

PUBLIC HEARING HELD AT THE SAWRIDGE HOTEL, FORT MCMURRAY  
8 OCTOBER, 2002

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1 Public Hearing held at The Sawridge Hotel, Fort McMurray  
2 8 October, 2002, commencing at 7:30 P.M.

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4 THE CHAIRMAN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We  
5 might as well get started. I'd like to welcome you  
6 all, thank you for your interest in coming. This, as  
7 you know, is a Public Hearing for the Federal  
8 Electoral Boundaries Commission to consider the  
9 proposals which have recently been published. There  
10 are various forms in which publication took place.

11 First was this handout in summary form, which  
12 appeared in the major newspapers, then we have the  
13 official hard copy in this white volume here and we  
14 have extra copies for anyone who wishes one. It's on  
15 the web as well, and if you don't know the web address  
16 for it, our Secretary will be glad to give it to you.  
17 There is in addition, a very useful booklet called  
18 Representation in the House of Commons of Canada,  
19 which contains all the information that you may wish  
20 to know respecting the allocation of seats throughout  
21 the Country, so you'll find that useful reading.

22 I'd like to introduce the members of the  
23 Commission first of all.

24 My name is MacCallum, I'm a Judge of the Court of  
25 Queen's Bench of Alberta. I was appointed Chairman of  
26 this Commission by the Chief Justice of Alberta. To  
27 my right is Ritu Khullar who was appointed by the

1 Speaker of the House of Commons. She is a practicing  
2 Lawyer in Edmonton, Alberta. To my left is Donald J.  
3 Barry, a Political Scientist from Calgary, and he too  
4 was appointed by the Speaker of the House of Commons.  
5 Our staff is composed of the Commission Secretary,  
6 Miranda Petryshyn, my immediate left. Next to her is  
7 Dawn Mathews, the Geography Specialist on loan from  
8 Ottawa and our Reporter is Sonja Petryshyn today.

9 The process, I can describe briefly to you. Our  
10 Commission is an independent one. It is formed under  
11 the auspices of -- under the power of the Federal  
12 Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act of 1985.

13 We are intended to be and we are free from any  
14 political or administrative influence. We are  
15 expected to interpret and serve the public interest in  
16 this work in a wide sense, which involves balancing,  
17 of course, and deciding amongst competing interests.

18 We welcome constructive suggestions, of course,  
19 but you must understand that they must be evaluated in  
20 the general context of the public interests as we see  
21 it, on a more regional basis and not necessarily on an  
22 individual locality. In other words, we take the big  
23 picture. If a particular point of view which people  
24 advance is not adopted by us, I hope they won't feel  
25 aggrieved by that, because you may rest assured that  
26 we will take any constructive suggestion and evaluate  
27 it carefully.

1           The final word in this process is ours, but the  
2 process is consultative. We must first of all, follow  
3 the legal guidelines which are set out in Section 15  
4 of the Act and in Section 3 of the Constitution. In  
5 this process we produce our Proposal which we have  
6 already done and I imagine you are familiar with it.  
7 Then we hold public hearings, we just started these on  
8 Monday and we hope to be finished by the end of the  
9 month.

10           As a result of these hearings, we may change our  
11 Proposal if we deem it advisable. We then prepare our  
12 Report which goes first to the Speaker and then to a  
13 Committee of the House of Commons where it is  
14 considered by the MPs.

15           We will receive and consider objections from  
16 Members of Parliament, and again, we might modify the  
17 Report, if we deem it advisable.

18           The final Report which we prepare at the end of  
19 the day is sent to the Chief Electoral Officer who  
20 drafts a Representation Order and it then goes for  
21 Proclamation to the Governor in Council. This is all  
22 done before July of next year, 2003.

23           So the new boundaries which we set cannot be put  
24 into use in a general election before July of 2004.  
25 So if an election is called before then, it will be  
26 contested on the basis of the boundaries as they now  
27 exist.

1           The object of the submissions which we receive,  
2           ladies and gentlemen, has to do with electoral  
3           boundary readjustment. It does not have to do with  
4           the redistribution formula which allocates the number  
5           of seats in each Province.

6           As a result of the application of that formula  
7           which is set by operation of law, Alberta will be  
8           entitled to 28 seats. There is nothing we can do  
9           about that. It is not a subject which is open for  
10          discussion at this meeting, although after the  
11          representations have been made and questions answered  
12          at large, if you are interested, we'd be glad to  
13          explain to it to you, but the formula and all the  
14          information you will require is contained in that  
15          booklet.

