

PUBLIC HEARING HELD AT THE SAWRIDGE HOTEL, SLAVE LAKE
9 OCTOBER, 2002

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1 Public Hearing held at The Sawridge Hotel, Slave Lake
2 9 October, 2002, commencing at 2:00 P.M.

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4 THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, everyone, welcome.

5 I hope you won't weren't misled by the sign in the
6 lobby. Is this helping at all? Can you hear me any
7 better when I do this? No? That's fine, I'll just
8 try and speak loudly.

9 I hope you weren't misled by the sign in the
10 lobby which says the meeting began at 1:00 o'clock, it
11 was advertised as 1:30, so we made our timetable up
12 accordingly.

13 This is a meeting of the Alberta Federal
14 Electoral Boundaries Commission, as distinguished from
15 the Provincial bodies which are holding hearings
16 concurrently. So our business of course, is to
17 redesign the boundaries of the Federal Electoral
18 districts.

19 The purpose of the meeting is to consider the
20 Proposal which we have made and which appears in its
21 formal form as follows, and I think most people who
22 didn't have one, have picked one up at the front desk.
23 There are no more on hand, so if anybody didn't get
24 one who wishes one, would you please leave your name
25 with the Commission Secretary after the meeting and
26 she'll be glad to mail you one.

27 The proposal is also found on the web site and

1 again, the Secretary will give you that address and it
2 appeared in summary form in the handout which appeared
3 in the major newspapers and it looked like that. We
4 have as well, a booklet called Representation in the
5 House of Commons of Canada, which is very informative,
6 and I recommend it to you reading if you have an
7 interest in the subject of the allocation of seats for
8 the House of Commons in Canada generally, and in each
9 Province. It will show you how that formula was
10 arrived at.

11 I will introduce the Commission. My name is
12 MacCallum, I am a Judge of the Court of Queen's Bench
13 of Alberta in Edmonton. To my left is Donald J.
14 Barry. Mr. Barry is a Political Scientist who teaches
15 at the University of Calgary. To my right is Ritu
16 Khullar, a Lawyer practicing in Edmonton.

17 My fellow Commissioners were appointed by the
18 Speaker of the House of Commons, I was appointed by
19 the Chief Justice of Alberta.

20 The staff, Miranda Petryshyn, the Commission
21 Secretary. Dawn Mathews, the Geography Specialist and
22 our Reporter today is Sonja Petryshyn.

23 Before I forget, when people come up to present
24 or to ask questions later on, I want you to come to
25 the podium please, and use the microphone and make
26 sure that you speak slowly enough because everything
27 you say will be taken down the Reporter and a

1 transcript will be prepared and it is on the basis of
2 this transcript that we have to review your
3 suggestions or criticisms, so we want to make sure
4 that we get everything that you say.

5 I will describe the process briefly to you. We
6 are an independent Commission appointed under the
7 auspices of the Federal Electoral Boundaries
8 Readjustment Act of 1985.

9 We are intended to be and we are an independent
10 Commission entirely free from any political or
11 administrative influence. We are expected to
12 interpret and serve the public interest in a wide
13 sense and that involves deciding and evaluating,
14 balancing competing interests so we have to take a
15 rather general view of things in many cases and cannot
16 always accommodate the wishes of small or more narrow
17 interests.

18 We welcome constructive suggestions of course,
19 but as I said, you must understand that everything
20 must be evaluated in a rather general sense. We have
21 to take a big picture. So if your particular point of
22 view is not adopted by us, I hope you won't feel
23 aggrieved and you will understand that it simply forms
24 part of the general considerations we have to make.

25 Whatever we do, of course, you may rest assured
26 that your contribution will be seriously evaluated.

27 The final word in the process is ours, but the

1 process is consultative. We must follow the legal
2 guidelines set out under Section 15 of the Act and
3 under Section 3 of the Constitution of Canada.

4 We hold public hearings following the preparation
5 of our Proposal and that, of course, one of those
6 public hearings is what we are doing today. We expect
7 to be finished them by the end of this month.

8 After we do that, we will re-evaluate our
9 Proposal in light of the suggestions and criticisms
10 which have been made and that will go to the Speaker
11 of the House and from that office to a Committee of
12 the House of Commons charged with the task of
13 evaluating our Proposal.

14 The Members of Parliament will then have their
15 turn to voice their objections or make suggestions and
16 after we receive and consider those objections from
17 the Members of Parliament, we will modify the Report,
18 if we deem advisable, and then send the final product
19 to the Chief Electoral Officer who drafts a
20 Representation Order which then goes to the Governor
21 in Council for Proclamation into law.

