



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Electoral Boundaries Commission
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Electoral Boundaries Commission

Judge Ernest J.M. Walter, Chairman

Dr. Keith Archer
Peter Dobbie, QC
Brian Evans, QC
Allyson Jeffs

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[Judge Walter in the chair]

The Chair: Good afternoon. We're now ready for our first presenter this afternoon. Melanie, if you would be so kind as to advise who. Are they not here as yet? All right. Then our first presenter will be here at 2:10, is it?

Is there anyone else who would like to say a few words? If so, they'd be more than welcome.

Mr. Dunford: Do we have to talk about this?

The Chair: Come on up, Mr. Dunford. If you'd like to be on the record, I'm sure we could accommodate.

All right. If there is no presenter till 2:10, we'll take a short adjournment, and you can continue on with your maps and discussions. Thank you.

[The hearing adjourned from 1:44 p.m. to 1:48 p.m.]

Ms Friesacher: Our next presenter is Mrs. Betty Cyr with the Livingstone-Macleod PC association.

The Chair: Mrs. Cyr, since we're being recorded by *Hansard*, would you be so kind as to give for the record your name and who you are representing.

Mrs. Cyr: My name is Betty Cyr. I'm from Pincher Creek. I am representing the Livingstone-Macleod PC association.

The Chair: Very good. We're delighted to have you here and look forward to hearing what you have to say.

**Betty Cyr, Livingstone-Macleod
Progressive Conservative Constituency Association**

Mrs. Cyr: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak before the Electoral Boundaries Commission today. The Livingstone-Macleod PC association would like to submit that there is no need for a boundary change at this time. Under the current criteria it is well within the allowable tolerances of section 15: "The population of the proposed electoral division must not be more than 25% above [or] below the average population of the proposed electoral divisions." As of present time Livingstone-Macleod stands at minus 11 per cent, compliant to the act.

In the redrawing of the boundaries, eliminating the Blood reserve and adding the town of High River would put the constituency at a plus 7.38 per cent. This inclusion seems simple and easy, but it ignores the normal travel and business patterns that have historically existed. This change will create fundamental differences of issues and problems for any MLA; i.e., the vast differences of mindset and issues between rural and urban peoples of this constituency as to the relevance of agriculture, forestry, oil and gas, and the urban domestic uses of water within that watershed, plus the rising future growth in the population of High River-Nanton, being a bedroom community of Calgary, versus small-town, rural Alberta habits.

The boundary changes would ignore the fact of four out of the five subsections of 15, namely (a) area exceeds 20,000 kilometres or 15,000 square kilometres; (b) the distance from the nearest boundary to the Legislature is more than 150 kilometres: Livingstone-Macleod's nearest boundary is two and a half times that distance; (c) no towns within this constituency with a population over 8,000:

Livingstone-Macleod's largest town would have to double to get over the 8,000 people; (d) within the current boundary there is a First Nations reservation: I would submit that we now have two reservations in Livingstone-Macleod, and it works well; (e) the "electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the Province of Alberta." There is a minimum of 80 miles of western boundary of Livingstone-Macleod which is also the provincial boundary of Alberta.

If any electoral division matches three of the five previous sections, it meets the prerequisites to allow for consideration to have population as much as 50 per cent below the provincial average. That being the case, this constituency already meets four of the five sections needed to accept a population base within a 50 per cent variance from the provincial average. That being said, it is obvious that our present boundaries meet the conditions set out for 25 per cent allowable tolerance.

The current boundaries make for a very large constituency as it is 90 miles north and south, 60 miles east and west. This also includes two aboriginal reservations. It is congruent with the municipal divisions, reservation boundaries, and provincial boundaries on the west side. Livingstone-Macleod has 12 municipalities, three urban municipalities, and two reservations, plus it does observe the common travel patterns, common rural issues and lifestyles, thus posing to be one of the most diverse constituencies already in terms of geography, industry, employment, and demographics.

The inclusion of High River-Nanton and the exclusion of the Blood reserve put the population at a plus 7 per cent, and it cuts the MD of Foothills in half, ignoring the need to be contiguous with the municipal boundaries and ignoring the rapid growth population in the bedroom communities of High River and Nanton.

