot of feedback. You know, there are school divisions – the Palliser school division has suggested that the current interim alignment of two urban MLAs in Lethbridge serves their needs. There are many others who have suggested that this current alignment does better serve their interests and Lethbridge's interests. Undeniably there are those who have made the opposite case.

I just want to ask. If we do maintain two urban constituencies, there has been some discussion about perhaps tweaking that boundary between east and west. The alignment, I think, south of highway 3 should be Lethbridge-West, and then areas north of

highway 3, Lethbridge-East. If we did maintain the two urban constituencies roughly as they are, do you have a perspective on where the boundary ought to be?

Mr. Neudorf: If it was left the way it was, I would make minor changes to it. I don't know that highway 3 is where I would go to make that change. I think there are some communities in the north of Lethbridge-East, where the substation is – there's literally one subdivision that is part of Lethbridge-West where they have to drive across the river through Lethbridge-East to get there.

Is this the new one, the new map that you had presented as an option?

Mr. Clark: That's right. Yeah.

Mr. Neudorf: I think it was, basically, as I saw it, that northeastern quadrant was more put into Lethbridge-West, and then Lethbridge-East was expanded in the downtown area. I think I would prefer to leave it the way it was than to go to this new map. I don't see how this benefits much other than just changing a map for the sake of changing a map. If we're going to leave it as two, then leave it the way they are. But I don't have a whole lot of other thoughts on that.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Thank you very much.

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much, sir. I wanted to come back to your remarks about this being a very strong industrial and service hub, and I wanted to drill down a bit further on that, particularly about commuters in the catchment area that they come and go to. I take it that it's not merely commuters coming into the city; it's people working by going out of the city to places of employment. That immediately leads me to ask: you know, what is the range? Coaldale seems obvious; Raymond perhaps; certainly to the airport. But does it also include Picture Butte and Fort Macleod?

Mr. Neudorf: I would say yes. Ironically, for many years my daughter worked as a baker in Fort Macleod, lived in Lethbridge, so she would commute back and forth all the time every day for that. I know many teachers that teach in Taber and commute back and forth from Lethbridge. Raymond I would also include in that. I would say that 45 minutes is probably the largest extent of that driving to and from Lethbridge, different areas. It can be anything from agriculture, of course, to mechanic in terms of industrial growth. Southland Trailers is within Lethbridge, and they draw many employees from all over the region. I think they're the largest private employer in town.

9:50

Yeah. I just think that there's a significant amount of commuting, but those are the communities that it would reach. Very often I'm talking with people in my office from Taber or Raymond and all in that circle in between, so it can be fairly extensive, but I would say that 45 minutes is typically the extent of it.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. One supplemental. I mean, historically the railways – of course, you've got very significant railway lines that meet and pass through Lethbridge. Does that continue to be the case, that there's a lot of traffic associated with the railway freight?

Mr. Neudorf: Yes. Very good point. Yes, there is a lot of railway within Lethbridge. They've done some significant reconfiguration to minimize that. Their larger siding is in Kipp, which is just beyond Coalhurst. Of course, additional commuting back and forth there. As well, the Blood Tribe and the associated work that goes on between Lethbridge as the main centre predominantly for health care, mental health and addictions, and shelter and some of those

into the Blood Tribe, reaching often all the way to Cardston. But yes, rail is a significant employer, and those two sites, Lethbridge and Kipp, work very collaboratively to manage the volume of rail going to and from and the shipping of goods.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Neudorf, I go back to our first public hearing in Lethbridge in late May and a presentation by an individual. I'm sure you're aware of his presentation. I believe his name was Cameron Mills. He started off with the proposition – well, let me back up.

On a macro level we do not have the resources to add seats to the south, okay? We're stuck. In fact, the trend is – and your colleagues that may be on the line that are from Calgary certainly are aware of this – that we have to take seats away from what I call outside the metro areas of Calgary and Edmonton in order to make the population figures work for the big cities. So it seems to me it's not a representation issue as much as it is preserving rural seats, for lack of a better term.

The attractiveness of Mr. Mills' presentation was that I think he acknowledged: look, we're going to lose seats in the areas outside of Calgary and Edmonton. And then he said: look at the southern band as Medicine Hat having two hybrid ridings – they take care of the ranching and the oil and gas industries there – and take Lethbridge and carve it up into four hybrid ridings so we have a band of six ridings across the south that more than adequately take care of urban representation and rural. Because of the nature of the industry – the agribusiness around Lethbridge is incredible, and it's grown immensely these last 10 to 20 years. Your comment about the rail: that's why there's significant rail activity, because of the agribusiness, hay and feed going out, other stuff coming in.

It seems to me it's more of a regional approach to say: look, you realize the limitations that the commission has, and here's a way to solve it. Would you agree with that description?

Mr. Neudorf: Yes, I would. I think it is very essential to maintain the seats in rural and urban-rural hybrids across the province so that we don't drown out those voices. I think it's human nature to represent where you live and where you're from. All of those new seats are going to the big urbans, Calgary and Edmonton. We understand that, but to further lose seats and see that balance shift means that every committee, Treasury Board, cabinet: these things become more and more representative of the major centres in our province, and we lose those voices.

That has been a challenge. It has been my experience being elected from Lethbridge for the last six and a half years. It is very difficult to get the unique perspective of Lethbridge understood not by the electeds, necessarily, in Edmonton but definitely by the bureaucracy and the more entrenched workers there. So often I hear that Lethbridge is, oh, a mid-size city like Medicine Hat. No, actually. For most of the last decade it's been the third- or fourth-largest city in the province. We serve a large community. We serve into B.C. We serve into Saskatchewan. Yet many times in the last 30 years there has been one and one in Lethbridge, one Liberal or one NDP and one Conservative or one UCP. It was only a four-year period where both NDP were representing Lethbridge. Very difficult to get that voice heard across ministries.

Yeah. In that regional nature, to your point, yes, that is how the south works. We've had to, whether it's STARS and HALO, whether it's ambulance service – on all of those kind of things very much we work in collaboration.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. We're going to have to stop it there. We're running a little bit behind schedule. Thank

you very much, and please feel free to remain and hear the other presenters.

Our next presenter is Mr. Joe Ceci. Mr. Ceci, sorry for being a little late.

Member Ceci: That's no problem at all. It's Ceci, Mr. Chair.

I'm the MLA for Calgary-Buffalo. It's good to meet you all. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this 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. I want to thank the commission for the work you are doing, which is reflected in the proposed electoral boundary changes. In my 26 years of elected office, 11 of those as an MLA and 15 as a city councillor, this is the fourth time I've participated in electoral district revisions. Two of those revisions happened at the city, and this is the second time as an MLA.

The draft proposal for Calgary-Buffalo is mostly understandable. However, I'm here to request a change to the 1st Street S.E. eastern boundary you've drafted. Specifically, when determining the eastern boundary of the riding, I believe the Elbow River as a readily apparent geographical feature would be more helpful for current and future constituents to understand. I'd suggest that communities west of the Elbow River – namely, East Village, Cliff Bungalow, Mission, the Beltline, Chinatown, and Downtown West – share more in common with each other than the communities east of the Elbow River. My tweak would mean that the communities of Cliff Bungalow, Mission, East Village, and all the Beltline remain in Calgary-Buffalo. The communities east of the Elbow River, namely Inglewood and Ramsay, would, as you've recommended, be folded into the new Calgary-Confluence riding.

With these changes, the population total variances for both ridings from the average would reverse. Calgary-Buffalo would now be above the average instead of 1.2 per cent below, and Calgary-Confluence would be below the average instead of 3.6 per cent above. Removing Inglewood and Ramsay's current population from Calgary-Buffalo as it exists today would be a decrease of approximately 6,500 citizens. Future residential development in Inglewood's rail yard lands plus build-out to completion of the SoBow lands at 17th Avenue and 19th Street SE together will increase the future Calgary-Confluence riding by an additional 2,000 residents.

Calgary-Buffalo will remain a diverse inner-city riding with a mix of long-established communities like Chinatown, Cliff Bungalow, Mission alongside rapidly evolving areas such as the East Village, the Beltline, and Downtown West. This diversity is a defining feature of the riding, with many, many newcomers coming first to Calgary and settling in apartments in and around the downtown before moving to other neighbourhoods. I believe that the boundary change I'm suggesting would better reflect how people live their daily lives in Calgary-Buffalo and why they locate here, from shopping to recreating to connections to the downtown for work and postsecondary education.

10:00

I want to thank the commission for keeping existing municipal boundaries intact in the interim report. I really appreciate that you avoided creating ridings that mix dense urban neighbourhoods with the less urban or rural areas. That kind of approach makes a big difference for fair representation. Even though this doesn't directly affect Calgary-Buffalo because it's an inner-city riding, I think it's important to look at all boundary changes as part of a bigger picture.

Calgary's growth isn't slowing down. There is a census metropolitan area report saying that up to July 2024, 100,000 new residents moved into Calgary – 100,000 new residents – and for that reason, I encourage the commission to follow through with the addition of the proposed Calgary-Confluence riding. Population growth affects everything we rely on: schools, transportation, health care, public safety, and so much more. If funding and services adjust to that growth, our representation should, too. As Alberta's largest and fastest growing city, as the CMA report tells us, Calgary needs enough seats to reflect its reality on the ground. Calgary-Buffalo is a good example of how these changes are happening. Our growth isn't coming from sprawling Calgary-Buffalo but from redevelopment and density intensity, which brings its own challenges and demands.

Lastly, I want to genuinely thank the members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for your work and commitment. The decisions you make shape how people participate in democracy every single day. I'm grateful for the chance to share my perspective and to support a fair, future-focused map that truly reflects Calgary's ongoing growth.

Just a word about the addition of Calgary-Confluence. I think that's a wise move, particularly because of the intensification of the inner city. Splitting a piece of Calgary-Buffalo off and joining that with Calgary-Klein and Calgary-East is understandable. I used to represent Calgary-Fort before the changes in 2019, and there was a good, active group of citizens in that area which will be taken up in part by the Calgary-Confluence riding, so I really appreciate those folks getting their own representative back again so that that representative can work hard for their demands and needs.

That's the end of my presentation.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Ceci.
Questions, Dr. Martin?

Dr. Martin: No. Thank you.

The Chair: Mrs. Samson.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

Just in a nutshell: thanks for coming out and joining us this morning. The east boundary is the Elbow River, and you're still comfortable with 17th Avenue? I always have to paraphrase this because I'm not a Calgarian, so I'm not that familiar with the districts.

Member Ceci: Yeah. One small tweak to what you said: I'm recommending the Elbow River form the east boundary as opposed to 1st Street S.E. It's more understandable.

If you flip over to Calgary-Confluence, you can probably see it a little better there. You'll see the Elbow River. That would include the East Village. Yeah. Just on the western part of that and the northwest part of that proposed riding, you can see there would be the East Village, there would be the Beltline and Cliff Bungalow, Mission. I'm suggesting they would all form part of the future Calgary-Buffalo, and they currently do now. So 17th Avenue would be most of the southern boundary except for Cliff Bungalow, which goes beyond it to the Elbow River. Does that help?

Mrs. Samson: Yes, it does. Thank you very much for that clarification.

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

Mr. Evans: Just one question. With respect to Calgary-Buffalo, with the proposed boundaries it would have, as you mentioned, a

population of 54,243. What are your thoughts on increasing that population to the maximum that the variance allows of 68,000?

Mr. Ceci: I don't think that's what my proposal does. It would be less than 68,000. I think roughly it's about 54,000, give or take – right? – with your proposal. Adding back in the East Village, a piece of the Beltline, and Cliff Bungalow would probably bring it up another 6,000 or 7,000. Personally, as the MLA I would be comfortable with that. I'd be comfortable with it because I think it would keep like communities together, and it would be . . .

Mr. Evans: Mr. Ceci.

Mr. Ceci: Yes?

Mr. Evans: My question wasn't what your proposal was. My question was: what are your thoughts about having the population in your electoral district increased to 68,000? Currently you're at 77,000-plus. That was my question. Could you answer that, please?

Mr. Ceci: Yes. I think it should be said that I'm currently working with great staff and being able to handle that at this point in time, but any drop in that number, from the 77,000, would be better for me, better for the future MLA as well.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

Mr. Ceci, good to see you. One of the interesting and challenging features – I don't need to tell you, as the representative of Calgary-Buffalo – is how dense your constituency is. We have a mapping tool here. I can draw some lines. If we added Cliff Bungalow – and let me just confirm. What you're saying is add in Cliff Bungalow south to the Elbow River, use the Elbow River, including Mission, and then loop all the way east and include East Village, but not lose any other part of what we've proposed for Calgary-Buffalo. Just to make sure I'm clear on what you're asking, is that correct?