22 All of this will be done by July of 2003, next
23 year. The new boundaries thus established, however,
24 do not go into effect until after June of 2004, so
25 that if an election is called before then, it will be
26 held upon the basis of the ridings as they now exist.

27 The object of our exercise today, ladies and

1 gentlemen, has to do with electoral boundary
2 readjustment and not with the redistribution formula,
3 which allocates the number of seats to the various
4 Provinces.

5 There is widespread interest in the subject we
6 know, and if you want further information about it,
7 the formula is illustrated on that placard on the
8 wall. And you could ask one of us later on for a
9 further explanation if you desire one, but all you
10 really need to know for the purposes of our meeting,
11 is that Alberta has been awarded 28 seats as a result
12 of the 1991 Census. The population of Alberta having
13 risen to 2.9 million. There formerly were and there
14 are at this moment 26 Members of Parliament
15 representing Alberta in the House of Commons.

16 The average or provincial quotient applying to
17 each seat in the Province in the future is based on
18 the population of 106,243 people. So if each seat in
19 the Province were equally represented in terms of the
20 population, that would be the population of each
21 riding, and as you will see, as you probably know,
22 from reading our Proposal that will not be the case.

23 However, we are required under Section 15 of the
24 Act to create electoral districts or ridings or
25 constituencies, whatever you want to call them, which
26 are as close as reasonably possible to that figure.
27 We can vary from it in consideration of historical

1 pattern, for example, or to serve community of
2 interest, or if there are special cases dictated by
3 the size or thinning population of a riding.

4 We have two people who have notified us of their
5 intent to present today, so we won't be pressed for
6 time. We do set a time limit of 15 minutes for the
7 Presenters. During the presentation, I or my fellow
8 Commissioners may intervene at any point for
9 clarification, but we will try to let you speak
10 without interruption if possible.

11 I will have to enforce relevancy if a subject is
12 raised over which we have no control, for example, the
13 allocation of seats is something we accept. It's 28
14 and there's nothing we can do about it and nothing you
15 can do about it except through your Member of
16 Parliament.

17 I refer you to page 1 of our Proposal which sets
18 out in summary form the basis for the allocation of
19 seats in this Province, and I recommend it to your
20 reading.

21 The Presenters may put questions to us during the
22 course of their presentations if they wish. We won't
23 answer them right away, we might wait until the
24 Commissioners -- or at least until the Presenters are
25 finished talking and then if they have left some part
26 of their 15 minute allocation free, we will glad to
27 answer their questions then if we can or if we can't,

1 we will simply take it under advisement and give it
2 the attention it deserves later on.

3 There will be no questions or submissions from
4 the floor as of right, but if time permits, and we
5 deem it advisable at the end of the presentations, we
6 might permit questions from the floor, or indeed,
7 commentary from those present.

8 And the first Presenter, according to my list, is
9 Mr. Davie Barnes from Westlock. Mr. Barnes.

10 MR. DAVIE BARNES: Good afternoon. Is this thing
11 live? Okay, thanks very much.

12 Well, We'll get organized here yet. Thank you
13 very much for the chance to speak to you folks, and
14 good afternoon, and I wish you well in your work.

15 I sympathize with the difficulties you face in
16 sorting out districts in an area like northern Alberta
17 with the diverse population and physical restraints.
18 I think you've done pretty well so far, I would just
19 like to make a little bit of suggestion.

20 And I guess, getting things a little backward, I
21 should introduce myself. I am Davie Barnes from
22 Westlock. My interest is, I have friends and
23 acquaintances in the Athabasca area that had asked me
24 to speak. Years ago I used to be an Alberta Wheat
25 Pool delegate for that area and I came to know the
26 people around there fairly well. And I would like to
27 suggest that as one slight alteration to your program

1 that you run the boundary between Athabasca, Westlock,
2 St. Paul along the equal boundary to the Fort McMurray
3 -- not Fort McMurray -- Grande Prairie riding. Can
4 you just pop your -- okay, there you are.

5 The line, see where it comes down at the bottom
6 of the riding to the west of us should run right along
7 the top of Township 68. And the reason for the
8 thinking behind this is that is just about the
9 approximate boundary of the end of surveyed
10 agricultural land in the eastern half of the Province,
11 and there is quite a difference of lifestyles between
12 the area south of that and the area north. From there
13 on down, it's mainly agricultural based and the
14 interests of the community are based, as I say, more
15 on agriculture. From there up, it's mainly resource
16 extraction oriented.