In summary, I would like to submit the lack of consideration to the historical and geographical name of Livingstone-Macleod, that has very deep roots and meaning. Redrawing the boundaries as well as renaming the constituency would be alarming and very hard for many founding families of this region. Their grandfathers and fathers built this region from the grasslands to a strong, vibrant business region where there is agriculture, forestry, oil and gas, or the businesses that serve these industries. We need to maintain and give respect to those that built this region and those that still make this region a strong and diverse business region and a great, natural scenic countryside from prairie to mountains. This constituency is Livingstone-Macleod.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Cyr. We will have a few questions. I might say we have heard very strong representations on the inclusion of the name Macleod in the riding. We are certainly going to have a look at doing that because it has a very strong historical background to it, and we have to respect that sort of thing.

Keith.

1:55

Dr. Archer: Yeah. Thanks, Mrs. Cyr. Thanks for your presentation and your written submission as well. One of the issues that we face in going about our work is that at times a change in one constituency can have a cascading effect in other constituencies. So while I understand your position that the riding of Livingstone-Macleod certainly conforms well under its present configuration with the variances that we're working with, one of the challenges that we're looking at was the Cardston-Taber-Warner riding and the impact of growing population in the province as a whole with lesser growth in that constituency. That led to the decision to put the Blood reserve into that constituency. Our understanding is that there was likely as

much commonality of interest in putting the Blood reserve in the Cardston-Taber-Warner constituency as putting it in the constituency we're calling, uh, High River-Crowsnest.

Mrs. Cyr: See? It's hard to remember, isn't it?

Dr. Archer: Well, it's hard to remember all 87 at once.

Once we made that decision, that had the impact of having the riding numbers, the population size in the High River-Crowsnest riding much smaller than the limits that we were looking at. One of the ways that we thought that some stability could be provided to the riding is to have a northern boundary that's a little bit farther north, but given the size of the constituency, it actually wasn't that much of a change geographically.

It provided us with a population size above the average. Given the growth rates in High River, our sense was that with this change there likely would be a fair bit of stability within this constituency over the next number of boundary commissions. Consequently, while change always is challenging, our sense was that this would likely provide the constituency with an opportunity for more stability on a go-forward basis. Consequently, we didn't start from the premise that, "Here's a riding that we need to change," but that, "Here's a riding that's changing as a result of other things happening within the province. Consequently, let's find a way of trying to maintain some stability." I just wanted to raise that with you and get your reaction to that.

The second question I would have is that we've heard some presentations about the name of the constituency. There seems to be a stronger sense from the presentations thus far that it's important to retain the name Macleod within the constituency and not so much, based upon what we've heard to date, about retaining the name Livingstone. I wonder if you could comment on those two issues.

Mrs. Cyr: Well, on the first part I do see that with the splitting of the Foothills municipality I think it's going to make it very hard for them as an entity, the municipality, having to present to two different MLAs.

I think that is going to raise a situation there. I can understand your geographic splitting and the reason for Blood reserve going that direction, but I do think that we have to look at – our rural areas are being looked at somewhat as areas that are inefficiently being looked after or whatever. I don't know exactly what the terms would be. But from an urban perspective there are so many different issues within a rural municipality than what there is within an urban municipality. I think it would make it very hard for an MLA to deal with a large diversity of urban situations on one end of that constituency and all the rest of the constituency being rural area. I think that would be very hard because MLAs within an urban area are a little bit less – how would you say? – bombarded with such a diverse amount of different representation from different industries and different wants and likes and issues.

Dr. Archer: Thank you. With respect to the name?

Mrs. Cyr: I strongly feel that we do need to maintain Macleod. We have Livingstone as our western side, so Livingstone-Macleod seems to fit fairly well. But even if it went to Macleod-Foothills or something like this, we're still dealing with our western side being foothills, mountain region, or whatever. I think we need to respect what our founding forefathers dealt with. That area of Macleod was more or less the first part of our constituency area to be originally settled and established.

Dr. Archer: Great. Thanks. Those are all my questions.

The Chair: Peter.

Mr. Dobbie: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thanks, Mrs. Cyr. I appreciate your position that this constituency could actually qualify as a special consideration electoral division because it meets so many of the criteria that are set out for those divisions. Your argument is: we're not even asking for that, and at minus 11 it's a reasonable number.