16          Alberta now has a population of 2.9 million. It  
17          has 26 seats and as a result of the increase in  
18          population of Canada, it is now entitled to 28. The  
19          next thing I usually do in advance of these meetings  
20          is tell you what the hearing procedure is, ladies and  
21          gentlemen, but we don't have anybody who has  
22          advertised their intention in Fort McMurray to make a  
23          presentation before us. The time limit for doing that  
24          was on the 26th of September. But we're here and we  
25          have found at the centers we have visited so far that  
26          there a certain number of people who come out of  
27          general interest, so since you're good enough to take

1 the trouble to do that, we're at your disposal for a  
2 reasonable length of time, if you wish to make any  
3 comments and ask us any questions. If you want to do  
4 that, please just approach the podium, make sure the  
5 mike is on, identify yourselves and we can have a  
6 chat.

7 Yes, sir? Just a second, wait till I open my  
8 book here and I'll get this all down.

9 MR. DON MCGLADDERY: My name is Don McGladdery,  
10 M-C-G-L-A-D-D-E-R-Y.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

12 MR. DON MCGLADDERY: I am a councillor for the County  
13 of Athabasca which is a rural County in Northern  
14 Alberta and if we look at the map that is up there,  
15 just at the bottom of the Athabasca - Fort McMurray  
16 area, there is a little knob sticking down there and a  
17 rectangular area to the northeast of us -- of it.  
18 That is basically my constituency.

19 We are not specifically alarmed, we understand  
20 the reasons for the change that occurs to balance out  
21 the numbers and such, but we have had some discussions  
22 about what the options maybe were. That's the County  
23 of Athabasca and that northeastern part of it, as you  
24 can see, is my constituency. It's -- the highway runs  
25 through it and it's bounded by the river. The rest of  
26 our County tends to be more agricultural but we have  
27 not very much in common with the new constituency of

1 Westlock - St. Paul I think, that is created to the  
2 south of us. The changes that will result divorce us  
3 entirely from our MP. We will lose the long standing  
4 arrangements that we have had and so we're concerned a  
5 bit about where we'll go with representation in that  
6 regard.

7 We don't feel closely aligned with Fort McMurray  
8 either, being a hinterland agricultural community.  
9 Many of our farms are first generation. Others are --  
10 they have grown from the south, so we have the more  
11 mature ones that arose out of a settlement since the  
12 1930's. We are very new and although we have  
13 commuting with Fort McMurray and that, our incomes,  
14 family needs, social needs, all the rest of that, are  
15 very different from Fort McMurray, so we're not  
16 closely aligned with them either.

17 Now, I should say that I'm speaking in general  
18 about our County. I did spend 25 years of my career  
19 as an engineer in Fort McMurray, so I'm not typical of  
20 the folks, citizens who live there and need to be  
21 represented. So we are, as I say, not objecting to  
22 this, we understand why it's happening, but we are  
23 concerned about what all the implications will be for  
24 us down the road.

25 I thank you for this opportunity to speak to you  
26 and I wish you good fortune in your deliberations. I  
27 think this is a difficult job, but it needs to be

1 done.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. McGladdery, we're very pleased  
3 to hear from you. Thank you for taking the trouble to  
4 come. Does anybody -- Is Athabasca County entirely --

5 MS. MATHEWS: Pardon me? The Town?

6 THE CHAIRMAN: No, the County.

7 MS. MATHEWS: No. Part of it's in Westlock -  
8 St. Paul.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Which part?

10 MS. MATHEWS: Right where the pointer is right there.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see. Okay, thanks. Do you have  
12 any comments to make? Yes, Mr. McGladdery, we  
13 certainly recognize the complications which arise by  
14 not having municipal boundaries of various types  
15 within the same or provincial riding boundaries within  
16 the same Federal Electoral district.

17 There are, unfortunately, problems which can't be  
18 met in all cases and although it is convenient in many  
19 ways to have municipal boundaries contained within the  
20 same -- in their entirety within one Federal riding,  
21 it's not always possible or even advisable. I'm not  
22 saying it isn't in your -- in this particular case and  
23 any suggestion we receive as I remarked to begin with,  
24 we'll take under advisement and see if it can be  
25 worked out.

26 But when you see a proposed Federal boundary  
27 bisecting an existing municipal boundary, don't think

1 that we did it inadvertently, we had some reason for  
2 it, chiefly driven by numbers or barriers. It's  
3 obvious, of course, that municipal boundaries were  
4 formed the way they were for reasons which are not  
5 entirely ascertainable by us at this time.

6 So thank you for that. Are there any further  
7 inquiries or submissions from those present?

8 Perhaps I can, just in passing, remark upon the  
9 fact that the proposed riding here is somewhat low in  
10 population in terms of the provincial quotient, which  
11 is 106,240 people and we're at 88,000 and something,  
12 as we propose.