Mr. Ceci: Following the Elbow River you would include Cliff Bungalow, Mission, the East Village, and all of the Beltline to the east of 1st Street S.E. Yes.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. But not move it on the west side, still continue with 14th Street?

Mr. Ceci: Not Ramsay and not Inglewood. Right.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. If we did that, we add 20,000 residents, so you'd be over the 68,000, which is greater than 25 per cent. I'll just give you an example.

Mr. Ceci: In what year, Greg?

Mr. Clark: July 1, 2024.

For example, if we moved the boundary on the east side from 1st Street S.E. one block to Macleod Trail: 4,500 additional residents. That's the challenge that we have, that the population of Calgary-Buffalo and downtown Calgary has grown so rapidly, and the density – I don't need to tell you – is huge. Calgary-Buffalo has grown 56 per cent since the 2017 boundary. So that's the challenge, I think, that we have, that your proposal would put us way over the 25 per cent.

What we found for MLAs is that they love their people, and I think that's great. No MLA has yet answered the question: which part of your constituency would you like to not have any more? They say: we'd love to have all of it. But the math just doesn't work on this one, just for your reference, and that's the rationale as to

why the lines are drawn the way they are. I just really wanted to make that point. I understand where you're coming from, but I think it's going to be difficult for us to do what you've suggested.

10:10

Member Ceci: Appreciate the population projections. I didn't use those. I was using the geographical boundary as a common-sense way to build this riding.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Just so you're aware, that's going to make it challenging to do much.

Also, part of it is, to borrow a phrase: skate to where the puck is going to be. You know, there's a lot of growth. In your opinion, is that growth slowing down in the centre of Calgary, staying the same, accelerating?

Member Ceci: It's not slowing down.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. That's part of it. We want to try to have a boundary that isn't going to be massively overpopulated in the next eight, seven years either, so a lot of balls to juggle here.

Anyway, thank you.

Member Ceci: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Ceci. It's always good to hear people who knock on the doors and walk the streets to get support, so thank you.

Our next presenter is Mr. Parmeet Boparai. Sorry, sir. We're only about 15 minutes late, 15 minutes behind schedule. Please identify yourself, identify your electoral division for the record, and tell us what you want us to know.

Member Boparai: Yeah. Good morning, everyone, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Parmeet Singh Boparai. I'm the MLA for Calgary-Falconridge. I represent a number of communities in the northeast quadrant of Calgary. I'm participating in this process because I want to ensure fair, effective, and future-minded representation for a fast-growing city, which is important to delivering the services, schools, transportation, health care, public safety, things that my constituents depend on.

I have had the privilege of engaging closely with residents from Temple, Whitehorn, Castleridge, Falconridge, Taradale, Coral Springs, and expanding communities east of Stoney Trail like Homestead along with the industrial and cultural hub of Westwinds, which is home to many small ethnocultural businesses, cultural and religious organizations. These communities are vibrant and diverse, and they deserve boundaries that reflect who they are, where they go, and how they live. I appreciate the commission's difficult task of balancing population pressures, community identity, and legislative requirements. Your work is essential in ensuring effective representation.

If I go over the background, Calgary-Falconridge was created in 2017 as part of the province's last major redistribution. It was formed by reorganizing several northeast Calgary constituencies, abolished Calgary-Greenway, and added Coral Springs and the eastern half of Taradale from that riding. Whitehorn and Temple were brought in from Calgary-Cross. Castleridge, Falconridge, and Westwinds Industrial moved from Calgary-McCall, which is now Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

From the start the riding was already 13 per cent above the provincial population average and was based on the assumption that limited new housing would be built in the area. This assumption was proved incorrect. Since 2017 Calgary-Falconridge has experienced sustained and significant growth driven by the emergence

of new communities east of Stoney Trail, including Homestead, which is the fastest growing community in Calgary, increasing densification through multigenerational family living, and some high-density housing.

Today Calgary-Falconridge remains one of the most culturally diverse ridings in the province. Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, and Tagalog are widely spoken due to predominant South Asian and significant Filipino populations. There is a growing East African population, too. Cultural hubs such as Westwinds Industrial, home to religious and cultural institutions, Prairie Winds park, and the high concentration of ethnocultural businesses anchor the social and economic life of the constituency. These shared linguistic, cultural, and institutional ties make the communities within the riding particularly important when looking at the boundary alignments.

The proposal to bring Martindale into the riding is a logical and positive change. It shares clear demographic, cultural, and social elements with communities north of McKnight Boulevard. It's Castleridge, Falconridge, Taradale, Coral Springs, and Homestead. These neighbourhoods function as a connected ecosystem through shared schools, place of worship, cultural institutions, and family networks. The addition strengthens the identity and geographic ties of the riding in this area.

The proposal to remove Whitehorn and Temple and return them to Calgary-Cross is also positive and logical. This restores the long-established grouping of the properties Temple, Whitehorn, Rundle, and Pineridge. These communities have historically shared schools, libraries, recreation centres, and service hubs, and many residents already see themselves as belonging together. This adjustment fixes ongoing confusion since they were moved in 2017. The older, more mature communities south of McKnight share similar demographics and identity as well. Some neighbourhoods remain split – for example, Monterey Park – which is not ideal from a community of interest perspective. It appears to be a compromise driven by overall population pressures in the northeast.

The commission projects an additional 18 per cent growth in the coming years in Calgary-Falconridge. Calgary-Bhullar-McCall next to us is projected 29 per cent, reflecting the broader growth of the entire northeast corridor, which has seen some of the largest in the province. This is because of continued development east of Stoney Trail, large multigenerational household intensification, and high rates of settlement. If you look at Calgary's overall growth and representation, Calgary is growing and fast. This level of expansion places pressure on adjusted constituencies and highlights just how quickly Calgary's population growth is outpacing earlier expectations. We saw this with Calgary-Falconridge as well as many others.

Calgary's northeast quadrant continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in both the city and the province, and that growth is no longer contained within its boundaries. The Calgary-North East riding alone is projected to grow by 55 per cent even after its proposed split and the new riding of Calgary-Nose Creek. We are now seeing growth extending north to northwest Calgary, Airdrie, and the communities east of Stoney Trail from Homestead by 80th Avenue N.E. down to Huxley, Belvedere, and Twinhills near 17th Avenue. In fact, there is growth all the way to the far south end of Calgary all along the outside of Stoney Trail. The commission has taken two meaningful steps to address this, with Calgary gaining two additional seats with Calgary-Confluence and Calgary-Nose Creek.

Outside Calgary the Airdrie-Cochrane corridor also gains an additional seat, moving from two to three, with the new Airdrie-West riding in addition to Airdrie-East and Cochrane-Springbank. These changes demonstrate a strong recognition of the demographic reality Calgary is facing. However, the pace of growth in the city,

particularly outside the current Stoney Trail ring road, continues to exceed what was predicted during the previous redistribution cycle. This expansion reinforces the need to think proactively, not reactively, about representation. Without additional measures several Calgary ridings risk becoming significantly overpopulated early in the next distribution cycle.

If you look at Calgary's overall growth and representation, for this reason I encourage the commission to consider adding another Calgary seat. An example of an opportunity for these changes is the proposal for Calgary-Okotoks, a hybrid seat that is one-third Calgary and two-thirds Okotoks that was intended to relieve pressure in south Calgary. While we understand the intent behind proposing Calgary-Okotoks as a hybrid seat, the reality is that growth in the southeast quadrant of Calgary, especially outside Stoney Trail, is accelerating, mirroring the trend seen in the northeast quadrant of Calgary. A fully Calgary-based seat would account for this upcoming growth and prevent future overpopulation.

Okotoks is distinct from Calgary. Its community identity, municipal structure, and regional priorities are fundamentally different. Merging it with a major urban centre like Calgary risks reducing Okotoks' voice and diminishing its ability to have effective representation rooted in its own needs. Calgary can absorb and justify an additional fully urban seat far more easily than a hybrid seat. A Calgary-only riding would relieve pressure across the city, as we have in the north and northeast. It would improve equity and complement the work already proposed by the commission. Given Calgary's unexpected and continued upward population trajectory, this adjustment would strengthen the overall map and better position for the next decade of representation.

Again, I would like to thank the commission for their hard work. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. We heard from your neighbours last week.

Any questions, starting with Mrs. Samson?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you very much.

Thank you for your time this morning. You're in a difficult, if I could use that word, situation with the changes in Calgary-Falconridge. I realize there are communities of interest that have now moved into Calgary-Cross, but with the numbers that we're seeing and the continued growth, there's not a lot of wiggle room. You know, the recommendations you made we have heard from others, and they are concerned. We certainly will have a look at it, but it's a tough one. Thank you again for echoing those concerns.

10:20

Member Boparai: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: No questions. Thank you for your presentation.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you.

It's a good lesson in being a little cautious in the predictions that a boundaries commission might make. I did read that as well in the last commission's suggestion on Calgary-Falconridge, that it wouldn't grow as quickly. That's a challenge. Our crystal ball is probably equally defective, but we'll try not to make the same mistakes. I don't really have any questions per se. Just so I'm clear, are you comfortable with the draft Calgary-Falconridge map as we have drawn it in the interim report?

Member Boparai: Yeah. I don't mind it, but for a suggestion: if the north of Monterey Park can be excluded from Calgary-Falconridge, it would be better. Otherwise, that's fine.

Mr. Clark: Okay. That's helpful. Yeah. Again, it's a bit of a cascading challenge, but I see where that is. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: No questions.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much for your presentation.

We have kind of caught up, and we're on time now. Our next presenter I understand is wanting to present, but he's locked out of his office, so we're going to take our break a tad early, and we are going to have a break today. We will reconvene probably around 10:45 a.m. or when Mr. Arcand-Paul reaches out to Aaron. Okay. We'll break till 10:45 a.m.

[The hearing adjourned from 10:22 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.]

The Chair: I know I said we had adjourned until 10:45, but we have our next presenter available. We're glad to see that everybody got into their office unscathed.

I'm going to open it up for Mr. Arcand-Paul to present. Please identify yourself and tell us what electoral division you are from or representing and tell us what you want us to hear.

Member Arcand-Paul: Hello, commission members. Thank you for your flexibility this morning. It's lovely to see you again. For those that do not remember me, I'm Brooks Arcand-Paul. I'm the MLA for Edmonton-West Henday. I'd like to present to you on four ridings today: Edmonton-West Henday, Edmonton-West-Enoch, Banff-Jasper, and Mackenzie.

First, I'll start with my riding. I sent a presentation to Aaron just a few moments ago that hopefully he can share. There was a proposal to create a hybrid riding including Edmonton-West Henday. I would argue that you did the right thing by rejecting that proposal because the west end is rapidly growing because it's affordable and it's welcoming. It's imperative that our riding is kept within the municipal boundaries of Edmonton.

In a rural riding, which is a rural-urban riding, the voices of the young, diverse, and new constituents that I represent will risk being drowned out. This redraw is especially important given that these are the boundaries the west end will be relying on for the next two elections. This future growth cannot be understated, including for the reasons I outlined in my initial appearance before you.

While I won't recite what I have previously mentioned about West Henday, I do think the redrawn boundaries make a lot of good sense and pick up a few neighbourhoods into West Henday that fit squarely with the communities I already represent. This includes the addition of Glenwood, Summerlea, Britannia, Youngstown, and Mayfield. While I'd be remiss to not relay some concern from some of my constituents in Calder that they would no longer be in West Henday, I do understand the need to balance the population that West Henday would be composed of. However, if the option to keep Calder in West Henday is not too much to ask, I'm doing so with the understanding that the commission is in a tough bind.

I further understand and support including Rosenthal, Suder, Potter, and Breckenridge Greens into Edmonton-West-Enoch. Although splitting up the Greens does split up a community league, the Lewis Estates community league, I trust there are other community leagues across the province that function in spite of these delineations. But I digress.

Given the rapid growth that Edmonton has been seeing and will be continuing to see in the near future, I hope that the commission considers adding another seat within the boundaries of Edmonton. In the interest of time, the slide that you are seeing in front of you right now includes some growth of one part of my neighbourhood, Kinglet, Trumpeter, and Starling. On the left there's a picture from September 2017, and on the right is a picture from September 2025.

Aaron, next slide, please.

This is what the growth looks like. This is the growth from Hawks Ridge, Kinglet Gardens, and Starling. As you can see, there's been some rezoning developments.

I think, Aaron, there's a next slide, too.