Again, just to help you with context, the challenge that we're facing in the ridings outside of Edmonton and Calgary is made more difficult, in my view, by the very firm positions taken by the mayors of Edmonton and Calgary that they are not prepared to accept any sort of urban-rural constituencies for those cities. If we accede to that request, which is to only have Calgary constituencies fully within Calgary and the same with Edmonton, it really does tie our hands by not allowing us to take perhaps natural adjacent communities and make them part of an Edmonton or Calgary riding. The result of that is that it does tend to create a challenge once we move away from those cities because we can't add 10,000 people that might be adjacent to Calgary; for example, Chestermere.

It's helpful to have you here today to remind us that part of this situation is created by the position taken by those two cities and that certainly, while we should try to have as narrow a variation from the 40,880 as possible, if we're looking at larger variations, in fact that may be caused by acceding to the requests of the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary not to go outside of their boundaries.

Within your particular constituency the real challenge is that if we take the city of High River out, with some 11,000-plus people in it, it drops this constituency significantly below the provincial average, and we still have to put that city somewhere. We are certainly alert to the challenges that would be posed to the MLA, and I'm just not certain at this stage how best we can balance the trade-off between relative voter parity and the demands made on this large and complex constituency.

It has been helpful to get your feedback as to the number of communities that would be added. I'm still torn. I guess that within your constituency, if you knock it down by about 11,000 people, which is what you're asking us to do, it would take us to 10 per cent or 15 per cent below the average, and that does create a bit of a challenge for us when we're starting to balance.

At this stage in our proposal 38 of 40 of the nonspecial divisions outside of Edmonton and Calgary are within 15 per cent. The more we go beyond 15 per cent, the challenge we're going to have is with an apparent concern over a real lack of parity between city constituencies and rural constituencies. At this stage it has been helpful for me to have you remind us of the challenges. I'm certainly not sure yet where we can go with it. One thing I would ask you to consider is that if you can't have the existing constituency and you lose the reserve, could you provide us within the next few days, if possible, another alternate proposal for this constituency?

2:05

Mrs. Cyr: Within a few days? It is spring.

I would suggest, as I have worked with the land-use act that is being worked on right now, we are looking at an eastern slopes situation that is our watershed provider. Also, they seem to have the same type of problems. Maybe in looking at the western side of High River up into the Cochrane area, at whether it would be advantageous to look at a situation up that way to stay congruent with the municipality boundaries, which would make it easier for those rural municipalities to be only dealing with one MLA than dealing with two – I think that could be of help.

I have not been in the position that all of you have who have been sitting down looking at it. I'm looking at possibly more diverse problems arising when you have got one end of a constituency being heavy urban and the rest of it being heavy rural. I can understand that those two issues could possibly raise conflict for an MLA in the future because of the rising population in the High River-Nanton area being so close to Calgary that a lot of people are residing there, but their physical employment, et cetera, is arising out of Calgary. The whole mindset is sort of totally different from, say, what ours is in the Macleod, Pincher Creek, Fort Macleod areas or Crowsnest Pass but even up west of Nanton and Claresholm. It is a much different issue/situation arising than what the urban area would be bringing, so looking at a more rural western slope along the eastern slopes to the western side may be advantageous to helping out with the workability of that area.

Mr. Dobbie: So that would see High River move to Highwood and then that Turner Valley-Black Diamond area if we need to capture population even at the cost of making a longer constituency. Okay. That's very helpful. Thank you.

The Chair: Allyson.

Ms Jeffs: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much, Mrs. Cyr, for coming. As you can see, we've got a few challenges here. I'm not going to belabour the points made by the other commission members, but I think one of the challenges for a riding like this is that population isn't the only criteria, but it remains a fairly strong consideration, and that's under the law. We are in some measure driven by where we can capture population, and there aren't a lot of other options for this riding.

Just on a point. I realize you're not actually asking for Livingstone-Macleod to be a special consideration riding, but the statute only permits four of those, and we have used them sparingly for very, very, very large ridings. Not to suggest that High River-Crowsnest or Livingstone-Macleod as it is is a small riding, but I think that if you look at Dunvegan-Central Peace and Lesser Slave Lake, those are much, much larger ridings. Those are the ones that in the proposal would be the special considerations, and I think that's really why the tool is limited in the statute to up to a maximum of four. I thought I should maybe make that clarification.

In that area that you were talking about, moving up through Turner Valley and extending north, there would be, it would seem to me, a fair bit of population up there.

Mrs. Cyr: Yes, and potential for growth, but it's much more rural functioning. Both the rural and urban municipal districts there have more of the same issue/problems as what would be in the southern-central part of the existing Livingstone-Macleod.

