

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

COMMITTEE ROOM 1

Organizational Meeting

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SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)

Mr. Gary Ramey

Ms. Michele Raymond

Mr. Leonard Preyra

Mr. Jim Boudreau

Hon. Michel Samson

Mr. Andrew Younger

Hon. Chris d'Entremont

Mr. Keith Bain

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Legislative Committee Clerk

Mr. Gordon Hebb
Legislative Counsel

Ms. Margaret Murphy
Legislative Librarian

Mr. James MacInnes
Legislative Television and Recording Services

Mr. Robert Kinsman
Hansard Reporting Services

Ms. Carla Burns
Communications Nova Scotia

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ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2011

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much everyone for coming and I'm glad to be the chairman of this Select Committee on Establishing an Electoral Boundaries Commission. Maybe we'll just start by doing some introductions, if everyone is here.

[The committee members and guests introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm kind of working off the direction of Kim and she was nice enough to prepare this little package for each of us here. I'm hoping that everything will be done on a consensus basis, rather than anything more formal and that we proceed. We are under a time crunch, I would really like to see us start today and get some decisions made on the timelines and how we're going to proceed overall in this project.

The items that are on here today are public consultation; location and meeting times; report writing for the select committee and the timelines for completion of the report; and acceptance of the confidential submissions. Any feedback from anybody in the group before we get started of what they'd like to see or not see, how you feel about this? Michel Samson.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Chairman, I would recommend that we use the same format that was done in 2001 regarding meetings and public hearings. Last time it was held in five locales - Sydney, Port Hawkesbury, Yarmouth, Bible Hill and Halifax. I would recommend this committee hold similar meetings in those five locations and if there are others that people wish to suggest so be it, but at a minimum, meetings be held at those five locations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions? Do you want to add a site or change a site? One option on the table is to use the five that were there before.

MR. GARY RAMEY: I would be interested in hearing what the five were again? They went by fairly quickly.

MR. SAMSON: They're in your package. Under Tab 2, Page 3 at the very top, Meetings and Public Hearings, and there were both afternoon and evening sessions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In those communities?

MR. SAMSON: In those communities, yes.

MS. MICHELE RAYMOND: Were these the same sites that had been used the time before?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. RAMEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not objecting to those by the way, but I was just wondering, I didn't see any for the entire South Shore there. I thought maybe there should be a location somewhere along the South Shore of the province which seems not to be very close to any of those other places - well Halifax, I guess is closer. There is one in Yarmouth, is there not? Yes, well maybe we don't need an intervening one then, I don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Raymond.

MS. RAYMOND: Mr. Chairman, certainly I understand you're using population centres, but I'm just wondering, because I haven't had a chance to review this, whether those five sites have been

used from time immemorial or whether they just happen to be the most recent five sites?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: If I could just help with that. Keep in mind we're only determining what the criteria of the boundaries commission are going to be. That commission will then go out and hold much more extensive meetings in more locales, or at least it has the option of doing so. The idea back 10 years ago, or more than 10 years ago, was to be able to have it go around the province in at least five different locations, have the feedback for this committee, and then allow the commission itself to determine whether it wanted to add more communities in that.

At the same time, we all realize we have very busy schedules and it's going to be a challenge for us to be able to find locations in those communities in order to do this, in order to meet the reporting requirements of December 31, 2011, in order to establish the commission. I don't think it was meant to be a slight to any communities, I think you can point to various parts of the province and you could say that they may not be covered under this but hopefully, once the commission is in place, they will have an opportunity to hold many more hearings as they will have a much longer time frame than what we have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. RAMEY: I don't have a problem with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, if someone would make a motion - before we do that, we'll go to Mr. Boudreau.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: I just had a quick question with regard to the number of submissions that took place in the various locations because that might give us an idea of the effectiveness of the locations. So is there something to that effect?

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: It's asking for a breakdown.

MR. SAMSON: I don't think it's actually broken down per location . . .