13 We did this deliberately. In part because of the  
14 explosive growth of Fort McMurray, which is projected  
15 to rise I think to something in the order of 73,000  
16 people for the City alone by the time of the next  
17 census, when the next Commission will be doing its  
18 work. So somewhere in between now and then, whether  
19 that happens or not, we know that there's going to be  
20 a substantial increase in population. Even if it was  
21 discounted by 50 percent, the population of the riding  
22 that we propose would rise to at -- near the  
23 provincial average, if not at the provincial average.

24 So we think that by deliberately leaving Fort  
25 McMurray low, although it empowers the voters, you  
26 must understand, the Athabasca - Fort McMurray  
27 proposed riding, it empowers the vote because it makes

1       it more powerful than a vote in a more populace  
2       riding.

3               The real complaint, of course, comes from  
4       ridings where people -- where the provincial average  
5       is exceeded and so their vote -- the vote of each  
6       elector is worth less in arithmetical terms. So in  
7       the short term, the voters in this riding would enjoy  
8       the advantage. In the medium and long term, we would  
9       expect that they would be on par with most other  
10      ridings in the Province. So that's the situation we  
11      face in Fort McMurray.

12             We just came from Peace River and Grande Prairie  
13      today, and of course, the situation is otherwise over  
14      there. Their riding is too populace so their vote is  
15      diluted, but there's very little that we see possible  
16      in doing -- to do anything about it at this stage of  
17      the game. Because you can't divide the Peace country  
18      in two, you'd wind up with two ridings which are far  
19      too small in terms of population whereas one riding,  
20      as we know now, is too big.

21             You can't hive off northern Alberta, for example  
22      Peace River and Fort McMurray into one riding because  
23      there's no road that goes all the way across between  
24      Peace River and Fort McMurray.

25             So that's the difficulty that seems to us to be  
26      insuperable at this moment, as regards the  
27      northwestern part of the Province. Fortunately for

1 the electors here, the situation is otherwise.

2 Yes sir? Would you come forward please?

3 MR. JIM ATKINSON: This Kyoto going ahead, sounds like  
4 it's going ahead, you can't count on the population of  
5 Fort McMurray growing anywhere close to what you're  
6 saying.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, come up please and identify  
8 yourself, sir, and speak -- we have to get your words  
9 down. What's your name?

10 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Jim Atkinson.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Jim Atkinson. Yes?

12 MR. JIM ATKINSON: With this proposed Kyoto, I don't think  
13 it would be wise to count on much growth at all in  
14 Fort McMurray. All I can see so far is people are  
15 cancelling these projects left, right and center,  
16 putting them on hold.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, that's your projection,  
18 Mr. Atkinson, and it may be the projection of others,  
19 but all we can go by is the evidence that we have at  
20 hand and we certainly can't involve ourselves in  
21 speculation relating to matters which are ongoing  
22 through the Government of Canada. But your concern is  
23 obviously one which is on everybody's mind.

24 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Well, especially in McMurray because  
25 it's the center of this whole mess.

26 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, we understand the position, sure.

27 Oh, yes. We did receive a submission from

1           somebody in Peace River which seemed to us to be quite  
2           sensible. The existing western boundary of this  
3           riding, as it now stands, runs directly north and  
4           south from the top of the Province down through Jean  
5           d'Or Prairie across the Peace River and directly south  
6           before it starts to jog westerly towards Peace River.

7           From Fort Vermillion to Fox Lake, there is a road  
8           of sorts, which is under -- in the process of being  
9           improved and it provides the only access to the Fox  
10          Lake Indian Reserve, the only surface transportation.  
11          It now, Fox Lake finds itself and has, obviously for  
12          the last ten years, found itself in the Athabasca  
13          riding. And it can't be served from Athabasca, from  
14          anywhere in the Athabasca riding by road.

15          So someone suggested why doesn't the riding jog  
16          over to include Fox Lake Reserve and then go back to  
17          where it was before, south of the Reserve -- south of  
18          the river, south of Peace River. We can see no reason  
19          why that shouldn't be done, if there's any reaction  
20          about that from people present who have more knowledge  
21          than us on the local situation, we'd enjoy hearing  
22          from you.

23   MS. MICHELLE DACRUZ:        Could you just explain that again?

24   THE CHAIRMAN:                The Fox Lake Indian Reserve is  
25          served by road from the west, from Fort Vermillion and  
26          that is in the Peace River riding as the ridings are  
27          now constituted. So according to the person who

1 submitted this information yesterday, it's pointless  
2 to have the Reserve in the Athabasca riding because  
3 you can't get it at, unless you go by air.

4 MS. KHULLAR: If you just look at the map and  
5 the pointer is on the Fox Lake Reserve which is in the  
6 Athabasca - Fort McMurray boundary and then the little  
7 town on the other side of the yellow line which is the  
8 boundary is Jean d'Or Prairie and so what the  
9 suggestion is to bring Fox Lake into the Peace River -  
10 Grande Prairie riding, to take it out of Athabasca and  
11 move it into the other riding.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: You know that the shift in  
13 population would be minimal, of course it simply means  
14 that the symmetry of the riding would be somewhat  
15 altered.