Ms Jeffs: Right. I appreciate your comments as well about the issue with splitting the MDs. We hear a variety of positions on that around the province. Some MDs like to straddle two boundaries, and they say: "Great. We've got two MLAs." Others prefer to deal with one, so I guess there are regional variations on that theme as well.

Thank you very, very much for coming today. I have nothing further, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you.
Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Mrs. Cyr. We certainly have heard your comments about High River and also about the integrity of keeping the Macleod name. Just in looking at

the map of the proposed High River-Crowsnest, I see two major transportation areas, and I identify, really, three areas. It seems to me that High River, Nanton, Stavely to Claresholm is somewhat of a homogeneous area. Granted, High River has probably a larger portion of its population now than it did 10 years ago that are going into Calgary for work, but it's still a fairly decent drive from High River to the south end of Calgary, and I've taken it enough times that I'm not speaking just in theory. I know how long it does take. Then I see a second area, really the Fort Macleod-Granum area. Then, clearly, there's a distinction for the Crowsnest Pass, you know, a different history, a different population than the rest of the constituency.

Having heard what you've said, certainly, about the north end of the constituency, if the MLA for this area is representing Claresholm and Stavely – and I appreciate you'd like to say that Nanton and High River should be further north – is it really that much of a stretch to say that the MLA would also be dealing with Nanton and High River, particularly when, you know, to get up and back from Edmonton and the Legislature, you've got to go right through High River and Nanton if you do live further south in the constituency?

Mrs. Cyr: I think your shopping and business and travel patterns are quite different once you get to Claresholm. Probably for the northern area a large amount of its shopping, large-city business would go to Calgary whereas the south area goes to Lethbridge, then contingently the same way for the Crowsnest-Fort Macleod area. It would go to Lethbridge.

I think it makes it quite hard to make a homogeneous ability for an MLA to be working two kinds of areas and not finding one that could override the other because of a difference not so much in demographics but especially in employment backgrounds, the Lethbridge area being agriculturally oriented: irrigation, cattle, grain, whatever. There still is grain and cattle in the High River area, but I think the potential for future growth is going to be situated a lot more out of Calgary – work, employment – whether it is in the urban area or in the rural areas, because it's just easier for them to travel that direction. They just don't go south to Lethbridge for work. Out of Crowsnest, Pincher, and Fort Macleod they do go to Lethbridge for work, but they would not go north. So you haven't got a homogeneous working group of people that work with each other or interact with each other that much, which could give rise to different issues and problems conflicting against each other.

Mr. Evans: Did I hear you correctly that albeit you recognize there's an issue today, a lot of your concern is what's going to happen in that High River-Nanton area in the future?

Mrs. Cyr: Yes. I grew up in that area, so I know the amount of pattern changes. I know the changes in people and the rural-urban, and it is quite a different area as to the rural patterns west of High River and south along the foothills into the Crowsnest and then back out to Claresholm, Fort Macleod, Pincher Creek. It's a different type of people. We see lots of them come out to holiday in our area or have holiday homes. Crowsnest Pass right now is probably being inundated very strongly with Calgary people buying houses, but they're not living there. They're just owning the houses so they've got some place to come out and live. You don't have people, then. You've got the houses there, but we don't have the population.

2:15

Mr. Evans: The distinction with Turner Valley and Black Diamond, you think, is more population size now compared to High River in terms of it being more similar, if you will, to the existing demographic in this constituency?

Mrs. Cyr: Well, probably. It's been 40-some years since I moved out of that area, but working with my husband, as he's the reeve of the municipal district of Pincher Creek, we have seen and I have heard, when they've met with municipalities, the complications of problems, the urban clash with the rural realities of what they need or what they want being two different things. They find it very hard, so I would imagine, then, as an MLA, when you're starting to throw all of those in to make a very good stewpot, it's going to create a hard situation.

We do have a very diverse amount of different industries within our area. It isn't like being an MLA in a city, where you've only got X square blocks and those people are all worried whether the water is running in their area or whether the sewer isn't or whatever. If we take and split, we're going to have areas that are going to be fed under the Oldman River, and there are going to be partial areas that are going to be fed under the Bow. You're going to have in the future urban-rural situations of water choice demands, et cetera, which are going to lead to other issues that are going to come up between urban- and rural-oriented people. It could be the same as the old westerns had between those that had the water and those that didn't have the water and those that wanted the water.