MR. BOUDREAU: No, I'm just wondering in the last report, that's all. That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Preyra.

MR. PREYRA: I move, Mr. Chairman, that we accept the proposal of the member for Richmond and also the idea that when we adopt procedures similar in principle to what was done before, it might just be easier to get consensus and expedite things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There were quite a few in Port Hawkesbury and Yarmouth had a few. Bible Hill had two. (Interruption) Pardon? Well, Truro/Bible Hill - six of one and half a dozen of the other.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: If you make it Truro/Bible Hill, it probably was just at the college is why it says Bible Hill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do we have a consensus on that rather than to beat that issue up and we'll move it forward? (Interruptions) All right.

So the location of meetings and times, why don't we just get those details worked out similar to what the pattern was before. Are there any particular days - I prefer to have a Monday and Friday, looking at the way the House is, if we can start ASAP, or does someone else have a preference? Mr. Preyra.

MR. PREYRA: I'm just wondering, Mr. Chairman, if we should set an end date and then work backwards. I'm sure people have plans for Christmas? It might work better if we go backwards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments or perspectives on that issue?

MS. RAYMOND: I definitely say we should back cast.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: I agree with that. You might want to put the Halifax one last because I think that then it can collect - it's semi-central, and I know it's hard for a lot of people, but it collects anybody who has been missed at that point.

MR. PREYRA: I was thinking of the report-writing dates, and I agree with that too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bain.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. One of the problems that presents itself is if we go on Monday and Friday, a lot of us are gone from our constituency Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. If we could allow at least one day that we could spend a day in our constituency, whether it's a Monday this week and then . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're in the House the whole time. (Interruptions) All right, so I hear that point. Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: I guess it's going to come down to the sooner we can have the clerk's office here, the Committees Office, looking at the availability of space. Last time, if you look at the dates, we tried to get it done as quickly as possible. It pretty much ran almost a week and we got it all done.

I would strongly recommend that in light of the time sensitivities involved here that we may have to possibly look at a Monday to Friday - do five days in one week - and then it's over with as far as having to leave our constituencies. Then we'll have the opportunity to meet and collect the information we've had. I would strongly recommend that we look at getting it done as soon as possible and as quickly as possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, and then we have to look for bad weather as well - not that it seems that way here in Nova Scotia anymore, but the potential is there. All right, so then are we talking roughly - what are we saying here? Be done by November 25th, or December 1st? Kim?

MS. KIM LANGILLE: We have to allow for advertising time, so we have to keep that in mind as well. Yes, it has to get out ahead of the meetings.

MR. YOUNGER: December 1st?

MR. SAMSON: What was the standard for advertising? A week? Two weeks?

MS. LANGILLE: Well, I think it depends on where you're advertising. I think before last time there were ads done in provincial newspapers and then whatever locale you were going to, there would be an ad run in that paper as well. So what the cut-off would be is going to be different for local papers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger said December 1st. Ms. Raymond?

MS. RAYMOND: You would probably know how long the report preparation - the writing and preparation - actually took last time.

MS. LANGILLE: I wasn't here last time, so no, I don't know. I know they had four deliberation meetings and then the report was done.

MS. RAYMOND: All right, fair enough.

MS. LANGILLE: And that's not the public meetings.

MS. RAYMOND: The first week of December might do.

MR. PREYRA: Are you suggesting we finish hearings by December 1st and report by December 15th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to have the report before December 15th - a couple of days, anyway - because there's a rumour. I've just talked to some people today, and they're hoping for the House to be finished around that time, but who knows? We might be here until Christmas.

MR. PREYRA: The report by December 12th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. SAMSON: It's irrelevant whether the House is seating is sitting or not. We can just table it with the Clerk and that meets its requirements.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hebb.

MR. GORDON HEBB: You're not reporting back to the House. This committee is mandated to set the terms of reference. I think that was the distinction from 10 years ago, that the committee may have reported to the House, but you're not reporting back to the House. You're making the decision as to the terms of reference.