This is Secord. I want to really underscore September 2017, when the boundaries were redrawn, to today, September 2025. That growth is exponential in Secord.

Next slide.

And it keeps going. There are empty lots that are still being developed, and as you can see in these photos, there's continuous growth happening, new multi-unit and multi-dwelling homes being built and zoned for such.

You can end the slides, Aaron.

Second, I want to commend the commission for also taking Indigenous representation seriously by creating the riding of Edmonton-West-Enoch, the riding of Mackenzie, and including all Stoney Nakoda Nations and the O'Chiese and Sunchild First Nation in the riding of Banff-Jasper. You have for the first time in the history of the province given Indigenous peoples in Alberta access to representation in the Legislature.

Edmonton-West-Enoch gives Enoch Cree Nation an opportunity to access effective representation. Enoch Cree Nation is unique because it's a highly urban First Nation. Many people from Enoch live and work in Edmonton. In the previous configuration of Drayton Valley-Devon their voices were being drowned out in a largely rural riding. Living right next door to Enoch and, in fact, in a community that used to be reserved land, Secord and Rosenthal, it just makes sense to include them in an Edmonton riding rather than a rural riding. If any of you have been out to the River Cree, it is becoming an increasingly important hub for the west end and certainly a great date spot for me and my honey. They have a massive expansion under way and are serving both the Nation members of Enoch and their neighbours in Edmonton with their services and entertainment options.

Further, in bringing together the three Stoney Nakoda nations along with the Tsuu T'ina Nation and O'Chiese and Sunchild First Nations in Banff-Jasper, you have given them the opportunity to be better supported by a singular MLA and their constituency office team. It is a very large riding geographically, but it makes good sense not only to keep the mountain towns together but also bringing together First Nations that have traditionally been amidst largely rural ridings.

By creating the riding of Mackenzie, you have proposed to give Indigenous peoples from northern Alberta a distinct voice for the first time in the history of our province. In doing so, you have given the First Nations and Métis communities of interest the protection the act is meant to give under section 14 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. You've also brought Alberta in line with Manitoba and Saskatchewan, who have northern ridings with majority Indigenous populations.

Lastly, I want to recognize that you've been getting push-back which would impact the riding of Mackenzie. For example, there have been arguments made about the long-standing and historic nature of ridings in northern Alberta. I humbly put to you that history is not always a good reason to keep things the way that they are, and we do need that recognized change.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on this gargantuan task. I am open to any questions based on my presentation.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Sir, you're right. We have received some push-back on the Mackenzie issue in the north, and I have to say that we've had excellent Indigenous presentations last week during our online session from the north that really cause us to question the wisdom of what we proposed.

You made mention of – I'm somewhat familiar with Saskatchewan, but it's a completely different northern geography than northern Alberta and a completely different development. Tell me a little bit about Manitoba. That I don't know anything about. How do they deal with the north in Manitoba, if you've researched this?

Member Arcand-Paul: Yeah. In the north they have the specific – and the name is escaping me. I think it's Keewatinook, where they've developed the riding for the fact that they have the makeup of largely Indigenous folks in that part of the province. If I'm not mistaken, it's northwest of the province, and it contains, again, a very large number of Indigenous folks that would show up to the polls and are represented by somebody that they choose. I'm a little bit scant on the details, unfortunately, on what the representational turnout is with respect to a candidate, but I do know that they are largely represented by Indigenous folks in that community.

The Chair: Okay. Each province has dealt with these exceptions in different ways. Having looked at the history of Alberta and the work since the Saskatchewan reference in the early '90s, it seems to me that the Alberta legislation gives us the tool of 15(2), which can't be equalized with the way Saskatchewan does it. I think we have to do a bit more work in terms of the northern ridings to make sure that they don't lose representation. The push-back from the north to us has been, in my view, very bipartisan. Everybody is unhappy with losing one more voice in the north. So we're dealing with a combination of things. One of them is very much more appropriate Indigenous representation. That is a bit of a challenge for us. That is my only comment.

Questions, Mr. Clark?

Mr. Clark: No. You know, I will say just how much we appreciate the feedback on Enoch inclusion within Edmonton. I don't believe we've received any direct input from the Enoch Cree. That's always a bit of a flag, and I just want to be cautious on that. But having said that, I think your submission here today is very helpful. Just briefly, do you know specifically if Enoch Cree have any feedback on the proposal?

10:40

Member Arcand-Paul: I haven't had a chance to chat with their chief and council, but it has come to light from members that there was some support of including them into the urban riding of Edmonton. If we're looking at the people that do vote: yes, chief and councils also vote, but it's the membership that does have a really strong showing of their ability to go to the polls.

It would depend on the commission's ability to do so under legislation. I think that as a legislator I'm hyperconscious of perhaps changes that need to be done to legislation to include the ability to consult with First Nations. That was one of the biggest pieces of feedback that I received when I was talking about the redraw and what their interests are with the inclusion into, like, urban ridings or the inclusion into Banff-Jasper, that they were never reached out to for consultation. I think that might be a gap

from the commission's abilities and powers, but as a legislator, again, as I said, it's difficult. It's a question for us to deal with.

With respect to Enoch specifically, I can't opine as to what they've been saying, but I can tell you that there are members that do vote, that participate in provincial elections, and they are thrilled to have this as part of the changes to their riding.

Mr. Clark: Excellent. Well, thank you very much. Really appreciate that input. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Yes. Thank you.

Thank you for your presentation and your kind remarks about our attentiveness to the First Nations as we survey the map and maps. I wanted to ask you something more about growth in your riding. You showed us some recent photographs, and I take it those are Lewis Estates photographs, are they?

Member Arcand-Paul: The first set was Kinglet. That was around the Big Lake area. It includes Kinglet Gardens, Kinglet, Hawks Ridge, Starling. They're one of the newer areas with new developments happening, and the second set was Secord, which is one of the communities that I currently represent that is also fast growing.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. I'm sorry about Calder. You're fast growing, but Mr. Eggen said: you know, it makes sense that it's here, thank you very much. So you'll have to talk to your colleague.

Again, I'm sorry that we seem to have split the community leagues and the like in the Lewis Estates area. We divided it along Webber Greens Drive, I seem to remember. In your preference, as it were, you would like to see that made whole, would you?

Member Arcand-Paul: I know the difficulty of using the landmarks and using the main roads as the delineator. It would be nice for that. It's a little, tiny chunk that would kind of be separated entirely from the south of 87th Ave that maybe could be added to Edmonton-West-Enoch, and it might be a weird carve-out. But I do think that separating them may create some practical difficulties for the entire community of Lewis Estates because they are all one. I know the map kind of looks like there are different Greens and they're all titled differently, but they all form one community of Lewis Estates. It would be nice to keep them as whole, but I understand the practicalities of a fast-growing riding like Edmonton-West Henday.

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much, sir.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your presentation today. Also, thank you for your comments concerning the Indigenous. Although we did have input, I felt we didn't have enough, but the stuff we did get was really good. Again, thank you for your time.

Member Arcand-Paul: Yeah. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: Yeah.

I just want to comment with respect to: I appreciate what you were trying to achieve by showing us those photos with the 2017 date and comparing it to 2025. I don't think that it demonstrated any sort of growth that wasn't captured in the 2024 census, but I appreciate giving us a visual. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Yeah.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much again, Mr. Arcand-Paul. You've touched on – well, I have a question, actually. My colleagues on the commission may say it's a bit of a hobby horse of mine, hybrid ridings. We received a considerable amount of push-back, not so much from Edmonton but Calgary, against hybrid ridings. So your praise and endorsement of Edmonton-West-Enoch: that's a hybrid.

Member Arcand-Paul: Yes and no.

The Chair: I think yes.

Member Arcand-Paul: Okay. Fair. I mean, you have to be on the ground. I don't know if you live in that community.

The Chair: No, I was out there enjoying the facilities the last time around when I was in Edmonton.

Member Arcand-Paul: Okay. So you know what I'm talking about with the River Cree then and the growth that's happening.

The Chair: Yeah. Great cigar lounge.

Member Arcand-Paul: Just south of there, which would include Edmonton-West-Enoch, also includes the Uplands, it includes Keswick, it includes a bunch of new neighbourhoods that go and extend into, like, a rural part of, I guess, Edmonton because the city limits extend that far. It is within the city limits, and it is growing at a rapid pace. As you know, housing is at a premium, and we need more housing. Edmonton has grown quite significantly, and I think it also stresses the urge for an additional riding in the city of Edmonton because we are growing so fast. Arguably, same with Calgary.

I will take note, and sure, I will agree with you that there are some rural aspects to this riding, but with the growth of this city I don't anticipate that it's going to be rural for much longer because of how fast that area is growing. I'll admit, anecdotally, that I'm in the process of buying a house. I'm looking in those areas, and I'm quite shocked at how far the developments are going in that area, so it's only a matter of time. You know, the fact that we're going to have two elections under these ridings: I think it's very prudent to have that additional growth captured in that riding of Edmonton-West-Enoch.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Thank you very much for presenting.

Our next presenter – and we're actually right on schedule; ahead of schedule – is Ms Kathleen Ganley, Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Hello. Sorry. You are running ahead of schedule. That's exciting. Well, thank you very much for having me today. I appreciate the ability to comment on this. I want to first say that I appreciate that this is, like, a very challenging situation – very challenging – with people making different arguments, and I very much appreciate your willingness to sort of do the work and the map that you have drawn already. I think, overall, I would say it seems quite fair. I, of course, have a couple of quibbles, but I'd like to start with the positive.

I'll comment primarily on Calgary because that's where I'm from. I think in terms of Calgary this map is a significant move in the right direction. I would say that if I could highlight anything, it's that the jurisprudence and the act make it clear that ensuring effective representation is the sort of primary factor. There are a number of other things that ought to be taken into consideration, and I think municipal boundaries are definitely one of them, but that idea of effective representation, of keeping all the ridings as close as possible to having, you know, the median population I think is super, super important. I would say that the map kind of recognizes

that with the insertion of Calgary-Confluence and Calgary-Nose Creek. I think that those ridings are coming in in the right place.

Some of the fastest growth we have seen in Calgary is in northeast Calgary, but we're also seeing significant densification in the centre city, which is where Calgary-Mountain View is, so I'm very, very familiar with it. In fact, there are buildings going up, like, basically, constantly, right? Everywhere in my riding there are new buildings going up, so we will see that population continuing to grow in the centre city.

I might suggest that, given the tendency for ridings in Calgary to be over, it doesn't do a great job of accommodating future growth. Like, this map is going to come in and it's going to be in place for eight years. If you look at the last map and how much growth has occurred since the last map, I think that it is worth the commission considering inserting another seat into Calgary to recognize that future growth because you're dealing with a map that we will have for quite a while. I know that some folks have made arguments in the opposite direction, but I think when you're looking at ridings in Calgary like Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, for example, which is more than 10 per cent over, and then some ridings in the rural north that are 28 per cent under, I think it's worth considering whether maybe Calgary might need another seat.

10:50

My other big quibble with this would be the ridings of Calgary-West-Elbow Valley and Calgary-Cross. I'm a little curious in light of the fact that, again, Calgary ridings are over and they're projected to go more over into the future. I don't want to guess at what's going to happen, but, like, this is very likely. Having those hybrid ridings seems to me entirely unnecessary. In light of the fact that Calgary has plenty of population, I don't know why we would be drawing in other areas that could go into other ridings and bring them closer to the median. Like, this just doesn't seem necessary to me.

Especially, like, Calgary-Cross is near Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, for instance, which has an overpopulation, as do many of the other ridings in northeast. Calgary-Currie is over 5.8 per cent, Calgary-Fish Creek over 9.3 per cent, yet for some reason Calgary-West, which is in the southwest of Calgary, is drawing in sort of additional rural areas. It just doesn't seem necessary when you could shift things a little and make everyone closer to the median. Yeah. Those would be my quibbles, but overall I would say that it has been a good job. Yes. Could be improved by adding one more seat to Calgary.

I think what I would say in the end is that we find ourselves in a moment in history where our institutions are somewhat under attack, so I think that it is more important than usual to remain focused on ensuring that the entire population feels well represented and feels like they have that buy-in to the system. I think that seeing that populations in Calgary are over and populations in other areas are consistently under so the kind of principle of one person, one vote, that MLAs ought to equally represent constituents – yeah. I think the more we can do to get those closer to the median, the more people will have buy-in to that system and the better it is, but I think, overall, I don't have a lot of complaints with this map.