I think these are things that we have to look at. The ability for an MLA to work and not be putting out fires at home all the time but be able to rule that whole constituency could be put in jeopardy.

Mr. Evans: Well, we do have a very vibrant province, and I guess we're all lucky that that is the case. It does mean that things change and demands change, and MLAs do have to be adaptable.

Thank you very much for your comments. We'll certainly take them into consideration. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. It's a pleasure having you here.

Mrs. Cyr: Thank you. I want to say that I also gave to your staff a letter from the municipal district of Pincher Creek No. 9.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Friesacher: The next presenter is Mr. Tom Gillespie, vice-president, Livingstone-Macleod PC association.

Mr. Gillespie: Hello, everyone.

The Chair: Since we're being recorded by *Hansard*, would you be so kind as to give them your name and your position for the record.

Mr. Gillespie: My name is Tom Gillespie. I am vice-president with the Livingstone-Macleod PC Constituency Association.

The Chair: Go ahead.

**Tom Gillespie, Livingstone-Macleod
Progressive Conservative Constituency Association**

Mr. Gillespie: Well, thank you very much for the opportunity to come and speak to you today. I do appreciate it. In light of your last speaker there may be some repetition between her presentation and mine. I don't imagine that that would be the first time that's ever happened for the commission, so bear with me. Hopefully, some of my points will veer us off in some slightly different directions.

From my perspective, the redrawing of the boundaries as proposed would put the residents of Livingstone-Macleod at a disadvantage. To avoid this, I'm hoping to demonstrate that there really isn't a need to alter the current boundaries.

My reasoning is basically twofold. First, by my understanding of the criteria listed, it shows that the current boundaries are well within all of the allowable tolerances, and it makes the proposed changes inconsistent with the act. Second, the proposed changes, for me, frankly, defy logic and sound reasoning. I understand the challenges you're up against with numbers, but I think that they do put some hardship upon our constituents' ability to reasonably access their MLA and also upon the MLA who's trying to cover that geographic area.

Again, to go through some of that criteria, population of a proposed electoral division must not be more than 25 per cent above or 25 per cent below the average population of all the proposed divisions. We are at minus 11 and so compliant. The area of the constituency exceeding 20,000 square kilometres: I believe that we do, or we're very close. The distance from the nearest boundary to the Legislature is more than 150 kilometres. I know that one for sure; we're at least twice that. There are no towns within the constituency with a population over 8,000, so that's another check mark. Within the current boundary there is a First Nations reserve, and of course we have both the Piikani and the Blood reserves within Livingstone-Macleod. The electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous, too, with a boundary of the Province, the Crownsnest Pass area, so once again that's another one of the criteria.

The parameters as stated in the commission report of February 2010 are not being taken into account here, it seems, in the proposed redrawing, so that's point number one for me. I'm just wondering: if we've set up these criteria, why do we seem to be going away from them?

The second point to look at for me is the logic point or the rationale point of the proposed changes. Assuming that the goals in redrawing boundaries are to retain adequate representation and relative parity for everyone, the redrawing of the lines that exclude the Blood reservation from Livingstone-Macleod separates those residents from the nearest town with which they mainly trade, and that would be Fort Macleod. As well, the children of the Blood reserve also attend school in Fort Macleod. So there are just all of these common issues.

Additionally, many of the challenges that face the Blood reserve are the same as those that are faced by the Piikani, yet the proposed redrawing would have those two neighbour First Nations dealing with two different MLAs. You can argue that there are advantages to that, but from my perspective the two First Nations working together on their common challenges in co-operation with a single MLA probably works better for them. Incidentally, we have an MLA who knows the area, knows the issues, and he knows the people involved, so that would be a significant change for them.

The proposed boundary changes adding High River to Livingstone-Macleod separate High River residents from Okotoks, and I know those two communities, although I don't live there, are heavily intertwined commercially and socially and, of course, have all the common challenges of being bedroom communities to Calgary. Betty alluded to the fact that there are plenty of properties in the Crownsnest Pass that are owned by folks from Calgary, but in the Pass they're known as weekenders. They show up on Friday night, and they're gone on Sunday night. It's not their place of residence. Therefore, they're not counted there. Again, I see a problem with logic, with rationale.