MR. YOUNGER: So December 31st?

MR. PREYRA: December 12th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hear December 31st and I hear December 12th.

MR. SAMSON: Oh no, it would be earlier than December 31st.

MR. PREYRA: December 12th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, December 12th. Going once, going twice. Do we have a consensus agreement on that? All in favour?

MR. SAMSON: I just want to point out that that's a Monday. You might want to pick a date a little later in the week in case, for some reason, there's something last minute that comes up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's go with - December 14th was mentioned before. December 13th and 14th.

MR. SAMSON: December 14th is a Wednesday. That should be fine. May I suggest that our public hearings be completed by December 2nd, which is a Friday?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, any other opinions or feelings on that? All right, so what we have agreed upon, if I'm hearing things correctly, is that the hearings be done by December 2nd and the report be completed by December 14th. Clear?

MR. PREYRA: And how much time to be allowed for advertising?

MS. LANGILLE: As I said, that depends on where you're advertising. I spoke to Communications Nova Scotia and I think they can turn around an ad fairly fast, but it's the little local papers, I think - they would have certain cut-offs, and it would depend.

MS. RAYMOND: What would happen if we go to Sydney and Port Hawkesbury at the beginning of a week, Halifax when we can get it, and Yarmouth and Truro in the same bracket? So all in a week.

MR. PREYRA: The 25th would be the earliest available date.

MS. RAYMOND: The 25th.

MR. BOUDREAU: It would allow a week, which is probably the minimum, right?

MS. RAYMOND: I'm suggesting clumping the hearings in a week.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it wouldn't be this Monday, then, right?

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, that's good.

MS. RAYMOND: The week of November 28th to December 2nd.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's too tight.

MS. RAYMOND: Twelve days to look at it.

MR. BAIN: Five days.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've got to have a bad day of weather in there.

MR. BAIN: When you take in Sydney to Yarmouth.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So why don't we look at the end of next week to be in Sydney? Can we do Sydney and/or Yarmouth - one of them or two of them. We can split them up from one week to the other if we get - not that I don't mind going to either place, but . . .

MR. BAIN: I think it makes sense that we space them because of travel.

MR. SAMSON: The other point, Mr. Chairman, if it does help, I know back in 2011 other members of the caucuses would sit in - in case of foul weather, if something happened that someone could not travel. It's been the practice that other members can sit in. As for all of our committees, they can substitute members if necessary. I think we should keep that in mind as well, in case of either weather or other commitments that the named members might have on specific dates or evenings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, can we target anywhere from the 22nd on? December 2nd, I have - well I don't necessarily need to be there, I have another commitment on that afternoon.

MR. SAMSON: I could chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It couldn't be a better person. I think you're glad to recommend yourself. It would be a charm. (Laughter)

MR. PREYRA: So, December 2nd in Halifax?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just to make sure we have clarity before we leave - we're going to try to

attempt to either do Port Hawkesbury and Sydney around the 22nd and 23rd, in that neighbourhood or vice versa, Yarmouth. One end of the province done right up front and get that done, okay? Are we all in agreement? All clear on that.

What's the next thing we have on there? The communications person.

MS. LANGILLE: Just one other item with regard to the meetings. I think they held afternoon and evening meetings - are we doing the same, or just in the evening?

MR. SAMSON: I would recommend that we do the same - that there's an afternoon session that's permitted and then an evening session as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How long are the meetings - one hour or . . .

MS. LANGILLE: I think they were two.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Two hours, okay.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Sometimes you may have a lot of presenters and some nights you may have very few, so give enough time.

MR. SAMSON: I think it was 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

MS. LANGILLE: I guess that's another issue then, how long you want the meetings to be?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not so sure - looking at the list of people who are there and the issues at hand, if you look at the numbers it would be easy to do it in the time frame of an hour and a half each, with the potential of extending it a half hour if we want.