16 All right, any further comments?

17 MR. DAVID CHATTERS: I'd like to just make a comment on  
18 that particular situation?

19 THE CHAIRMAN: And your name, sir?

20 MR. DAVID CHATTERS: Dave Chatters.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

22 MR. DAVID CHATTERS: Of course everything you said  
23 about Fox Lake is absolutely true, but certainly it's  
24 not the only community in the Athabasca riding that's  
25 not accessible by road, so it is accessible by air,  
26 but so that should not perhaps be the only  
27 consideration.

1 I hadn't intended to make a presentation,  
2 particularly tonight, I am just in attendance to hear  
3 what the citizens of the community have to say, and of  
4 course, disappointed that there isn't more  
5 presentations being made, but my concern more is with  
6 the southern boundary of the riding and the  
7 communities of Boyle and Athabasca who in every way  
8 are connected the south rather than to the north by  
9 the Regional Health Authority, by their School  
10 Authority and now are placed in a provincial  
11 constituency with Westlock and Barrhead; and so that  
12 is of concern, but I won't elaborate particularly on  
13 that because I think there are some presentations  
14 being made on that issue tomorrow in Slave Lake so.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Westlock and Barrhead are not in  
16 the same Federal Electoral District.

17 MR. DAVID CHATTERS: No, the provincial, the new  
18 provincial boundaries that are being -- at the same  
19 time as you're presenting redrafting the boundaries  
20 for the Federal, the Province is also drafting  
21 boundaries and Athabasca is being placed in the  
22 provincial constituency with Westlock - Barrhead.  
23 They're in the same provincial constituency, so that  
24 may be of --

25 THE CHAIRMAN: So you think that Boyle and  
26 Athabasca should be where, in Federal --

27 MR. DAVID CHATTERS: They would more rightly belong in

1 the Westlock - St. Paul riding because so much of  
2 their connection is to the south and rather than to  
3 the north. As I say both in health care district and  
4 educational district, as well as provincially through  
5 that constituency, provincial constituency  
6 association, but I certainly would recognize in Fort  
7 McMurray there not being a great deal of concern with  
8 -- from Fort McMurray on this particular proposal,  
9 simply because it makes Fort McMurray by far the  
10 dominant community in the new riding.

11 It will be two thirds of the Athabasca riding,  
12 where now it's approximately half so, but I think the  
13 concern will be more from the small communities  
14 Athabasca, Boyle, Slave Lake, and High Prairie. And  
15 what influence that gives them on the Athabasca - Fort  
16 McMurray riding, but as I said I just mention that,  
17 but there will be presentations from those  
18 communities, I understand, tomorrow, and I am here to  
19 listen to what the people say not to argue their case.  
20 I'm simply here to hear what they have to say. So I  
21 thank you for your time.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chatters, before you sit down,  
23 I wonder if you would care to comment on the  
24 following? In its August the 2nd edition, Fort  
25 McMurray Today reports you as being shocked because  
26 our Proposal does not achieve representation by  
27 population and that the proposed changes could be

1 politically motivated.

2 On August the 12th, you are reported as having  
3 said that the Commission is a creature of the Liberal  
4 Government and is working in their interests to change  
5 the outcome of the ballot box.

6 Sir, we find these accusations to be outrageous.  
7 You heard what I said about the independence of this  
8 Commission, both in its appointment process and in its  
9 constitution in the people that you see before you.  
10 Are you still of the same view, sir?

11 MR. DAVID CHATTERS: I haven't seen anything at this  
12 point that would change my point of view.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: You have no evidence, I'm sure, to  
14 back up what you said.

15 MR. DAVID CHATTERS: I -- the evidence is certainly --  
16 the evidence that I looked at was the establishment of  
17 the boundaries as they exist and what it does to the  
18 riding. It's a conclusion I come to, and certainly I  
19 have a right to come to that conclusion.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: You have no right to conclude that  
21 we're biased, sir, based on such speculation. If you  
22 have nothing further to say, I have nothing further to  
23 say to you.

24 MR. DAVID CHATTERS: Thank you.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Anybody else like to make a  
26 comment? Not on the subject of bias by the way, this  
27 is not the forum for that. Very well, thank you very

1 much for your interest, ladies and gentlemen. If  
2 there is nobody else, we'll adjourn the meeting.

3 If you have any need of the material which I  
4 referred to in my introductory remarks, please inquire  
5 from Ms. Petryshyn and she'll be glad to give it to  
6 you.

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12 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.

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