Livingstone-Macleod is, as it stands, a very large constituency. It's about 90 miles north to south and 60 miles east to west, so our MLA is already dealing with the diverse concerns of 12 different urban municipalities and three different rural municipalities. When you throw High River into the mix, you come up with just a strikingly different bunch of issues there. Frankly, it dilutes the time

available for the constituents on the west end of the constituency to meet and consult with their MLA because he's going to be spending a lot of time learning about High River and all of the brand new issues that mean nothing to people in Fort Macleod or Claresholm or Granum or Pincher Creek. As you know, there are only so many hours in a day, and when you add more geography, unless Evan is able to somehow clone himself or be in two places at once, I'm not sure how he's going to deal with added geography. I think he's stretched pretty far right now.

The current boundaries for Livingstone-Macleod are congruent with municipal boundaries, reservation boundaries, a provincial boundary on the west side, and despite the diversity within the constituency, the way it's drawn now reflects the common travel patterns, some of the common rural issues, and some of the common lifestyle and demographic issues.

2:25

By the way, to the point of resistance from the folks in Edmonton who feel that they just can't see adding any kind of rural representation to their constituencies, that may be built partly out of the fallacy that if it's not Edmonton or Calgary, it's rural, so those people all have their common issues. There is diversity in the issues. The commonality is not necessarily there. What they're dealing with in High River or one of the Calgary bedroom communities is significantly different from what we're dealing with in a Pincher Creek or a Fort Macleod. So you're adding more issues to the MLA's workload. Once again, it goes to logic, it goes to rationale. The commonality is not there. I know you have to add some population, but you're also adding issues. I think there might be a way or maybe there's some exploration to be done to find a way to add bodies but not add significantly to the workload and the number of issues that are facing up.

Just to finish things off, relative parity, adequate representation for the constituents: that's my concern. I hope that I've demonstrated some reasoning for retaining Livingstone-Macleod the way it is now. Redrawing the boundary by including the area up to and including High River and excluding the Blood reservation, I think, reduces access to our MLA for constituents, especially on the west end. Also, it's a bit of a disadvantage for the peoples of the two First Nations. It also puts aside all of the criteria set out in the act, so if we're looking at fairness and compliance and logic, I'm hoping that you can see what I've had to say here. If you'd like to discuss it a little further, I'd be happy to learn some more from you.

The Chair: Brian.

Mr. Evans: Thank you, Chairman, and thanks very much, Mr. Gillespie. As you said, there is some similarity between your presentation and Mrs. Cyr's, and that's not surprising, of course, because when we looked at this, we did see that including High River was going to be an issue for at least some of the constituents in Livingstone-Macleod.

I would suggest to you that we're not ignoring the criteria that are set out in the act; rather, we're trying to balance all of those criteria, both within each constituency and throughout the 87 constituencies that we are dealing with. Clearly, the courts have said: yeah, you can have up to the 25 per cent, but you'd better have justification for it. Albeit we don't in Canada operate on an absolute one person, one vote, to have any variance from that, you have to have justification. You have to have some logic and some demand for moving off of that.

We have a number of criteria that we are required to consider in terms of any variance in the act, and we're allowed to take into

account other matters that are specific to the kinds of representations that we get from the proposed 87 constituencies. We are looking at that very carefully, and we will, I guarantee you, carefully review your presentations today.

I was somewhat curious about your statement that the normal trading pattern for the Blood is into Fort Macleod, which I guess makes some sense from where Stand Off is and the roadway into Fort Macleod. I would have thought that that might be a secondary trading area but that the major trading area would have been Lethbridge. Can you help me to understand why that wouldn't be the case, Mr. Gillespie?

Mr. Gillespie: Well, the kids go to school in Fort Macleod, so Fort Macleod being the nearby community, being the smaller community, that's one where, obviously, there's a great deal of trade going on. I wouldn't deny that members of the Blood reservation are in Lethbridge to shop, but I think that Fort Macleod is the nearest community with which they have ties.

Mr. Evans: I see. Okay. Well, those are the only comments and questions that I have. Thank you for your presentation, and please believe that we are thinking about this very carefully and trying to make it work for all concerned.

The Chair: Allyson.

Ms. Jeffs: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much for coming today. I just wanted to comment and make sure it's clear – I was listening to your presentation and following along – that when you're talking about the subsections of the act dealing with the constituency exceeding 20,000 kilometres and distances to the Legislature being more than 150 kilometres, those are all provisions for a special consideration riding. That would be a riding that wouldn't fit into the plus or minus 25 per cent but would need to go as much as 50 per cent below the provincial average. I don't think that's really a consideration with either the proposed riding or Livingstone-Macleod currently, as it stands.