MR. PREYRA: Legislative Counsel is volunteering to keep a list of interveners and stay until they've all . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: What's the feeling there on that? If we put two hours, then we have to stay two hours. If we put an hour and a half and we have to stay two hours, that's okay, and if we have to stay two and a half, that's fine as well. If we advertise two hours, then we're forced - if no one shows in an area or there is no one else there after an hour and a half, why hang around?

MR. SAMSON: I'm trying to see what the ad said last time, if it required people to advise as to whether they're going to make - yes, if you look under Tab 2 it shows the ad that went out, and it said that individuals and organizations wishing to present views to the committee are invited to attend a public meeting, to please advise the committee in advance by calling toll free before.

So, if I'm not mistaken, we had a sense of who was coming to present beforehand. I think we can be reasonable if there's no one lined up to show, I don't think the committee has to stay there for two hours knowing no one is going to show. At the same time, if we have to go a bit overtime because of the presentations, I think we're all flexible enough to be able to do that as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: I'm just wondering, the way that ad is worded, I agree to stay longer, it doesn't matter if there are people there who want to talk, we can hear them, we're already there. If in the event that nobody signs up at a location to speak, say, at an afternoon session, are we all going up to a session that nobody signed up for?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If we advertise, then we have to show.

MR. YOUNGER: No, but the advertisement said you need to register in advance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are going to be some people say that they didn't have time to register and you said you were going to be there. So we're going to be there.

MR. YOUNGER: That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your point is good, though. It's a fair point. Mr. Bain?

MR. BAIN: I would think, Michel, maybe you could comment on this too. When the D250 Committee went around, I think we allowed them an hour and a half at each venue and if it went beyond that, that's what we did.

MR. SAMSON: Yes, I don't think it makes too much difference whether it's an hour and a half or two hours. Again, if you start at 6:00 p.m. and no one is there, only one presenter and that presenter's done, I don't think it's unreasonable to suspect you're going to wrap up for the evening at that point and not just wait around until 8:00 p.m. I think that just sets some time frame, but I don't think we have to worry too much about that.

MR CHAIRMAN: So are we setting an hour and a half time frame or two hours? Any comments on that?

MR. PREYRA: An hour and a half, and prepare for two.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, an hour and a half. Go ahead, Kim.

MS. LANGILLE: Just on the fact that people call in and if they want to make a submission, I think how that has worked in the past is that if you have people who sign up, that's fine, they are to be heard first and then if there are others who show up, they sort of go in a queue and be heard from after the people who have actually taken the time to sign up are heard - just for your information.

MR. BAIN: Yes, I thought that because it is still a public meeting and, although they may not put a submission in, if they're there they have every right to present.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are we done with that issue, then? An hour and a half . . .

MR. PREYRA: Can I just confirm, are there overnight meetings contemplated in here - or how many of them are we expected to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well I suspect you go either to Sydney on the first night and back to Port Hawkesbury, stay one night and drive up the next day to Port Hawkesbury and then continue back.

MR. PREYRA: So that would be the 22nd and 23rd?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That depends - or it may be Yarmouth.

MS. LANGILLE: That's certainly what has happened in the past - if you're kind of far away from Halifax or your home sort of thing, yes, accommodations, the Committees Office looks after that sort of thing and sees that you have a place to stay.

MR. SAMSON: I think the same rules apply as what applies for us through the Speaker's Office. I think if it's beyond 50 kilometres or 100 kilometres, accommodations are provided, I think it's the same idea here. Some nights could end up being later nights.

MR. PREYRA: I was just thinking, if we're having a meeting the evening before and maybe have a meeting the next morning, if we're staying overnight en route to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The issue is that, for example, you leave Sydney you go to Port Hawkesbury, we'd have one in the afternoon, you can spend the three hours on the road and maybe make it earlier in the afternoon.

MR. PREYRA: But is the plan then to go to Truro that evening?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

MR. SAMSON: We have an afternoon and evening session in each spot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then you'd be done with it. Then you could slip Truro in or Yarmouth in, wherever is easier, and then you've got Halifax . . .