The one other thing I would point out – because I have spent a fair amount of time in Medicine Hat just working with folks there. They have one of these hybrid ridings, and I think it's frustrating to the voters there. What I've heard on the ground is that they don't always feel that their voices are fully represented, and I think that goes for both sides, right? There is a question of, you know, urban voters having a certain perspective, but rural voters also have a certain perspective, as do folks in small towns. I mean, I laid out my arguments in the last submission, so I will not reiterate them here, but I think sometimes there are conflicting interests in terms

of whether your schools and hospitals are bursting at the seams or whether you're struggling with lack of use and sort of base funding for those. I can expand on that, but since I've already done it, I will not do that here today.

I'm happy to take any questions that you have.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Ms Ganley.
Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: No. No questions for Ms Ganley.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your time today. I appreciate it. I just want to tell you that from my perspective, Calgary-Cross took in Conrich because Conrich has no services, and those people are commuting into Calgary. So we viewed that as communities of interest. The same thing occurred in Elbow Valley. Otherwise, you know, I mean, it fit nicely for us. We heard very clearly back from the suggestion of Okotoks getting tied into Calgary. The ones we heard from preferred if Okotoks would stay in Diamond Valley, again, a better connection with community of interest.

I appreciate your comments. We take everything into interest when we're making these decisions. Thanks again.

Ms Ganley: Yeah. Can I just say that I appreciate very much that response. I think you're absolutely correct that hybrid ridings are a tool. It shouldn't be overused. I would say that the points you make on that are very valid.

I'm glad you have recognized the difference in terms of Okotoks. I think you're correct. They feel that they have their own community of interest, and I think that's very valid.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: No questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you.

The grand challenge we have is balancing what may be unbalanceable in terms of substantial population growth in the cities, as you identify, in the inner cities and certainly northeast Calgary, south Calgary, south Edmonton, but also accommodating for future growth and ensuring effective representation to all Albertans, including the far north and in particular the far north and rural and remote areas as well.

Just a thought experiment. Because the cities tend to lag behind in that population growth exceeds the rest of the province, by making constituencies like Calgary-Mountain View and Calgary-Buffalo and Calgary-Confluence right around the mean at this point on the expectation that they're almost certainly going to grow quicker than the rest of the provincial average, we're creating some headroom there. We're not making them 5 or 10 per cent under because that would make it very difficult for us to have any sort of effective representation outside the cities. Does that meet your test for effective representation?

Ms Ganley: Yeah. I would one hundred per cent agree with that. I've got the percentages open here. I think you're right. I think we do want to take those centre city ridings closer to the median. I don't think that you're speculating. My recollection is – and I don't know if that's still the case, but you, like me, sort of live in centre city Calgary, right? You're driving around all the time, and you can see it, right? You can see it. Everywhere I go, densification is occurring, and those places get snapped up in a heartbeat. Like, sometimes

they are purchased before they're even finished being built. You know, in areas like Hillhurst, West Hillhurst, Bridgeland, all mature in my riding, you can see those buildings going up and filling very quickly. I mean, it's very, very clear that the population will continue to expand. I actually think that sort of aiming those centre city ridings for sort of right on the median, knowing that that growth will occur, is the best balance you possibly could have done. I don't envy you that particular decision.

The only other thing I would comment on is that I think that northeast Calgary is equally growing very quickly, and their ridings are already quite large. I do appreciate that the commission has already put one riding in there. It could maybe use another. Yeah. I don't want to pretend to imagine what you did in drawing this map.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much.

Ms Ganley: Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Ganley. I've got a couple of comments but a quick question. Are you content with the name of your electoral division?

Ms Ganley: I actually do think it's potentially confusing. I say that because of having a Calgary-Mountain View and a Mountain View-Kneehill. When we're in the Legislature, we're not allowed to address one another by name. We address one another by riding. It's kind of like being the kid in the class that has to go by their last initial because some other kid has the same first name. You know what I mean? I do think that that is potentially confusing. I will tell you that, by and large, when I say to people, "I'm the MLA for Calgary-Mountain View," they assume that I am somewhere on the west edge of the city, and I have never totally understood why that is. People are always surprised that the riding is named what it is. I mean, I like the name; I've grown attached to it, but I'm happy to have it changed. I do think it is a bit potentially confusing when the Speaker calls us by riding name to have two very similar riding names.

11:00

The Chair: Yeah. We've heard some push-back on the name Foothills because foothills are all over. Anyways. Okay.

Let me give you a perspective. You may have heard my comments with the previous speaker, and I didn't realize you were on the line, but let me fess up to my observation that Calgarians seem to be, you know, very much opposed to hybrids and it seemed that there was a bit of a campaign. There's nothing wrong with that, but: hybrids are bad, they're evil; don't allow for them. As you know, as a lawyer, it is a legitimate choice, and you've indicated that, yeah, they shouldn't be overused, but in my view they've been underused for so long. We've had this option since the early '90s, and as someone who does not live in Calgary nor in Edmonton, you may have recalled the line – it was actually brought up to me yesterday in a presentation – that maybe it's time that Calgary and Edmonton see what the rest of the province deals with in terms of hybrid ridings.

Our approach is, I think, very modest here in both cities, and we were kind of in a quandary with Calgary south, with Calgary-Okotoks, and we heard loud and clear that that's not a great plan. I don't think you have to be concerned about that one, but there are some that fit really well. Edmonton-West-Enoch is one. Conrich: there's some good rationale for that. I may be just rambling because you're Calgarian, and I want to maybe defend some of the things that you had quibbles with. It's late in the week. We finish today.

Last week we had a presentation from an MLA who said, "You know, with the numbers in my riding, it's becoming outrageously

large,” so I posited to him: “Okay. You’ve used the term “outrageously large.” Let’s talk about Mackenzie in northern Alberta.” I am told – I haven’t verified this – that the southern boundary of Mackenzie is closer to Montana than it is to the Northwest Territories. Now, that’s outrageously large, and we took a riding out of the north for which we’ve received strong bipartisan push-back. So I guess I’m trying to build the case for more hybrids, and I think we will in our report, and I think we have to do some correcting in terms of the elimination of rural and certainly a northern seat.

With all that, I don’t think we’re obsessed with getting to the mean or average, because that limits us. We’re more obsessed with getting everybody in the range and meeting the test of effective representation. Now, I think it will always be thus, that urban ridings are higher, well above the average, and rural ridings are almost always below the average. That’s my *Reader’s Digest* version of what we’re thinking. I didn’t get the endorsement of any of the four co-commissioners to say this to you, but that’s certainly my thought process.

I think as a former Attorney General you understand, you know, the pressures that we have. It is somewhat influenced by the very limited increase of only two seats. That’s a frustration for us, and we will be recommending something along those lines, that we just didn’t have enough room. We just don’t have enough room in the two-seat expansion of the Legislature. As you know, the Court of Appeal says, “Look, you’ve got three options: add more seats to the Legislature, take more seats away from the rural areas, or use hybrids,” and that’s the conundrum we’re dealing with and we have been dealing with ever since we started this. I welcome some push-back on that, Ms Ganley, or a response.

Ms Ganley: And I’m happy to provide it. What I would say is that the point of representative democracy is that rather than sort of people fighting with one another directly in the streets or whatever, they elect representatives; the representatives go to the Legislature, and that is the system we use. The court system is a very similar thing. People sort of give their interests up in the interest of us all being governed by a common system. There are some things that are very, very fundamentally different right now in a very intense way. We’re seeing this, like, massive increase in what I would call separatist rhetoric, and I will tell you that the people I talk to in Calgary are horrified.

I think when you’re creating these hybrid ridings, you are putting an MLA in the position of simultaneously representing constituents who are fundamentally, morally, in their very souls Albertans and Canadians at the same time, and others who believe that Alberta should separate, and that is their kind of one-issue perspective. I can only imagine that that would be incredibly challenging, and I don’t think throwing those folks into the same riding where they’re advocating to one MLA, instead of having them in separate ridings where the MLAs can argue it out in the Legislature, is something that will support faith in the system or that supports the general aim of peaceful resolution of our disputes through the processes that we have.

I will tell you that my perspective is that it’s emotional for people. It is, and it worries me, honestly, how emotional it is for people. The idea of sort of throwing all of those people into the same riding in the hopes that they will somehow sort out those disputes or understand one another better: I think, much like when you’re dealing with school children who may have had a dispute – do you know what I mean? – I don’t know that putting together two very angry and fundamentally opposed people under the same MLA, rather than having that hashed out in the Legislature, is the right way to do it.

When I was first elected, they told us, you know, that there are two sword lengths between the two sides to avoid anyone getting into a dispute about it, and I kind of thought it was funny back then. Now it seems, I guess, less funny than it did at that time, and I just think that ensuring that those disputes are sort of going up through our representatives and into the process is the better way to do it.

I do appreciate the perspective of the colleagues from the north who are suggesting that these ridings are very large. They are very large. I would say that there’s one MP, I think, for the entire Northwest Territories, and they seem to manage somehow. With the advent of modern technology, I don’t think the size of the riding is the same kind of factor that it was once in history.

In terms of the Calgary perspective, I think you’re right when you say that Calgary has had more of a push-back against this concept of hybrid ridings, and I do understand that it is a tool that is available. I think that it is a tool that should be used as sparingly as possible, for the reasons I have just outlined, but I think Calgarians very much have a perspective, in a lot of ways, that we haven’t always been represented. There are feelings, I think, about Edmonton, as everyone is familiar with, the whole Calgary and Edmonton situation. Sometimes it feels like it mirrors Alberta and Ottawa although not, obviously, to that degree.

I think Calgarians really feel that we want to have our own voice, that we want to sort of have a seat at the table, to be represented, and to be able to send our own representatives that speak specifically for us. I think the reason you see that push-back, in my understanding from both sides, both the rural or the small urban and from the sort of main city, is because we are all very acutely aware, because of the sort of boom-bust cycle of oil that has historically resulted in, like, sudden growth in Calgary, of what those growth pressures feel like.

11:10

It’s just a very different perspective, right? You know, there are a lot of disputes amongst Calgary communities, particularly in the inner city, about densification, about the history of the neighbourhood versus how we have to – and, like, the entirety of Calgary, we feel that sort of growth pressure in our souls, right? Whereas rural areas feel the opposite. There are fewer and fewer people often, although in some bedroom communities that will be different. Airdrie and Okotoks are, I think, actually growing faster than Calgary. I don’t want to say that definitively because I don’t have the numbers in front of me, but my understanding is that they are. I have a lot of friends, obviously, in those cities, and they feel that their interests are different than Calgary, right?

I think growth pressure creates scarcity of resources, and that results in people having what would otherwise be a logical thought sort of more emotionally, much like I described with the sort of separatist, antiseparatist thing. I just think the result is that people feel it very viscerally. I mean, that would be my best attempt to answer the question.

The Chair: Okay. I don’t want to keep you, but I am watching the clock, and we have the time, so that’s why I’m engaging this repartee with you.

Ms Ganley: Totally fair.

The Chair: You raise an interesting point that, like, I guess I’d never thought of. I don’t think it’s ever been presented to us, the issue of independence, but I’m not sure the good folks of Conrich and Enoch are – those are not hotbeds of separatism necessarily, according to my understanding. You know, those are the two examples I use: one from Calgary, one from Edmonton, for the hybrids.

Counter to what you just said, we had someone – I can't remember the person or the electoral division last week – who made a very strong point that hybrids help bring people together, in exact response to your point that institutions are under attack and things like that, that hybrids help force people to look at life from a perspective that's not their own, so there's that argument as well.

Ms Ganley: I think what I would say in response to that argument is that it suffers from a misunderstanding of human psychology. I don't think throwing two groups of people with wildly different perspectives in a room and hoping that they will sort it out – like, the Legislature and the court systems are the processes that we have for sorting those things out peacefully. So I think you're much better off to send two representatives with those different perspectives to sort it out than to expect people within a riding to do that. I would actually say that the converse is true, that putting everyone into the same riding is likely to aggravate those differences.

The Chair: Ms Ganley, thank you so much. Thank you for participating in my dialogue. Much appreciated.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: I think we need to move on to the next presenter, and I'm going to call on Mr. Dale Nally. Is Dale Nally present?

Mr. Nally: Hi.

The Chair: Good morning, Mr. Nally.

Mr. Nally: Good morning. How are you?

The Chair: Good.

Please identify yourself and indicate for the record what electoral division you represent and proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Nally: Thank you. My name is Dale Nally. I'm the MLA for Morinville-St. Albert. I'd like to thank you for allowing me to come in today and speak to you about the electoral boundaries.