I just wanted to be clear that those are criteria that are looked at for a very limited number of what are special ridings under the statute. I think the maximum is four. It's not every riding that meets those square kilometres and the nearest boundary being part of the boundary of the province. It would have to be in danger of slipping. The commission, as the ridings are proposed, proposes two of those in this boundary distribution, and they are much larger ridings. We are looking at Dunvegan-Central Peace and Lesser Slave Lake. Not to suggest that this riding is not a large one, but it is quite a bit more sparsely populated and much smaller geographically than those.

I just wanted to be clear about that because those aren't really factors that would be in the mix for this. I mean, obviously, as Mr. Evans has said, population, and then we need to look very carefully at reasons that we might deviate from that. Those factors address, I think, the special consideration ridings. Just to be clear about that.

Other than that, I certainly understand the conundrum that you're in in terms of wanting to maintain the riding as it is. We're struggling with balancing the other factors and the population distribution as it is presently across the south. The neighbouring constituency, Cardston-Taber-Warner, as currently proposed, even with the addition of the Blood reserve is 9 per cent, I think, below the average. So we need to somehow maintain a balance.

We do hear in other areas of the province that are growing and are more urban, not necessarily just in the larger cities, that if their constituencies are too much over the average, they feel disadvan-

tagged vis-à-vis some of the rural ridings when that disparity becomes too great. It's a balancing act for us.

More of a comment, really. I don't know. You're welcome to respond; otherwise, I would just ask the chairman to move on. I don't know if you wanted to add anything or to clarify on that.

Mr. Gillespie: Just to the issue of commonality, I wouldn't see any commonality between Taber, where I grew up, and the Blood reserve, for example. I just don't think there's any trading that happens that way. I don't think there's any cross-pollination of any kind. I don't know what the opportunity is to add population to Cardston-Taber-Warner. Once you get east of Taber, I know there's just not too much to pick up, but I'm not sure that adding the Blood reserve into that mix is the best way to go about it.

Ms Jeffs: Fair enough.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have nothing further.

The Chair: Thank you. Just one thought for you. You're speaking of the large area of your riding. You could put your riding, Little Bow, and Cardston-Taber-Warner, all three, into the Lesser Slave Lake riding. That gives you some idea of what the dynamics are for a special consideration riding.

Mr. Gillespie: That's good context. Thank you.

The Chair: Peter.

2:35

Mr. Dobbie: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Gillespie. I particularly appreciate the obvious thought that you've put into an analysis of how a better constituency could be drawn.

It strikes me from hearing your presentation and also the previous one that one factor that I certainly have not weighed enough is the apparent deference that we have given to the requests from a number of the larger cities, and that would include Red Deer now. When we were recently in Red Deer, we were told by a number of people from within Red Deer and members of city council that their preference would be to have Red Deer contain only two constituencies, notwithstanding that each would be about 5,000 above the provincial average. They felt so strongly that there was a community of interest within Red Deer that that community of interest would be more effectively represented by two MLAs dealing with a larger number of people rather than what some might argue would be the additional benefit of having a third MLA with some responsibility for Red Deer. They felt that community of interest was so strong.

What strikes me today from hearing your comments is that we may have not given enough deference in our consideration to the request from other communities of interest, where you've drawn parallels among municipalities of similar size and smaller being distinct from the Highwood situation. For me that is a very helpful distinction to draw. I am going to be mindful in our discussions, if I'm building an argument in favour of what you're proposing, that we have to be careful to consider that if we are being deferential or considerate of what the larger cities are asking for, then we should be equally as deferential to the extent we can when a group of smaller municipalities or counties make similar representations. It's helping me to come up with a principled basis for making the distinction.

Again, looking at the current addition, we're adding a couple of townships. We're adding only about 12 miles, I guess 15 miles, heading north. It may be that there is a better community of interest in heading further north but staying west, as has been suggested, and now I can accept that the trade-off in geographic size might be one

that we certainly should consider. That would allow us, then, to consider moving that population of 11,000 from High River out.

Again, the principles that I'm summarizing for you essentially are that you feel there is a community of interest within the smaller communities and the counties that is so strong that it is distinct from Highwood, and we should be very careful not to discount that. Is that correct?