17 It's like two different lifestyles altogether.
18 And though this, the map that was shown in the paper
19 shows the surveyed area, the land surveyed area there
20 and the top of Township 68 will just about divide that
21 area off from the rest of the northern part of the
22 east half of the Province.

23 So this is a suggestion, whether you take it to
24 heart or not, it would make the administration of each
25 district, the representation of it, much easier for
26 whoever gets elected to run either one of them. They
27 would both be more homogenous communities and it's

1 something to keep in mind.

2 I've got also a little summary of my presentation
3 here if I -- should I leave it with you?

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Yes please.

5 MR. DAVIE BARNES: I think that's about it. I'm not
6 going to take too much time unless you have some
7 questions or?

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have any questions? The
9 Secretary will get your copy, sir. Thanks very much,
10 Mr. Barnes. That's very helpful to have that copy and
11 it helps us to sit down at our leisure and look at the
12 map and see exactly what you're --

13 MR. DAVIE BARNES: Driving at. Okay. Thank you very
14 much.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: You've been very clear, sir, and
16 very succinct. Thank you. We have no questions for
17 you.

18 MR. DAVIE BARNES: Thank you.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: The next gentleman on the agenda
20 is a very familiar name, Mr. Frank Appleby from
21 Athabasca.

22 MR. FRANK APPLEBY: Thank you very much.

23 Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, staff
24 members. It's certainly a pleasure to be able to
25 appear before you today and express some of my
26 thoughts about the boundaries job and the Commission.
27 And I realize only too well that the difficult task

1 you have had because so much of this redistribution of
2 boundaries is based on population and that makes it
3 very difficult for you.

4 I'd like to give you a little bit about my own
5 background. I was born on a homestead about ten miles
6 southeast of Athabasca, many, many years ago as you
7 can well see. Pushing up towards my 89th birthday now
8 actually. And I was a Federal returning officer here
9 in this Athabasca constituency for a number of years,
10 1958, 1962, 1963, 1965 and 1968, working under both
11 Liberal and Conservative Governments and working very
12 well with all the authorities that we have.

13 We have made some changes during the period that
14 I was Returning Officer and one of the most dramatic
15 changes was Athabasca, instead of being tied on to
16 Fort McMurray, was tied into a new constituency called
17 Pembina which took in Athabasca almost at the northern
18 boundary and then moved south and actually took in
19 parts of six constituencies, some of them right around
20 the City of Edmonton. In fact, we had one polling
21 station on the Calgary Trail south of Edmonton for
22 that constituency. That only lasted a couple of
23 elections, but it was certainly a great change for the
24 people of Athabasca and the people in some parts of
25 Edmonton as well.

26 I was also very interested in this because I
27 served in the Provincial Legislature for a number of

1 years too. Well acquainted with this whole area.
2 Westlock, Athabasca and the surrounding area, and as
3 Dave Barnes has said today, we feel that things have
4 changed over the years.

5 I notice in your brochure you say you can take a
6 look at community identities, community interests, and
7 historical patterns, but I also realize that you're
8 restricted to some extent in looking at those things,
9 and I think that something in the past that has not
10 occurred and should perhaps occur in the future, is a
11 little closer look at geographical differences and
12 transportation differences. That's a very important
13 part of it.

14 You know, when I was first returning officer, I
15 used go to Fort McMurray, the only way to go was get
16 on a train over at Boyle and travel to Fort McMurray
17 and hope you get there the same day. And we didn't go
18 to Fort McMurray. We only went to a place called
19 Waterways, three miles from Fort McMurray, and there
20 they could unload the train, put things on the
21 riverboat and ship them to the north.

22 Fort McMurray, believe it or not, in those days,
23 had less than half the population of the Town of
24 Athabasca. And how dramatically that has changed.
25 Today, Fort McMurray has more than 20 times the
26 population of the Town of Athabasca.

27 If you look at Northern Alberta, we see Fort

1 McMurray with three massive oilsands plants, another
2 one on the drawing board. We see oilsands
3 developments over at Wabasca, out of there the Gulf
4 plants, we see over as far as Peace River actually
5 oilsands across there. They go east to Primrose Lake,
6 north of Bonnyville and Cold Lake and more oilsands
7 plants. And the whole thing is concentrated on that
8 Fort McMurray area, where there's huge developments
9 taking place right now.