I'm going to be very clear in what I'm in favour of. I am in favour of what I call the rurban riding. I know you'll hear it referred to as hybrid, but I prefer the word "rurban." I can tell you that there is a growing division in Alberta right now between urban and rural ridings, and I presume that you're going to hear from MLAs from urban ridings that don't want part of rural Alberta in their riding, and I presume you will probably hear from rural MLAs that would prefer not to have urban parts of their riding in their rural piece. So you're going to hear from all different perspectives. I think that my situation is unique because I actually represent one of those hybrid ridings.

I can tell you that when the boundary was first created, it was back in 2017-18, when the NDP were in government. This was Morinville-St. Albert. The unique riding was created. It was a third St. Albert, a third Morinville, and a third Sturgeon county, which included Legal, Redwater, Bon Accord, and Gibbons. So it is your quintessential hybrid or rurban riding. It was also the riding that I lived in. It probably wouldn't have been my first choice at the time. I would have preferred to have been door-knocking in a community that I exclusively lived in.

So this was unique, but I have to tell you that representing that riding now for six years, I've changed my opinion on the hybrid ridings. I believe that being a rurban MLA has allowed me to be a better MLA. I'm a member of cabinet. I'm a member of Treasury Board. I do not have the luxury of just wearing an urban hat or a

rural hat, but if the only people that I'm listening to are urban or rural, that's the perspective that I'm going to bring forward.

There are a couple of reasons why I believe I'm a better MLA because of the hybrid riding. One is that it provides enhanced representation. I am listening to a more diverse group of constituents. When I'm in the rural part of my riding, I hear their perspective on rural crime. I sat at a constituent's table in their kitchen, having coffee with them. They told me about a time when they were robbed on their farm. They could see the lights of the bad guys. They could hear them in the Quonset helping themselves, because they knew that they had 20 minutes before the RCMP would show up. All they could do was sit behind a locked door in their house and wait. I've got to tell you that when you hear a person and when you look them in the eye after telling you this story, it changes your perspective. Conversely, I'm also able to speak to constituents who tell me why they value the policing authorities, specifically the RCMP. They like the tradition and the history that goes along with it. It forces me to be a better representative because I'm listening to a more diverse group of constituents.

I also believe that collaborative problem solving is enhanced as well. There are a lot of decisions that we have to make in government, in the Legislature that require collaboration from both urban and rural areas. I'll give you a prime example, something that is very front of mind right now, and that is data centres. This is a huge opportunity for the province to generate billions of dollars in investment, creating thousands of jobs, generational wealth from the royalties. It's a great opportunity when you speak to many of the urban constituents that are very supportive of this because of the investment attraction and the jobs. But when you also represent a community like Redwater, that pays higher transmission costs than they do in St. Albert, you hear a different perspective. One of the things that I was able to speak to when working with the minister on the data centre strategy was the fact that if we're going to embrace this industry, we have to make sure it is not at the cost of our rural constituents paying even more in transmission charges. So just something little like knowing that in Redwater they pay higher transmission than they do in urban areas is something that I bring to the table as a hybrid MLA.

Even in more current events, you know, there's a lot of talk right now of Alberta separation. The fact is that if you are in one particular riding, you're going to hear a specific perspective predominantly, but when you have a diverse set of constituents that you represent, I literally hear from all Albertans. I hear from people that want a stronger Alberta in a united Canada. I hear from people that do want an independent Alberta. Again, as an elected representative, having a diverse set of constituents makes me a better MLA. It allows me to make better decisions as an MLA.

11:20

I know I've spent a lot of time talking about the hybrid nature. I hope that we go with more of these hybrid ridings. My particular riding in Morinville-St. Albert is almost perfect. The only thing that's lacking is that I don't represent any First Nation communities. I know that there's a proposal in front of you to include part of Lac Ste. Anne in Morinville-St. Albert, and I hope you consider that because having a First Nation community is probably the last piece to making my riding near perfect. I'm supportive of hybrid ridings, and I hope that you consider more of them. It will help us bridge the divide that is happening between rural and urban Alberta.

Right. I think that is probably most of my six minutes. I'll turn it over to you if you have any questions.

The Chair: Well, thank you, Mr. McNally.

Mr. Nally: Just Nally.

The Chair: Sorry, Mr. Nally.

It's unfortunate that we didn't have a formal debate between the two presenters.

Mr. Clark, questions?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you very much, and thanks, Minister, for being here. It's good to see you again.

You know, one of the sayings we have on the panel here is: hybrids if necessary, but not necessarily hybrids. The timing is really interesting following Ms Ganley, who I think made essentially the opposite argument, as Justice Miller alludes to. Just interesting.

What I'm really interested in, though, is that you seem to have outlined a set of conditions where a hybrid can work, and that is: in your case, I've written down that you've got St. Albert, Morinville, Redwater, Gibbons, Legal, Bon Accord. You know, sort of essentially three legs of a stool is what I see here. No one of those three really dominates, so all those different groups feel like they're part of it. For anyone to be successful electorally, you're going to need to appeal to at least two of those three groups, and that creates that kind of balance. We've got some others around Calgary, and although some would disagree, rolling in Conrich, which really faces Calgary, rolling in Elbow Valley into West, which shares infrastructure with Calgary: those seem to meet a pretty reasonable test of what an effective hybrid can be. I think where the challenge comes and others have pushed back on is saying: well, if you've got like an 80-20, one group over another, the 20 inevitably feels like they don't have a voice.

I guess my question is: your St. Albert-Sturgeon constituency as proposed sort of faces north and east, really, I guess, you know, from Edmonton. What if we flipped it around? What if we took a bite out of Edmonton and mixed St. Albert with Edmonton. How would you feel about that? Do you think that's a reasonable mix?

Mr. Nally: Listen. Again, I think it doesn't give you the diversity of opinion because – I'm not suggesting that what you're throwing out is necessarily a bad thing because, you know, I think the more diversity, the better. I don't think you'll get quite as much diversity as putting two municipalities together versus an urban and a rural, but you would get some diversity, and that would, of course, be a good thing.

In terms of putting St. Albert with Edmonton: listen, if that were to be one of the ridings, that's actually a unique value proposition. I hadn't thought about it, but I've got to tell you that it meets the definition of diversity. If you look at St. Albert, we actually have three MLAs. We have one MLA who exclusively represents St. Albert. If you're saying: if we put a piece of Edmonton with St. Albert, would that make her a better MLA? I've got to tell you that if I'm listening to my own arguments, then it would because she would now be listening to St. Albert as well as Edmonton. So I'd have to say yes, but I would also say don't get rid of the St. Albert-Sturgeon riding because that also gives a different set of diverse opinions.

The third MLA: Parkland has a sliver of St. Albert, and they only became a St. Albert MLA because St. Albert took over some land from the Sturgeon county so they could expand. I would suggest to give Parkland a bigger piece of St. Albert. Then you would get three true St. Albert MLAs. I think that the diversity of perspectives: Yeah. I would have to say yes, I would agree with that. That would be some great decision-making.

Mr. Clark: One more just really quick question. I don't know the good people of St. Albert that well. Do they feel like they're Edmontonians?

Mr. Nally: You know, I've never asked them that question, but as someone who has spent 25 years living in St. Albert, I think that there is some uniqueness to St. Albert. St. Albert does see themselves as a different community from Edmonton, yeah, but we had a Member of Parliament that represented St. Albert and part of Edmonton, and one thing that I never heard was any complaints. So I don't think that the folks of St. Albert would be upset if there was a part of Edmonton lumped in, but I would make the case to do it in addition to, not instead of, an urban-rural. So in other words: catch all of it. It would absolutely be a stronger representation.

At the end of the day, my grandfather used to say: if you do what you've always done, you're going to get what you've always got. Well, let me tell you what we've got. We've got a huge divide between urban and rural, and you see it amongst both caucuses under the Legislature. You create more hybrid ridings, you're going to get better decision-making, you're going to get better representation.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, Minister Nally. I wanted to ask you about economic and traffic corridors. For example, it seems fairly clear to me that there's a connection between Redwater and the Industrial Heartland, which is to its south and southeast, but also along highway 2, Morinville, and Legal. Do you see growth of residential developments along those two corridor zones?

Mr. Nally: Yes, I do. Part of the strongest growth in my riding is north St. Albert, so at the back of my mind is the concern that I've got a pretty strong balance of diverse perspectives. Northern St. Albert is where the growth is coming. Much of it is in my portion of the riding, which is along that corridor of number two, which is why I would love to have a sliver of Lac Ste. Anne in Morinville-St. Albert. That's why I would love to include a First Nation, because I don't have one, and it would help offset the growth of that's coming into St. Albert for sure, and it would help protect the nature of the hybrid riding for sure.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, sir.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your time this morning. I should say that first.

When you look at your riding as it stands as we've redrawn it, St. Albert-Sturgeon: two questions. Do you like the riding the way it is? I don't believe there was a lot of change there. And two, do you like the name?

Mr. Nally: Well, thank you for asking me that. You know, I think that it was good. I think it can be better. I am concerned about the growth on the north part of St. Albert because we have very strong immigration, and St. Albert is growing at a fast rate. When you drive by on highway 2 and you see the north Erin Ridge development that's happening, it is going quick.

So yes, it's good. I think we could make it better by protecting it and not waiting 10 years to address it. That's why I support one, you know, increasing the rural component into Lac Ste. Anne, and it includes the First Nation, it includes Alexander. I would love to have that in my riding, and it's not for political reasons because I think it's a demographic. I don't think that there's a ton of votes for me there, but that's not why we're doing this. This is about representation. So I think that would protect against that growth there. I would say it's a good start. I think we can do a little bit better for sure.

Now, in terms of the name, I would like to keep the name as it is. The reason for that is, first of all, St. Albert is a third of my riding, but I only represent 20 per cent of St. Albert. So having Morinville first: I represent a few more Morinville constituents. It's the largest community that I represent. I would prefer to keep the Morinville-St. Albert name intact, but I mean, at the end of the day that's not a hill to die on. It's a nice-to-have to keep the name Morinville-St. Albert, so if you could consider that, I think that would be terrific.

11:30

Mrs. Samson: Just in clarification, you know, based on what we're proposing as a naming policy, the name would be St. Albert-Sturgeon.

Mr. Nally: Yeah. Like I said, I didn't come here to argue the name. You asked me what I thought.

Mrs. Samson: Yes, I did.

Mr. Nally: Yeah. I would prefer to keep Morinville-St. Albert as the name because Morinville is the biggest community that I represent both in the current riding and in what you're proposing as well as what I'm proposing. Morinville is still the biggest riding, so I would like to keep that name first but without getting rid of the St. Albert name either. I like the name as it is, but like I said, at the end of the day, it's not a hill to die on. It's more of a nice-to-have, not a must have.

Mrs. Samson: Right. So if we kept the name, it would just be flipped. It would be St. Albert because that's the larger of the two, St. Albert-Morinville.

Mr. Nally: It's the larger of the two, but I only represent 20 per cent of it, so I would argue to leave the name. I saw what you wrote about having the larger community first. You know, I guess that makes sense, but in this case I represent 20 per cent of St. Albert. For that reason, I would prefer to keep the name Morinville-St. Albert. My second choice would be St. Albert-Morinville, and then my third choice would be St. Albert-Sturgeon.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you very much. I appreciate your thoughts.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans: No questions, but thank you very much, Minister Nally.

Mr. Nally: Thank you for your time today.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

We'll go to our next presenter, Mr. Tany Yao. Please correct me if I mispronounced your name.

Mr. Yao: No, you have it right.

The Chair: Okay. Please identify yourself and tell us what electoral division you represent and what you'd like us to hear.

Mr. Yao: Thank you so much, Justice Miller and to the electoral boundary commissioners. Thank you all so much for taking the time to listen to me. I greatly appreciate that. Yeah. I'm Tany Yao. I'm the MLA for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo. However, my concerns aren't tied to my constituency. My concerns stem from my role as an advocate for the north, which is one of my drivers in being an elected official and serving in such roles as with the chair of the Northern Alberta Development Council. In that role in particular, I

recently developed a report after touring through northern communities and speaking with hundreds of stakeholders in various walks of life. There's a common theme of the perception of being undervalued and underrepresented in regard to investments by the province in such things as infrastructure and core services.

My concern today is about the proposed loss of a northern constituency. The proposed constituency lines would result in one less voice for an important but undervalued region of the province, which is the north. As you know, the land mass entails almost half the province. This area provides hundreds of billions of dollars in revenues to the provincial and federal governments. The jobs provided by this region are not reflected in population surveys as many commute, and those numbers are in the tens of thousands. Decisions made by our government can affect these citizens directly simply because of the region they work, so we just need to ensure that there are mechanisms for more or stronger voices in the Legislature that reflect the impact that the northern region has.