Mr. Gillespie: Yes. And thank you; I think you've heard what I've said, and you've encapsulated it pretty well. I'm not here to pound my fist on the table and say: you can't change it; you should never change it. I understand that these things change all the time. That's part of growth. But I think the way we negotiate these things in Alberta is that we sit and we talk at things like this and we come to some sort of agreement or consensus or understanding.

Some of the things that we discussed with Betty after her presentation make a lot of sense. I do see more commonality in issues with some of the areas you talked about as opposed to the community of High River. I just think that you have to be careful to not just add bodies at the expense of adding a lot more face time, frankly, for the MLA who's going to be stuck in High River dealing with a lot of brand new things he's never had to deal with because they're so connected to Calgary whereas the rest of us are not. So thank you very much for hearing that.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you for the tone and also the effort you put into yours.

Mr. Gillespie: Well, I have an opinion, but I believe in compromise.

Mr. Dobbie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dr. Archer: Thanks, Mr. Gillespie. I think we've gone through a lot of the issues that I would have gone through with you over the last couple of presentations. I would note that this issue or challenge of having people in urban areas and in rural areas working collaboratively is something that we've heard a lot as we've gone across the province. In some constituencies there seems to have been developed over time a pretty good working relationship with rural areas, even with fairly largish urban ridings. St. Albert, for example, is of that size that there's one constituency that's entirely urban, and then part of the city is joined with some of the surrounding rural areas into a constituency, and in that part of the province it seems to work pretty well. Our challenge, I think, is to find the solution that seems most responsive to local needs while also being mindful of the representational requirements that we're working within.

I would want to reiterate the point that one of the discussions we had in the first round is that recognizing the lower growth in the southern part of the province, was there a way of designing some constituencies that at least could provide some stability over the next period of time? I'm not sure if it was you or Mrs. Cyr who had made the point that having constituencies change on too regular a basis is frustrating because it can disrupt established patterns. In the configuration that we came up with, it seemed to us that having High River in this constituency might lead to a need for establishing some new patterns of relationships, but the other side of the coin is that it likely will ensure that the population basis within this riding is stable for some period of time, stable relative to the provincial changes. Consequently, this change may enable this constituency to remain in this configuration for at least a couple of iterations.

That was one of the things that we were trying to take into account as well. If those patterns of relationship are relatively weak at this point in time, it may be that over time it'll provide an opportunity for those to strengthen.

The Chair: Anything further?

Dr. Archer: That's all from me. Thanks.

The Chair: That's a very important consideration when you're considering that you've been subject to so much change at each hearing. This does present the opportunity for sort of some stability for a considerable period of time. It's something to think about.

Mr. Gillespie: My thought on that would be that, certainly, High River and that area is growing populationwise faster than Pincher Creek or Fort Macleod or Blairmore. I think that what your MLA might end up with in a constituency that looks like this one that's drawn here is that the head of the monster is over here at High River and the majority of the time and attention has to be here, and the other areas ultimately are going to suffer. There are only so many hours for these people to work, as you know.

The Chair: There are, but there are only so many ridings, and there are conditions.

All right. Thank you.

Mr. Gillespie: Thank you.

The Chair: Anyone further at this point? Is there anyone else who would like to say something?

Mrs. Downs: Actually, I would.

The Chair: Come forward, ma'am, and identify yourself for the record.

Adele Downs

Mrs. Downs: Good afternoon. My name is Adele Downs, from the Lethbridge-East constituency. After listening to the last presentation, I really would like to support the acclaim to retain the name of Macleod simply because it is southern Alberta's heart. It's our history down here. You hear the name Macleod, and you just see those Mounties in their red coats. I just feel that it is so much southern Alberta history. I would just love to see that name retained as well, and I support the previous presenters in that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Gillespie, I believe you didn't specifically mention that, but I think you wanted the name Macleod retained also, did you not?

Mr. Gillespie: Yes.

The Chair: Yes. For the record he did also. We've heard that from people who presented in Edmonton, so it shows you that it's been around.

Mrs. Downs: Thank you for the opportunity.

The Chair: Well, thank you so much. We appreciate that.

All right. There being no further presentations at this time, we have three or four MLAs who will be presenting this evening starting at 6. We will adjourn and resume at 6. Thank you all for coming.

[The hearing adjourned at 2:45 p.m.]