10 Looking at the historical pattern, many years ago
11 Athabasca was the hub of transportation, exploration
12 for the north. Explorers came through there. Peter
13 Tom came through there to establish the Northwest
14 Trading Company trading posts. David Thompson came
15 through Athabasca to set up the mapping program for
16 the Federal Government throughout that area. And
17 actually, Alexander McKenzie, on one of his historic
18 journeys to the north started out from Athabasca and
19 that was a pattern in those days. In the 17th and
20 18th Century, that's what was happening. That was the
21 historical pattern we had.

22 And then things started to change because in 1912
23 the railroad came to Athabasca and the influx of
24 settlers from Europe, the Ukraine, Poland, Romania,
25 Hungaria, the British Isles, Eastern Canada, the
26 United States, all started to come towards Athabasca,
27 many of them. And they settled there and homesteaded

1 there and started to develop the land. The river
2 traffic with the boats, the steamboats, the barges,
3 the scows, started to fade away because the railroad
4 came into Fort McMurray and Athabasca and that was
5 happening, the fur trade dropped away.

6 Actually, that was from thereon, with the
7 homesteading of their land, the development of the
8 agricultural area, that the thoughts about the north
9 started to fade out of the minds of the local people,
10 and we began to look south, to the area to the south.

11 We had farm produce to ship, it had to go south.
12 We had various amenities that we needed, we had to
13 look to the south for that. We particularly
14 Athabasca, looks toward Westlock for a great many
15 things. We have a seed mill there, we have two
16 auction markets there where our livestock is marketed,
17 we have a sophisticated town services there, and all
18 sorts of things.

19 You might say, well, you can still get those with
20 the Federal boundaries. But it makes it awkward
21 because, as Dave Barnes has said, the line is drawn
22 across and we're going to have, in our County of
23 Athabasca, if that proposal goes through, we would
24 have two MPs, both serving parts of that one County
25 and that's an awkward situation.

26 Some people you know, have a strange idea,
27 they're saying oh, well, we're better off if we have

1 two or three MPs, we can work on each one of them. In
2 my experience in the past has been that if you more
3 one MP representing the area, they can easily slough
4 off and say, no, that's that guy's responsibility, you
5 take it to him. So that's what happens. Here we are
6 today and we think that with a lot has changed, we
7 don't have any common interest with Fort McMurray. We
8 respect Fort McMurray, we know it's a wonderful
9 development there, but we don't have any common
10 interest with them.

11 But we have our interests towards the south,
12 towards the east, towards the west, agriculture, and
13 those sort of developments. Another interesting
14 factor is these people that came have continued to
15 develop their cultural activities and they go to
16 various parts of the Province, in our area and the
17 south, to carry on -- the Ukrainian dancers go to put
18 on concerts in various places, the Scottish have their
19 Burns' Night celebrations on there, but none of this
20 is tied into Fort McMurray.

21 I expect if we went to Fort McMurray, we'd find
22 some great celebrations going on with the
23 Newfoundlanders up there, but we don't have those down
24 in Athabasca.

25 So what we are asking for is to take a look at
26 those boundaries, get more of Athabasca in there and
27 the County. Dave Barnes has suggested that we go up

1 to Township 68, and I think the last Township in the
2 County is 69, the boundary up to 69, so that would be
3 the boundary there, at the end 68.

4 I think if you could take into consideration some
5 of those factors, the community interest, the
6 community identity, the historical patterns that have
7 developed and the great change that's come about in
8 that historical pattern. These things should be very
9 highly considered by the Commission.

10 I notice from the population that the proposed
11 boundaries will give about 88,000, I know your quota
12 is supposed to be about 79,000.

13 One thing about the Fort McMurray area, there's
14 no doubt about it that even since the last census,
15 there has been considerable increase in the population
16 there and by the next census coming around, I think
17 Fort McMurray will probably qualify for a constituency
18 all of its own. But that's something we will have to
19 look forward to.

20 What we're asking today and we have a big
21 representation from the County of Athabasca here, I
22 think we have 11 people or more, besides people from
23 Westlock, Dave Barnes, and they are all interested in
24 the same thing.

25 That's our concern, lady and gentlemen and
26 hopefully you'll take this into serious consideration.
27 Thank you very much.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Appleby, rest assured that we
2 will take it into -- give it our serious concern. It
3 is certainly a privilege, sir, to hear from someone of
4 your stature and experience in this area.

5 MS. KHULLAR: I would just like to thank you,
6 Mr. Appleby, for the history lesson, it was very
7 informative and I could only learn from presentations
8 like yours and Mr. Barnes, and I really appreciate it.
9 Thank you.