Also, the practical accessibility to in-person representative meetings is an important aspect for our democracy. Travel within a constituency should be reasonable and should support effective representation, so aspects like population spread for constituencies should have some reasonable assumptions for fewer constituents in a large area, and it should be a reasonable expectation that denser populations can respectfully be represented with a higher ratio in a smaller area. We need to maintain a balance of influence that not only acknowledges population but also the land area as well as the economical influence.

A third argument I have is that I also must highlight that there's a disproportionate number of Indigenous people in the north. Numbers I discovered reflect that approximately 18 per cent of the population are Indigenous in northern Alberta compared to 6.5 per cent in the rest of Alberta. So my ask is if the boundaries commission recognizes reconciliation ensuring Indigenous peoples are represented in our Legislature, maintaining a constituency in the region of Slave Lake would be a strong symbol of this, in addition to it being logical for other reasons that I mentioned earlier.

I hope you will consider my plea to maintain these numbers of the northern constituencies. I should also note that I hope that you had received a package from all the northern MLAs with our written concerns.

With that, yes, thank you so much for hearing me out on this issue.

The Chair: I'd like to start. Because of your involvement with the Northern Alberta Development Council, tell me, sir: what do you consider north? What's the southern boundary of the north? If you could describe it in terms of, I guess, a latitude or a parallel, that would be helpful.

Mr. Yao: Absolutely. Actually, we've had many discussions about that, and that was included in our fact-finding mission as we toured the north. In general we find that people really identified highway 16, which goes from Jasper all the way to Lloydminster, as that line in the sand with about a 100-kilometre boundary around Edmonton. We are arguing to try to make that the official definition of the north. Depending on which department you go to, they will have slightly different definitions. Even the Northern Alberta Development Council has a very interesting line of delineation to the north, which I can barely even explain myself.

The Chair: Okay. Correct me if I'm wrong. You're saying highway 16, which I don't have a map right in front of me, starting in Jasper, and it would kind of careen south to Lloydminster, and then you do a bubble around Edmonton of about 100 clicks.

Mr. Yao: Yes, sir.

The Chair: Okay. Tell me a little bit more if you can encapsulate your work of NADC, your fact-finding. Is it a legislative committee, or is it a private, nonprofit situation? Describe that for me.

Mr. Yao: Northern Alberta Development Council is supported by the province. It was developed by the province to ensure that the voices of the north are heard as another advocacy channel for them. To that effect, the Northern Alberta Development Council provides annual reporting on issues regarding the north, and the last report I did, which has been approved by the minister but has yet to be tabled in the Legislature, is a very encompassing report that provides all the feedback from all the northern communities about everything from our boundaries to just these concerns about not being fully supported by the province in regard to funding supports and other things for things like infrastructure. A big complaint is roads and Internet access, things like that.

The Chair: Okay. Good. Thank you.

Mr. Evans, any questions of Mr. Yao?

Mr. Evans: No, but thank you very much for the information that you provided. I'm now looking for highway 16 running east and west.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Samson.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you very much. You've just added a little piece to the puzzle that I've been struggling with with that line with highway 16. When I look at the map here, I see, in fact, if you drew a straight line, it would go below Edmonton to Lloydminster. This is Jasper here, and Lloyd is here, and Edmonton is there.

Mr. Evans: It goes right through Spruce Grove.

Mrs. Samson: Yeah.

Are you saying that NADC has got agreement that on that portion above Edmonton is considered the north?

Mr. Yao: Yeah. The NADC line, the Northern Alberta Development Council, if you actually go on the website, is a very zigzagging line, which we were never able to get explanations as to how they chose those initial boundaries to begin with. When I was proceeding with this report for the Northern Alberta Development Council, the direction we actually received from the ministry was to use that as the boundary as to which communities we invited, that highway 16 route. Yeah, admittedly, it drifts a little bit below Lloydminster. Just so you know, even communities like Camrose and Drayton Valley and that argued that they'd be part of our NADC, and we have other communities that are currently within the existing boundaries that did not want more because there were concerns about dilution of their voices, but in general we really found a lot of support that highway 16 seemed to be a reasonable line in the sand to identify the north. You know, northern Alberta is very well developed compared to other provinces.

That's all I want to say.

11:40

The Chair: Good point. And not as developed as you'd like in terms of infrastructure.

I'm looking at the map that my colleague just referenced, and to me, for electoral boundary purposes and for description of the northern boundaries, could you live with a definition of the north

encompassing the southern boundaries of Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock, and Grande Prairie-Wapiti? I don't know the third one there, but it's a bit of a zigzag line. Central Peace-Notley. Could you live with a definition or a categorization of the north using those southern boundaries?

Mr. Yao: Yeah, I believe so. I think it's fairly close to what has been suggested previously. Again, we just chose to simplify it based on guidance from the ministry to just use highway 16 as our general boundary.

The Chair: And how long has NADC been operating? When was it established?

Mr. Yao: It's been a few decades now. I think it was started up in the '70s.

The Chair: Okay. So it's a long-standing group, then. Okay. Thank you.

Dr. Martin, any questions?

Dr. Martin: Thank you very much.

Thank you for being here today. You alluded to your letter, which all of your colleagues in the north are signatories to, and we take that letter very seriously. We've heard a very great deal about the northern voice in not only the submissions that we have received, over 1,100 submissions, and a very large portion were about the north in one way or another; we also have heard from at least three MLAs in the north. Indeed, yesterday evening we heard from Mr. Sinclair. All of you are on the same song sheet, which is wonderful to see, and it may very well be, in my experience, the only time we've had 10 MLAs speaking with a single voice on the importance of this very important topic of Alberta's north.

I wanted to ask you a bit about your own riding if I may. You know, just to secure the major point about transportation awkwardness, I think you face a very great set of transportation difficulties. How do you manage to deal with the northern half of your own riding?

Mr. Yao: Well, we're very encouraged in the north by the Premier's dedication to getting highway 686, which goes from Fort McMurray to the Peace Country. We're very encouraged by that. They've also made a point – Minister Dreeshen – of investing in highway infrastructure to twin our highways north of Fort McMurray. Again, these are attempts at trying to make things like commuting less attractive and living in Fort McMurray more attractive. For your awareness there are over 40,000 camp beds in the region and a third of them, the people that stay in these camps, live out of province. So the other provinces first need to acknowledge that our energy industry supports their provinces, and if we could do more to make the conditions more favourable, we could have a larger population not only living in Alberta but in the north.

I just want to point out one last thing. The same concerns that Alberta has with concerns to Confederation and being represented in Ottawa are the same concerns that northern Alberta has in relation to provincial politics and being represented at the Legislature in Alberta. Again, it's about just so many benefits coming from the northern region that benefit all Albertans, but the desire is just to not only be represented well but to ensure that we have the investments to ensure that these industries can continue to thrive and be well supported by Albertans and Canadians.

Thank you.

Dr. Martin: If I may just follow up on your remark about the shadow population. It's a persistent theme, has been for decades, well, from across all the northern ridings, come to think of it. How do we best measure them, and to whom is their primary responsibility? Is it a municipal issue? Obviously, you're in the mix to some extent. But my main point: how do we measure the shadow population in a consistent way?

Mr. Yao: Well, I admittedly wish our government would compel our industries to work more closely with us. That's what our ask has been, to work closely with industry to help identify this population. Industry has always been coy about telling us how many people are actually commuting. I gave you a number for 40,000 actual beds in the region. I got that number through my former colleagues at the fire hall who have to do fire prevention and fire codes inspections and that. That's how they have those numbers.

If we assume that they're hot bedding, which is people off-duty come in, we can assume that there's over 80,000 commuting back and forth to the region. It's a substantial amount, it impacts a lot of our bottom lines, and there has to be a proactive approach with all levels of government working together with industry, quite honestly, to address this situation. My understanding is that Minister Dreesen might be doing a study on airports, which might reflect a study to be had on commuting as well.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you.

Mr. Yao, good to see you again. I just looked up quickly the NADC boundary, and it looks like it runs south of Grande Cache, south of Athabasca – well, Whitecourt is a little further west – Bonnyville, St. Paul, Saddle Lake, so that 16 is sort of an advocacy position that you would take, not the official NADC boundary at the moment. Is that fair to say?

Mr. Yao: That's correct, but when I was initiating this report that I was working on, the guidance from the ministry itself was to use 16 as the boundary.

Mr. Clark: As I kind of head east there, I'm curious about Smoky Lake. Now, I recognize this is your colleague's constituency, the south part of the Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche area, but I'm curious. Smoky Lake, Saddle Lake, those areas, in particular Smoky Lake: does it have a connection with Lac La Biche or the southern part of Minister Jean's constituency?

Mr. Yao: A little bit, and I guess it's proximity to Lac La Biche. As an example, there's a lot of overlap between those two constituencies per se, just from my own personal knowledge about the people who work and live in the area. No offence to Minister Jean and his constituency; I'm a little bit agnostic on their desire for what their definition of their boundary would be. I haven't looked too closely into it. I know that they had asked for some different boundary changes. I admit to not really looking into that too deeply.

Mr. Clark: Fair enough. You've got enough on your plate as it is.

I'll just echo some of the comments of my colleagues, that we did receive your letter from the northern MLAs. It was one of the very first things we received, and we've given a lot of thought to that already. We've heard a lot of advocacy and input, so rest

assured that your message has been received, and we will give it some serious, serious consideration.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Yao: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

The Chair: Thank you for coming, sir. Your input is very helpful.

We're going to move on to our next presenter, Mr. Nagwan Al-Guneid for Calgary-Glenmore. Oh, sorry. Did I say mister? Sorry, ma'am.

Ms Al-Guneid: No worries. Hello.

The Chair: Good morning, still.

Ms Al-Guneid: Good morning. Yes. I realize I might be between you and lunch, so I'll do my best here. I'm Nagwan Al-Guneid. I'm the MLA for Calgary-Glenmore. For starters, I'd like to thank each one of you for doing this work. It is hard. It is complex. I've listened to some of the presentations, and it is really hard, so I do not envy you for this job. For today what I would like to do is to reiterate some of the key points from my written submission and try to paint a picture for you of Calgary-Glenmore.

11:50

For starters, it's important to keep Calgary-Glenmore's communities connected and as coherent as possible. This is a well-established urban riding that has, I would say, a mix of young families and seniors. We have three senior homes and five long-term care facilities, including one hospice. You meet a lot of first-home owners in this riding who never left. Even those who rent here: they are long-term renters. So I would say that people who move to Glenmore stay in Glenmore.

I do thank you for respecting the municipal boundaries in Calgary-Glenmore and keeping our city intact and not creating hybrid ridings because it does as well, from a selfish point of view, help us as MLAs to have effective representation.

For my second point here I would like to recognize the thoughtful work of adding an additional seat in Calgary. This is important, because I am noticing the increase of population in Calgary-Glenmore. You would have these numbers better than me, but Statistics Canada shows a big increase in Calgary's population in 2023 and 2024, and I do notice it in my interactions in the riding. I regularly meet folks who moved from Ontario to Alberta, and they cite the Alberta Is Calling campaign. This government campaign has been a resounding success, and we see the impact here in Calgary-Glenmore. I meet folks who literally bought their homes in the riding remotely from Ontario through virtual home tours, so that is interesting.

We're also noticing seniors downsizing to apartments. We're seeing young families moving and buying these homes, and some of it is actually intergenerational transfer. The young adults might have left Alberta for school and work and then decided to return here and raise their family right where they grew up in Glenmore.

My third point is on the makeup in the Calgary-Glenmore riding. Overall, I would say that this riding is homogeneous in its makeup. It is historically a very established riding. Generally speaking it is an affluent riding, with many residents working in professional settings, in professional conferences, and even in the boardrooms. We do, however, have pockets of different socioeconomics, and we also have Calgary Housing in the riding. My point here that I'm trying to drive is that Calgary-Glenmore is a microcosm of Calgary downtown, which gives a very strong urban feel to it. It is absolutely not a rural riding.

Another community of interest is the Indigenous community. Our neighbour next door is the Tsuu T'ina Nation, and many families send their kids to go to school in the Calgary-Glenmore riding. We have designated CBE schools for Indigenous families. One of the high schools here has a smudging space where Indigenous youth can have a safe, culturally appropriate space for smudging.