10 DR. BARRY: Yes, indeed. Thank you very much
11 for that very helpful presentation.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir, what you say about Fort
13 McMurray, of course, is very true. In 1991, the
14 population of the Athabasca riding was 80,261, in
15 2001, it was 93,191 owing almost entirely to the
16 increases in the City of Fort McMurray.

17 So in setting the proposed population at 88,000
18 or thereabouts as we have done, we have taken into
19 account the projected growth in Fort McMurray, such
20 that by the time the next census rolls around, it
21 should be at or near the present provincial quota that
22 is for this redistribution of 106,243. We expect that
23 to happen, so although it is low at the moment, it
24 should come up.

25 And people should understand I think, and some
26 don't, that to the extent that the population of a
27 proposed riding is below the quota of 106,000, the

1 voters are empowered. Their vote is worth more. To
2 the extent that it exceeds that figure, their vote is
3 diluted. So the people in the proposed riding will
4 have an advantage over some others in the Province in
5 the short term, at least, according to our proposal.
6 It is not something that is widely understood, but
7 people should -- just remember that if we set the
8 population of a proposed riding lower than somebody
9 else's, they're not being disadvantaged. On the
10 contrary, they are being empowered.

11 Mr. Appleby, thanks very much again.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, obviously we have some time
13 left, ladies and gentlemen, so we'd be pleased to have
14 sort of an informal exchange with you. But the same
15 rules will have to apply, because everything must be
16 recorded, we would ask you to come to the podium,
17 identify yourself, and then we'll have a chat.

18 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: Good afternoon. My name is Sheila
19 Foley and I'm the Reeve -- I'm the Reeve with the M.D.
20 of Lesser Slave River --

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Can we ask you to point that out
22 please, to show us where that is?

23 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: Actually, you have us included
24 here. The only point, and it will be quite apparent
25 when I tell you what my concern is, or not really a
26 concern. Where the Westlock boundary is proposed and
27 the County of Athabasca would prefer to be included in

1 the Westlock area proposal, that's there, which would
2 be from, I think the gentleman said from Township 69
3 and south.

4 Our municipality then, that bottom south chunk,
5 would be just cut off from the regular representation
6 of the larger portion of our municipality. So we have
7 no objection to you adjusting the boundary to
8 accommodate the County of Athabasca, the only thing
9 that we would ask that not to cut that little portion
10 off right down below where your cursor is, there, not
11 to cut that off from the rest of our municipality.
12 Even though it is a small farming community, we would
13 like you to follow our east boundary on our
14 municipality at that point.

15 And we're not speaking about a lot of population
16 in there, so it's not going to skew your population
17 count, but the reason is is we would have one small
18 portion of our municipality covered by another MP,
19 which we would prefer that not to be the case.

20 It's a small farming community. Be south, you
21 know where Hondo is?

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

23 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: South of Hondo down to Flatbush.

24 That's the area there that we would like to be
25 retained within our larger municipality.

26 THE CHAIRMAN: Does that go into the municipality
27 of --

1 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: That northern end is not a big
2 concern to us because it's pretty well resource and
3 industry based, but it's just that little portion in
4 the south that sometimes gets the feeling that they
5 are left out of a lot of decision-making issues and I
6 think if you put them in a separate Federal boundary,
7 they would have some concerns about that. Just follow
8 our municipal boundary there and we'd be very happy.
9 That's basically what you have done now. I can show
10 you on this map if you would like?

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. So where you are now lies to
12 the north of the proposed northern boundary of
13 Westlock - St. Paul?

14 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: Exactly.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: And you'd be quite happy to be in
16 Westlock - St. Paul?

17 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: No, we don't. We want to stay
18 within the Athabasca riding.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Oh you do?

20 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: With the rest of our municipality.
21 This is all of our municipality in here.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Oh.

23 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: And it's just a little chunk down
24 here to the south. This is all of ours, yes. Well
25 not into Wabasca but -- the area that you pretty well
26 have highlighted, it's all our municipality and if it
27 was just a little bit over here to the --

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Just past the 5th Meridian there?

2 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: Yes.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So it would come down here
4 and then back up and across?

5 MS. SHEILA FOLEY: Yes, and we would have no
6 objection to that and that would retain our small
7 portion throughout the rest of our community.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Ms. Foley, thank you very much.
9 And next, please?

10 MS. LORRAINE GISLASON: Thank you. Good afternoon,
11 members of the Commission. My name is Lorraine
12 Gislason.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Could you spell your last name?

14 MS. LORRAINE GISLASON: It's Icelandic, it's very hard.
15 G-I-S-L-A-S-O-N. I'm Reeve of the County of
16 Athabasca. However, today I'm speaking as a resident
17 of the County. In your proposal, the County is being
18 split in half, north and south. The County of
19 Athabasca is primarily agriculture, reaching up to and
20 including Township 69. Therefore, we do not see the
21 advantage of being put with the northern region,
22 primarily Fort McMurray which is, of course, the oil
23 and gas industry.

24 Fort McMurray is the only city in the proposed
25 area and is growing very rapidly according to all
26 reports. If the boundary were adjusted to include all
27 of the County of Athabasca, the population difference

1 would be approximately 4,000 people. The population
2 of the County, including the Town and the Village is
3 almost 10,000 people, so if you split it in half, you
4 would be losing approximately 4,000 people.

5 My objection to the proposed change is that the
6 County will be split, and therefore, may be
7 represented by two MLAs and that -- I'm sorry, two
8 MPs, and that I believe, would not be to anyone's
9 advantage. Adjust the boundaries as you have to, but
10 please take into consideration that the County should
11 be left as a whole. Thank you very much.

12 MS. KHULLAR: Excuse me, Ms. Gislason?

13 MS. LORRAINE GISLASON: Yes?

14 MS. KHULLAR: I just want to clarify, I
15 understand your point that you want the County totally
16 in one riding to be represented by one MP. Do you
17 have a preference as to which riding?

18 MS. LORRAINE GISLASON: We would prefer to go south.

19 MS KHULLAR: You'd prefer to go south?

20 MS. LORRAINE GISLASON: Because of our agricultural ties
21 and our trading patterns. We go south rather than
22 north, I mean trading patterns are traditionally from
23 the north to the south and we follow those.

24 MS. KHULLAR: I'm just wondering, what would be
25 more important, to keep the County together in one
26 riding or to be oriented to the south? I mean, if it
27 was a choice of leaving the riding split or leaving

1 the County split or putting the County totally in
2 Athabasca - Fort McMurray --

3 MS. LORRAINE GISLASON: I would believe to keep the County
4 together, as a County.

5 MS. KHULLAR: Okay. Thank you.

6 MR. FRANK APPLEBY: I would just like to add a point,
7 Mr. Chairman?

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Appleby?

9 MR. FRANK APPLEBY: Frank Appleby again. We have had
10 years gone by, some historical connection with Fort
11 McMurray because we were a frontier settlement and the
12 trading, as I mentioned earlier, goes on to the north.
13 That has gone now. We have absolutely, as far as I
14 can tell, no economic or industrial connections with
15 Fort McMurray anymore. And since the development of
16 farming area to the south, to the east, to the west,
17 that is where our interests lie and definitely the
18 County of Athabasca would be much better served by
19 being in that new constituency of Westlock - St. Paul.

20 Not only for the industrial and agricultural
21 interests, but also for the cultural interests as
22 well, because many of the things that go on are
23 synonymous with what we have in the County of
24 Athabasca. So I think it's very definite that, from
25 the point of view that I have talked to a great many
26 people, is that we definitely feel that our interests
27 are in the south.

1 Thank you.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks again, Mr. Appleby. And
3 the next gentleman who is approaching the microphone?

4 Mr. EDGAR KOEHLER: My name is Edgar Koehler and I'm a
5 County Councillor with the County of Athabasca.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Would you spell your last name
7 please?

8 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: K-O-E-H-L-E-R. And I am going to
9 do my presentation based on my area and my personal
10 opinion on this, not on behalf of the County.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: That was the County of Athabasca?

12 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: County of Athabasca.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: But this is a personal view?

14 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: And actually, it's basically to
15 support what Ms. Gislason has said and what
16 Mr. Appleby has said.

17 I'm a resident of the Athabasca area and my
18 family was for years. I guess the traditional pattern
19 was right, like Mr. Appleby said, and he's a former
20 teacher of mine, so I have a lot of respect for him.

21 What we've got is that our railroad, as mentioned
22 by Mr. Appleby, that came in 1912 to Athabasca, our
23 whole area has changed. We've lost our railroad. And
24 I live west of Athabasca which is in a good area where
25 Mr. Appleby lives too, but our trading pattern right
26 now, our grain flows basically to the Westlock area.
27 Our supplies, everything, so there is a lot in common

1 and to split that area, like was already said, for the
2 amount of gain in population for what's going to
3 happen McMurray wise, I think would be unwise.

4 I really think that the boundary, just diverts
5 just south of the Village of Boyle through the County
6 of Athabasca, which splits our agricultural heart
7 industry of the County and all our trade efforts.