A third community of interest here is the Jewish community, and I would truly want to make sure their safety and interests are well represented in the new map. There's a Jewish school. There's the Paperny Family Jewish Community Centre, or the JCC. Think of the JCC as the living room. That's where many Jewish families meet, recreate, hold events. The JCC also has a culturally appropriate seniors' home. We have two synagogues in Calgary-Glenmore. The Beth Tzedec synagogue specifically has a banquet hall for signature events throughout the year. Considering the increased concern with safety and security in the Jewish community and for better representation within the community, we need to keep the connectedness of the Jewish community in mind.

The fourth community of interest is public health care workers. We have the Rockyview hospital in Calgary-Glenmore, and it is an incredibly busy hospital. Because it is a big operation, there are many health care workers and doctors and nurses living in the community.

In conclusion, I would say that while Calgary-Glenmore is monolithic in its nature, we do have communities of interest with specific needs and services that they require in the riding, so we must consider this coherence and connectedness. My goal is never to paint the riding with one brush. While the riding is historically established and wealthy in nature, we do have pockets of different socioeconomics, so we're very mindful of this dynamic. I think this draft map recognizes the fast rate of growth in our city by adding the additional seat, which will help in effective representation, especially as we have a strong urban riding here.

Thank you again for respecting the municipal boundaries in this draft map, and thank you for having me today.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much. When you said you were going to paint a picture: you're a good artist.

Ms Al-Guneid: Well, thank you.

The Chair: We do have an idea of your riding. Maybe I'm so much more impressed with it because I'm not a Calgarian, but my sister had lived in Glenmore since 1966, and she just recently sold her home. You describe a part of the demographic perfectly as I understand it.

Let me turn it over to the other commissioners. Mrs. Samson, questions of this presenter?

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your presentation today and follow-up. The riding itself has not changed much, just a slight adjustment from Elbow to Macleod. Based on your comments, I can assume that you're pleased with the proposed new map that we showed you.

Ms Al-Guneid: I mean, it's about representation. I think having the rest of Lakeview from North Glenmore and Kingsland makes sense to me. I am sure there are many factors for this choice, but I think it makes sense from a riding perspective.

Mrs. Samson: Good. Thank you very much.

Mr. Evans: What kind of growth and development is taking place in terms of residential development in the Calgary-Glenmore riding?

Ms Al-Guneid: Yeah. There was a big project that became controversial – you probably have heard about it – in the Glenmore Landing for five high-rises. That was the biggest development that was going to happen, but then it became controversial, and it was shut down, so it's no longer happening. You see a lot of single homes here. It could be an update. Like, that's the type of development that happens here. A lot of single homes, slow apartment buildings. We're seeing a lot of opposition, I would say, for apartment buildings, and that was very evident in the Glenmore Landing development.

We're obviously like any other riding in Calgary. There's the need for housing and improving affordability in the province, in the city. But I would say the majority of the development is single homes and just changing the older bungalows or the older homes into big, single homes.

Mr. Evans: Your population growth has been pretty static in this particular riding.

Ms Al-Guneid: That's a reflection, as I mentioned, of you have people, first-home owners, who stay here forever, and then if they downsize, there's that intergenerational change that happens among families, and the seniors move into long-term or senior homes or apartments within the community.

Mr. Evans: Thank you very much. Appreciate your presentation today.

Ms Al-Guneid: Thank you for having me.

The Chair: Okay.
Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

I thought there was an airplane in your background. Oh, there you are. Thank you for your presentation. It was very helpful.

Ms Al-Guneid: Sorry. This is my system.

Dr. Martin: Oh, I see. I'll just speak louder, shall I?

I wanted to ask you: you've already mentioned about the neighbourhood we have added, and you're comfortable with that. What is the relationship of the community with the area north of the Glenmore reservoir? It seems on the page to be isolated from the rest of the riding.

Ms Al-Guneid: Kingsland, or the rest of North Glenmore?

Mr. Clark: It's Lakeview.

Dr. Martin: Lakeview.

Ms Al-Guneid: Lakeview. I mean, the people who move here also love the Glenmore reservoir area. Yeah. Lakeview is Lakeview. You're connected to the Glenmore reservoir. Like, we have the beautiful Glenmore pathway. People recreate. There's biking, walking. There's even cross-country skiing down the valley. That's the connection that we see. People who come here love the outdoors, and they benefit from this beautiful backyard we have here.

12:00

The meaning of Glenmore in Gaelic is the big valley. The settler who came here called it Glenmore for the valleys in the area. We see a lot of hiking, walking – minihikes, obviously; it's not the Rockies here – but the main connection to the area is the usage of the reservoir. There's sailing as well. There's Heritage Park, which

is very connected to the reservoir. So it makes sense to me that you're adding the rest of Lakeview to Glenmore. It was always a puzzling thing for us, why half of Lakeview is with Glenmore and the other half is with Elbow.

Dr. Martin: That's helpful. There's a famous golf course there as well, come to mind.

Ms Al-Guneid: Yes, of course.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Thank you very much.

Ms Al-Guneid: Thank you.

Mr. Clark: Thank you for coming. No questions for me, but thank you so much.

The Chair: Yeah. Thank you very much. Like I said, you did paint a very good picture of your electoral division.

We'll now move on to our last presenter, I believe, of the morning. Yes. Mr. Grant Hunter.

Mr. Roth: He's not on yet.

The Chair: He's not on yet. Oh, well, maybe we could talk to Nagwan more.

Ms Al-Guneid: Happily.

The Chair: Actually, I held off on a question because of timing, but you did mention the Tsuu T'ina First Nation. Now, as you probably reviewed the entire report, you did see our proposal to include Enoch in west Edmonton. Tsuu T'ina couldn't go into yours, but what do you say about it being conjoined with the electoral division north of you?

Ms Al-Guneid: Like Elbow or West? What were you suggesting?

The Chair: Well, have I got my directions wrong? South of you.

Ms Al-Guneid: South would be Acadia or Fish Creek.

The Chair: Yeah. Thank you for bringing that up.

Mr. Clark: It could be Glenmore.

The Chair: It could be Glenmore? Okay. Yeah. Well, maps clarify things. Thank you.

What do you say about possibly bringing that into your riding or a neighbouring riding?

Ms Al-Guneid: You know, I wouldn't want to speak on behalf of the Tsuu T'ina Nation, obviously. I'm hoping they did submit and you had the chance to ask them. It's a small community, but it's a very concentrated community. I think around 1,300 in there. I wouldn't dare, honestly, to speak on behalf of the Tsuu T'ina Nation. I was merely explaining the connection they have to Glenmore. I do a lot of community visits in Glenmore, and I'm often door-knocking homes with Indigenous communities, and they are from the Tsuu T'ina Nation, who moved or just the kids in schools. I think we should ask the nation how exactly they see their interests align.

I go back to that effective representation and how we make sure the communities are well represented: their views, their interests, their economic interests, and especially their connection to the land. Obviously, you know, Glenmore has a lot to offer, but there is that whole area that we border with, yeah, Banff-Jasper. It is still part of

Banff-Jasper in your draft map. Okay. This is all to say that I think it would be wise to have a conversation with them.

The Chair: Right. Okay. Can I summarize your position that, if they in fact are content and would like to join with a Calgary riding, you'd be content to receiving it in Glenmore?

Ms Al-Guneid: We're happy to represent and build more relationships with them. I did attend a few of their events. I got invited to the opening, obviously, next to me at Costco and that whole plaza. I'm always happy to have conversations and represent them. But it's best to ask them directly where their economic and spiritual and strong connections to the land would make sense to them.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you.

Anything arising on my point? Okay.

We'll excuse you again.

Hopefully, Mr. Hunter is – he's still not in. Okay. In fairness, then . . .

Ms Al-Guneid: You can go to lunch, an early lunch, I think.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Ms Al-Guneid: Thank you, folks. Take care.

The Chair: Okay. Bye-bye.

[The hearing adjourned from 12:05 p.m. to 12:13 p.m.]

The Chair: Mr. Hunter, good morning and welcome. Thank you for coming. You're early, which helps our schedule, so that's great. Of course, you are the MLA for Taber-Warner. Tell us – yeah. Introduce yourself, and please proceed.

Mr. Hunter: All right. Can you hear me now?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Hunter: Okay. Good. All right.

Well, thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to present to the commission today. I want to present from, I guess, two lenses, from an economic lens and from a political lens. Obviously, as a politician I'm going to have that political lens. I think that I want to, first of all, start out by saying that, look, I'm very much in favour of a quad hybrid boundary configuration for Lethbridge and surrounding area. I think that, as has been seen for many years, Lethbridge is a hub for economic development and economic activity in that region. You know, you do have kind of anchor cities like Lethbridge, like Medicine Hat.

One of the things that I know I've been working on over the last 11 years is working on building out that agrifood processing corridor between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. I'm sure you're aware that we have Canada's premier food corridor between Lethbridge and Taber, so I want to just kind of talk about that because it's interesting that I've heard some present that it's important that cities have ridings that are only from the cities because of the commonalities that you have in the cities.

I was thinking about that and I thought: well, that first iteration that I saw from the commission put Coaldale in with Livingstone-Macleod. I was thinking about commonalities of Coaldale with Livingstone-Macleod and I thought: there's no commonality there. The commonality that Coaldale has is with Lethbridge and with Taber and with Lethbridge county and MD of Taber. So I guess when I hear people say that, you know, the commission needs to rethink about commonalities and cities have commonalities and

therefore they just have to be the same as what we saw with Lethbridge-East and Lethbridge-West, I think that maybe it works for Lethbridge, that commonality, but it doesn't work for the commonality in terms of Coaldale with, again, Livingstone-Macleod. I don't think there was any commonality there.

Even in the last iteration in 2019, when Cardston – I used to have Cardston-Taber-Warner as my riding when I first was elected in 2015. It was broken up into Cardston-Siksika, and I was thinking: well, where's the commonality in a riding from Cardston all the way up to just east of Calgary? So I think that for those who are making that argument, I would say that they're probably throwing rocks in a glass house because I don't know whether or not it actually has any validity.

I want to say that in terms of commonality for Canada's premier food corridor, I want to give you an example of a company called NewCold. They just built in Coaldale a \$222 million food logistics centre, and the reason why they put it in Coaldale, one of the reasons why, is because even a company that is, you know, from the Netherlands: they recognize the commonality of having a food logistics centre in Coaldale, which is kind of the centre area of Canada's premier food corridor. They knew that they would be servicing companies from Lethbridge, that they would be servicing companies from the MD of Taber, from Taber, and also from the farmlands in Lethbridge county. That company: one of the largest investments in that area because they recognize the commonality that is Canada's premier food corridor. So I think that it's important for the commission to recognize that.

I don't think that NewCold – if you asked them, "Well, if Coaldale was to be part of the Livingstone-Macleod riding, what kind of commonality would there be?" they would say there's no commonality. A company out of the Netherlands recognizes that, yet it seemed like the commission didn't really see that in this first iteration. So that's the first point that I wanted to make in terms of an economic perspective.

The second perspective I want to be able to present in terms of a political lens is that Lethbridge will be better served with a quad hybrid system. Here's just the simple reality. If Lethbridge was to embrace a four-ridings constituency configuration versus the current two-riding configuration, right now, as it sits, Lethbridge would have three ministers representing Lethbridge's interests in cabinet versus just one right now. That's substantial because you have 300 per cent increase in voices around the cabinet table. And for those who say, "Well, there's little value to that," I don't think they've ever been in cabinet, and I don't think that they have recognized the value of that.

12:20

I've heard it said, and you've probably also heard it said, in describing the south that they often call it the forgotten south. How do you fix that? How do you fix that political problem? One of the ways you do that is, especially for Lethbridge, that you rectify that by allowing more opportunities for more cabinet members to be around the cabinet table. I think that that is a way of being able to make sure that the interests of Lethbridge and surrounding area are heard at that cabinet table.

With that, I just wanted to be pretty brief in my presentation and talk to you about those kind of two lenses that I have on this. I can take questions now.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Hunter. I'm going to jump in here first. Currently there are eight ridings in the south, if you follow me – I'm just looking at the old map – Livingstone-Macleod, Cardston-Siksika, Taber-Warner is three, Brooks-Medicine Hat, Cypress-Medicine Hat is five, and two Lethbridge. I guess that's

seven – right? – currently. Now, the first we heard of this – and I like the terminology, the quad hybrid; I think that's a useful term for us – quad hybrid, I believe, was the evening we sat in Lethbridge back in late May, where Cameron Mills put forward the proposal. He said that if you look at the south, look at Cypress-Medicine Hat and Brooks-Medicine Hat as taking care of the southeastern – his proposal was four more ridings, this quad hybrid that you proposed. If we were to go to that route, first of all, you're losing an electoral division in the south.