8 So I would hope that you would definitely look at
9 what has been presented and I think probably we, as on
10 behalf of the County, will express in an official
11 letter to you, on our opinions of this too. So, I
12 appreciate your job. Thank you.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much and that would
14 be most helpful if you could let us have a letter from
15 the County because whatever we do, we want to do it on
16 the basis of evidence and not whim, of course. So we
17 have to be able to show that we've acted on the basis
18 of hard evidence.

19 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: What we have is a lot of people
20 with not enough information, with not to make a
21 decision as council, but I think we will, we will
22 definitely do that.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Unfortunately, the map which is
24 attached to our proposal doesn't show the Town of
25 Athabasca and I'll have to ask you -- it does show
26 what purports to be the northerly limit of the
27 surveyed agricultural land, and I'm just asking you if

1 that, if that boundary were followed, that is to the
2 north of Township 68 or 69, as it appears on this map,
3 would it include the area of Calling Lake and places
4 just to the north of the river which are in your
5 trading area?

6 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: Oh probably just south of Calling
7 Lake, yes, it would suffice, what we're asking for,
8 yes.

9 MS. KHULLAR: But it doesn't have to take in
10 Calling Lake?

11 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: It doesn't have to go, no, just
12 south of Calling Lake is where the agriculture
13 basically ends.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Sure, but it shouldn't follow the
15 river, the boundaries of the river because, of course,
16 that would bisect part of the Athabasca community,
17 wouldn't it?

18 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: Well definitely. Anything north
19 of the Athabasca River it would, because we do have
20 agriculture in the bend of the river, to the north.
21 So yes, definitely.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: So the northerly boundary there
23 where I see Township 68, that projected east and west
24 would be a satisfactory northerly boundary, as far
25 you're concerned?

26 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: Well, the northern boundary of the
27 County would probably be the questioned boundary

1 there.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: I see. Calling Lake is not in

3 that --

4 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: No, it's in -- which is just

5 north -- there you go. There is Calling Lake.

6 MS. KHULLAR: And what's -- are those red lines

7 the Township lines?

8 MS. MATHEWS: Yes.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: So that's 69 there?

10 MR. EDGAR KHULLAR: So it would be just a little bit

11 north of 69 then.

12 MS. KHULLAR: So it would still cut the County

13 in half then?

14 THE CHAIRMAN: You have to go up. The yellow

15 indicates the County?

16 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: Yes.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: So the northeastern part of the

18 County is not your major concern for the purposes of

19 this electoral district?

20 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: Well, we're concerned with all of

21 the County but that area there -- they have a

22 different concern than my personal -- I'm not speaking

23 on behalf of the total County right now, but the area

24 I represent definitely is supportive of --

25 THE CHAIRMAN: I wonder, Mr. Koehler, when the

26 County responds officially by letter, would you

27 address that point?

1 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: Definitely we will -- if we do, we
2 will give you a definite boundary map.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. County boundaries are not
4 necessarily or even desirably coterminous with
5 electoral districts for obvious reasons, but where it
6 is an often repeated request that we've heard that all
7 of the County or none of it should be included in one
8 of our proposed districts. So thank you very much for
9 that, sir.

10 MR. EDGAR KOEHLER: Thank you.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes Mr. Appleby, please?

12 MR. FRANK APPLEBY: I wasn't sure how many times I
13 will be limited to, but I just wanted to follow-up on
14 what Edgar was saying there, with discussion about
15 Calling Lake.

16 Calling Lake Natives there are part of the
17 Bigstone Band and the Bigstone Band is centered at
18 Wabasca. From Wabasca, there is tremendous
19 development in the oilsands east and west and north
20 from there, and many of the Calling Lake residents
21 depend on the -- working in that area, up in the
22 Wabasca area, so it's not effected by changing the
23 County of Athabasca, which is clearly agricultural
24 practically, by having Calling Lake remain in the
25 constituency, as you have proposed.

26 I think that that's a factor you can readily take
27 into consideration.

1 Getting back to Fort McMurray again, I can't help
2 by getting back to that, because you have mentioned,
3 Mr. Chairman, that you have taken into consideration
4 the possible expansion of Fort McMurray, but at this
5 stage in the game, in my opinion, I think it's almost
6 impossible to estimate the expansion and the
7 population of Fort McMurray down the road until the
8 next census, because I know a friend of mine who is up
9 there building 60 houses at the present time and these
10 houses are getting occupied as fast as he can build
11 them. There are other contracts doing the same sort
12 of thing.

13 So the population is actually exploding up there
14 in Fort McMurray and I think you have a very difficult
15 task, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, in
16 trying to estimate what may be the population by the
17 time the next election rolls around.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. KHULLAR: Mr. Appleby, if you don't mind, I
20 wouldn't mind asking you a question? Just in relation
21 to the discussion we were having with Mr. Koehler. If
22 -- what we've heard is that the proposal that the
23 northern boundary be the 69th Township, if that
24 happens the northern part of the County would be cut
25 off. What's your position? I just want to clarify
26 whether you want the whole County --

27 MR. FRANK APPLEBY: Yes. The group over there to the

1 west side, Flatbush and that area there, there would
2 be no problem as far as that's concerned, in having
3 them stay with Fort McMurray.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: You mean the northeast side, the
5 northeast part of the County? South of the river?

6 MR. FRANK APPLEBY: Northwest.

7 MS. MATHEWS: Wandering River.

8 MR. FRANK APPLEBY: Yes. And then Wandering River,
9 they have interests in the north too, so it might be
10 some change necessary there, as far as that's
11 concerned. But the general population and the general
12 area and the general economic interest and the general
13 development in the County of Athabasca generally, the
14 whole County practically, is to the south. There's
15 no doubt about that any more.

16 I should mention that I have not prepared any
17 written brief because I'm visibly blind, I'm legally
18 blind, actually, I can see to some extent. But we'll
19 try and put something together for you and get some
20 help to do that so that you'll have something written
21 in the future.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: We would greatly appreciate that,
23 sir, and I will tell you that following the conclusion
24 of our public hearings in the third week of October,
25 we will set to work on revising our preliminary
26 Report, so the sooner we get all this material in from
27 all the various people, the happier we'll be. I'm

1 just going to pass the mike over to respond more
2 directly to the projected growth of Fort McMurray.

3 DR. BARRY: Thanks. The estimate we received,
4 we are basing our estimate on figures supplied by the
5 City of Fort McMurray. We're basing our estimate on
6 the figures supplied by the City of Fort McMurray and
7 that figure suggests that the population could grow as
8 much as 25,000 over the next ten years, which would
9 raise the total from the current level of about 48,000
10 up to 73.

11 MR. FRANK APPLEBY: My estimate would be about double
12 over that period of time, but I don't think anybody
13 can realistically estimate what it will be.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Quite so, sir. It's not an exact
15 science by any means.

16 Yes, madam?

17 MS. LORRAINE GISLASON: Lorraine Gislason again. I just
18 wanted to clarify the northeast portion of the County
19 and why we have not really included it in the boundary
20 line of Township 69. This portion of the County was
21 annexed to us about seven years ago and it is
22 primarily Wandering River. Their trade patterns are
23 still with Fort McMurray and or Lakeland,
24 Lac La Biche.

25 Needless to say, they are coming south. The
26 school division, the school that they have in
27 Wandering River is not in our region, they go into

1 Lakeland, so I do not think there is a problem if the
2 boundary line were cut off at Township 69, and please
3 don't say 68, I live in 69. But I don't think there
4 would be a problem if that portion of the County were
5 to go to the north, because of the fact that it's
6 newly annexed to the County. Yes, it was in the north
7 previous to that.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Someone else said 68, so
9 I'll make sure that you're speaking about 69.

10 MS. LORRAINE GISLASON: Please. 69, yes.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Anybody else? Thank you once more
12 for coming. It's been most helpful what we've heard
13 today, precisely this sort of thing that we want to
14 hear and which we wouldn't get except from meetings
15 like this.

16 So have a fine rest of the day and wish us well
17 in our further travels. We're going back to Edmonton
18 tonight and we'll be very busy with the hearings in
19 there tomorrow. Goodnight.

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25 PUBLIC HEARING CONCLUDED

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPT

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing pages are a true and faithful transcript of the proceedings taken down by me in shorthand and transcribed from my shorthand notes to the best of my skill and ability.

Dated at the City of Edmonton, Province of Alberta, this 18th day of October, 2002.

S. Petryshyn, CSR(A)
Official Court Reporter/
Examiner

FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

OF ALBERTA, 2002-2003

UNDER THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

READJUSTMENT ACT, R.S.C 1985, c. E-3

P U B L I C H E A R I N G

SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA

9 October, 2002

C O M M I S S I O N

Justice E. P. MacCallum Commission Chairman

Ms. Ritu Khullar Commission Member

Dr. Donald J. Barry Commission Member

Ms. Miranda Petryshyn Commission Secretary

Ms. Dawn Mathews Geography Specialist

S. Petryshyn, C.S.R. (A) Official Court Reporter/
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