Mr. Hunter: I don't think so. I've heard you say that in the past. I don't believe that's the case. First of all, if you're taking the south, you're considering south of Calgary. In reality, it's the eastern slopes that I think probably should be broken up into maybe two ridings, so I don't think that you have to see it in terms of losing another riding. You can keep that configuration of having the same number of ridings in the south. But, again, I'm only speaking specifically to the issue of, you know, how Lethbridge should look, and I'm showing it to you from a political lens and an economic lens. What the commission decides to do in the eastern slopes: that's up to you. I mean, you guys can figure that. I don't think we need to lose and I don't think we should lose another riding in the south. That's not something that I'm advocating for at all.

The Chair: Okay. Well then, to me, that was one of the advantages because we have to worry about the whole province, and there's this constant pressure to take out – constant. I'm not exaggerating. It is a constant drive to remove rural representation. If you look at appendix D, you look at the pressures we have. So to me, the quad hybrid advantage was to say: okay; we can square this circle, give strong representation to this agrifood corridor, and give up a riding outside the major metropolitan areas and kill two birds with one stone. Maybe it's a perspective issue, but I see the advantage of the quad hybrid as giving us a riding somewhere else. Respond to that. You kind of have already. Yeah. Get back to me.

Mr. Hunter: Look, I think that the idea of losing another rural riding – I'm not in favour of that at all. I don't think that that is good representation. So no, I'm not advocating for that.

I do recognize that there are pressures in cities. But remember that in cities, look, you can sometimes walk from one side of your riding to another side of the riding. In my riding I have 13 communities that I've got to go to right now, whether it's the graduations or parades or councils and speaking with councils. So it is very different what a rural riding is required to do.

With the quad idea that actually makes it so that it's a little less onerous on those rural ridings. You know, again, if you broke Lethbridge up into four ridings, you've got 25,000 in a very, very small area, and then you would need to have another 25,000 outside of that to be able to make up the rest of that riding, which is far more reasonable, far more workable, in my opinion. I do like that hybrid approach. Really, we've been doing it in Alberta for a long time. I mean, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Brooks-Medicine Hat is working fine, and those ridings are a hybrid model. I don't see any reason why a hybrid model can't work. For those who say that it can't work, I think that they have some self-interest, to tell you the truth.

The Chair: As they would say about hybrid promoters, too, in fairness.

Let me pose one more scenario to you. Then I'll turn it over to the commission. My dear sainted mother used to say: learn to walk before you run. What do you say about only doing half of a quad hybrid this go-round and doing the full quad hybrid eight, 10 years from now because it's a radical change in Lethbridge?

Mr. Hunter: When you say “radical change,” like, let’s talk about radical change. In 2019 we lost Little Bow. We lost three rural ridings. I would say that most Albertans would say that that’s radical change. You lose three rural ridings to the cities, that’s radical change. I mean, again, this is not about – the idea that this is a radical change: well, if it’s so radical, how come it’s working so well in Brooks-Medicine Hat, Cypress-Medicine Hat? It is happening. When you say it’s radical, I don’t see that. I don’t see it as radical.

There are some people, I would say, in Lethbridge who would say: no, no, we can’t do that. Well, they would probably say that because they certainly want to be able to keep the status quo. Maybe Lethbridge-West wants to keep the status quo. That’s their prerogative. But to say that it’s a radical approach: again, we’re doing that in other jurisdictions.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Hunter.
I’ll start with Mr. Clark. Any questions?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you.

I think, you know, part of the things we struggle with is the feedback we have gotten. There’s been feedback on both sides, but it’s been 2 or 3 to 1 opposed. The core point they make is that while areas are integrated, those who live in Lethbridge do so because they don’t live outside of Lethbridge, and those who live outside of Lethbridge, in Coahurst, Coaldale, do so because they don’t live in Lethbridge. They very specifically say: “I’ve chosen to live where I live. I may shop or cross the boundary. It’s not a brick wall. But you know what? This is our community, and we want to be represented by somebody who’s from our community.” I’m sure you do. I know you do a good job in representing your constituents.

I want to pick up on a point you made, and Minister Neudorf made a point earlier today of a similar vein. I find it interesting that there’s a sense that the south is not the “forgotten south,” I think is the word you used. But under any proposal you’re not going to have any more MLAs. I’m just curious what would change. You still have the same number of MLAs advocating for the same people. I’m not sure I understand how that connects.

Mr. Hunter: Sure. I will restate what I said in my opening remarks. Currently if you had a quad model in Lethbridge right now the way that it sits, Minister Neudorf, myself, and Minister Schow would be three of the four MLAs representing that riding, three of the four sitting in cabinet, at the cabinet table, helping to be able to forward decisions that need to be made for that area. That’s a 300 per cent increase in terms of influence at the cabinet table. For those people who, again, don’t see that as a value, I think that they’re fooling themselves when they’ve never been on cabinet.

12:30

Mr. Clark: Do you not advocate for Lethbridge today?

Mr. Hunter: I advocate for Taber-Wamer. Taber-Wamer is not Lethbridge, so as a representative of Taber-Wamer, I represent Taber-Wamer. Now, I used to be the parliamentary secretary for agrifood development. In that role I did actually represent and advocate for that whole corridor between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, and I often did that.

Again, Mr. Clark, I know that you were in caucus, I know that you were an MLA, but I know that you were not a cabinet minister. I will say that there is a big difference. That is something that needs to be recognized, that when you have people who are on cabinet, they are at different tables and they have the ability to build the influence in a different way.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, and I would call your two-pronged approach economic and representative. I don’t think it’s necessarily political. I think what you’re saying is representation, but anyways.
Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you, and thank you, Minister. I wanted to pick up on a theme that I explored with your colleague Minister Neudorf this morning because in the conversation a few days ago with Mr. Cameron Mills, he suggested that there’s a very large amount of commuter traffic not merely into Lethbridge but out of it, which struck me as really interesting and speaks to the dynamic nature, particularly along highway 3, perhaps as you’ve alluded to. It’s my growing impression now from those conversations that Lethbridge will attract commuters from Fort Macleod, Picture Butte, Raymond, obviously the Lethbridge airport area, as well as Coaldale and, indeed, Taber. Is that a fair representation of the commuter traffic?

Mr. Hunter: Yes. They’re very integrated, and that is very much what we’re seeing not just now, but it will be so much more of what happens in the future as well. Economic corridors is the way we need to look at things. The stringent approach of seeing cities or towns: I don’t think that is the way that we should be looking at this anymore, and I just don’t see that as the future.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for your time just before lunch. I appreciate that.

The Chair: Speaking of food corridors.

Mrs. Samson: Speaking of food corridors. Exactly.

I want to share with you where my conflict comes from, and that is that we had some excellent presentations from the rural area around Lethbridge that talk about the successes that you have, they have had, with the agrifood corridor and the industry and the things they’ve built up around the food in southern Alberta and, you know, other projects like the waste water, the water, and all of those things. I’m not from your area, but it sounds to me when I listen to it: what a success story.

Then, on the other hand, my role is to gather the input and listen, and I hear from many, many residents of the city of Lethbridge who don’t want to be joined in as a hybrid. So I am torn because I say that what you have right now, today, in 2025, is working, and it’s working really well. You have a good story to tell, and in the next round of the commission, Lethbridge will have grown to the point where it cannot be equally divided. This is my conflict. If it’s working well with clear, distinct boundaries that everybody understands, why change it if it’s not broken?

Mr. Hunter: Well, I don’t see that it isn’t broken. To say that it’s working great now for those who are concerned about this, I think that those fears: really, I don’t know where they’re coming from. It’s almost like saying that there’s nothing in common from a person living in Lethbridge versus someone living in Warner or in Taber. That’s ridiculous. The reality is that we have a lot in common.

For those who are saying, “Keep it the same right now because that just works perfectly,” it’s just not the way that it works. Like, we are integrated. A quad configuration just represents that integration that you see in the city of Lethbridge and surrounding areas. Because of that integration: that’s why it works, because we integrate in so many ways. We just seem to have made arbitrary

lines on a map that says Lethbridge-East, Lethbridge-West, Cardston-Siksika, Taber-Warner are political lines. But the integration: if you want the economics and the integration that we are seeing already to be able to be presented, then make sure that you show that also in those boundaries. I think that that's the reality of what we're seeing in that area. I don't see that. I certainly see that some people don't want to see it, but I think that they also probably have some vested interest and self interest in that way.

Mrs. Samson: I just want to follow up with a small comment along those lines of your last thought, and that is: when I think about the electoral boundaries as an overlay into the region and what ends up with the electoral boundaries, it is not a brick wall. It is not stopping the integration of the city into the economic interests of the surrounding area. I guess that's my point. I just don't see it as a blockade. I see it as communities of interest who are saying, "I want to be with these guys," but that doesn't mean all the things that you want so badly are not going to happen because of where the boundary line is drawn. That's my thought.

Mr. Hunter: Let's say that you're right. Let's say that you keep the boundaries Lethbridge-East, Lethbridge-West, and that that's important to the commission. Okay; that's fine. But how is it that you can also use that same rationale to put Coaldale in with Livingstone-Macleod? Where is the commonality in that? As I gave you the example with NewCold, Coaldale has more in common with Lethbridge than it does with Claresholm.

Look, no matter how you guys decide to draw those lines, it's going to be difficult to be able to find a perfect commonality, but I can tell you that putting Coaldale in with Claresholm: there is no commonality in that. So when you make that argument that Lethbridge should feel good about, you know, Lethbridge-East and Lethbridge-West staying the same because there's commonality there, you also are now saying that there's no commonality between Coaldale and Claresholm, yet you put those in the same riding. I think the commission has to take that into consideration, not just what's best for a city but also best for all of the ridings and all of the communities.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. You make a good point, sir.

Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: Yeah.

You make a very good point with respect to Coaldale. What I'm interested in knowing, Minister Hunter, is: where would you put Coaldale if you had the quad hybrid? Would you break up that city, or would you keep it together?

12:40

Mr. Hunter: Coaldale should be in its own, should be not broken up. In terms of, "Where would I put it," I mean, now you're asking me a question. I actually think that Lethbridge being broken up into, again, like, four regions and then having a rural component to it – I think that Coaldale, Taber have a lot in common. The MD of Taber, Lethbridge county, Warner county: they have a lot in common just because of that agrifood processing corridor that's there. But, again, there are lots of ways of being able to draw that map. My argument

is more about being able to show that there is already integration that happens in those communities in and outside of that region.

Mr. Evans: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Yeah, I'm going to ask it. I still would call this radical surgery, Minister Hunter. In that regard, I don't see any chamber of commerce, any city of Lethbridge, any town of Coaldale submissions saying: "You know what? We have really kind of come along and we think this quad hybrid idea is great." We don't have that, what I would call, you know, intervening organization support or endorsement of this concept. What do you say to that?

Mr. Hunter: I mean, I won't speak for other people. I have spoken with the mayor of Lethbridge. I talked to him about the value proposition, the idea that he could have three ministers at the cabinet table. He thought that was fantastic. I talked to him about the reality of the integration, Canada's premier food corridor. He understood that. He recognized that, and he thought that was absolutely correct. Why they have not submitted: I mean, I don't know. The town of Coaldale: I think that they actually did make a submission the first time, if I'm correct, saying that they are certainly against them being in the Livingstone-Macleod riding. I'm pretty sure that they've already stated that. Why haven't they done it? I don't know. Have they argued in favour of keeping the status quo? I don't know.

The Chair: No. I don't think so.

Mr. Hunter: Okay.

Again, I really want to finish with this. That is that, look, when you say that there is a radical change, again, Brooks-Medicine Hat and Cypress-Medicine Hat are working fine. This is really quite similar to what you see with those communities as well, that the hybrid approach does work in that there is commonality. For those people who are in the city of Medicine Hat, I'm sure that they also recognize that there's commonality with people who are outside of Medicine Hat. They shop in the same places. They go to the same arenas for hockey and for curling. There is lots of integration, so I really just don't buy that this is radical in the way that you're presenting that. I just don't see it.

The Chair: Okay. That's fair. Well, thank you, Minister Hunter. You've ruined our day in a sense.

Mr. Hunter: It's my pleasure.

The Chair: You've given us a lot more to think about, and we've got only days and weeks ahead to resolve this issue. Thank you very much for coming.

Mr. Hunter: All right. Have a good week, guys.

Mrs. Samson: Thanks.

Are we packing up?

The Chair: Yeah. I'll adjourn the morning session. Continue at just after 1:30 this afternoon.

[The hearing adjourned at 12:45 p.m.]