MR. SAMSON: The past experience was that it was easier to meet after the submissions had been done, rather than trying to have morning meetings after an evening. It just didn't work because of people's schedules and their commitments. It was much easier just to do it back in the city, after the public hearings had been completed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bring your runners, we'll go for a run in Sydney, a nice place there, then we'll head off to Port Hawkesbury. Ms. Langille?

MS. LANGILLE: Just on the meetings and moving around the province - Legislative TV accompanies these meetings and they need time to set up, so there has to be some time allowed

from removal time, too, between meetings. They have to take their gear into the next place - and probably Hansard, too, I would imagine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, the next issue. I think we're settling it - I apologize, Ms. Raymond.

MS. RAYMOND: No, we were talking about the duration of the individual meetings. Just in reference to that, I'm wondering whether there are sort of traditional constraints on people's presentation lengths, sort of like the Law Amendments Committee? Is there any tradition around that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the 10 minutes that we normally have would be fine. I want to hear their views - I'm just throwing that out there - and allow people some freedom to expand when necessary.

MR. SAMSON: I've never seen it to be a problem because you're going to have some who will be representing organizations that may have longer presentations, whereas an individual may come up and only speak five minutes. I think flexibility there is what is in the best interest.

I would love to say that our committee is going to be flooded with Nova Scotians coming out to discuss their concerns about electoral boundaries, but I think we must be realistic in that I don't see the chairman having to use his gavel to try to fit everybody in during the presentations, unfortunately.

MR. PREYRA: Maybe for committee members.

MR. SAMSON: Quite possibly, there you might need to exact discipline. (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, so we got the time. Now, to Public Consultation Process - Report Writer/Communications Person . . .

MR. YOUNGER: Congratulations, Ross. (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't worry about that. Assign it to me, I'll delegate it - it's pretty easy.

MR. SAMSON: That's usually done internally; that's usually something taken care of here.

MS. LANGILLE: The question is - do you want someone to be doing that end of things?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yes.

MR. SAMSON: Oh, very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A good scribe.

MR. SAMSON: And that person would probably have to follow us to all of our meetings.

MS. RAYMOND: That's what happened in the past.

MR. PREYRA: We'll just get one of the reporters. (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that will be just hunky-dory. Well, the reporters we've got here in this room would do an excellent job. I know you're concerned about ones who aren't here. (Laughter)

MR. YOUNGER: You could just blog the whole thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, so I think if we could identify two people so that, just in case one person is not able to make it, to make sure that they're a team effort. How do you feel about that? What's the feeling there? If we go to one and then for some reason, we don't want them to tie us up.

MR. PREYRA: Is this person to come from CNS? Is that the plan?

MS. LANGILLE: We have a representative from CNS here if they might like to comment.

MS. CARLA BURNS: Hi, I'm Carla Burns, I'm with Communications Nova Scotia. What we will do is assess what the committee's needs are and we'll go back and determine what resources we can provide. In the event that we can't provide resources, then we would look to our standing offer list. So today I'll just take back your information and talk to our senior team and see what we can do for you as a committee and report back through Kim, if that's acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's excellent for me. Just to get a consensus, we will put this type of information processing all through Ms. Langille?

MR. SAMSON: I have no issues with the report writer or Communications Nova Scotia. I do notice that from 2001 we actually had counsel for the committee. Mr. Dwight Rudderham acted as counsel for the committee. Now, I'm not sure if, Mr. Hebb, with the House sitting - two things, do we require counsel for the committee and, number two, do you have someone readily available within your office to provide counsel to the committee?

MR. HEBB: We could certainly provide counsel to the committee. I don't know that it would be necessary for anybody to travel to these locations but certainly once you meet, which I'm assuming you will be meeting back in Halifax to finalize your decision, certainly we can make that available, if you do, and I suspect we could provide someone but I don't know that it would be necessary for someone to go to the hearings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would we be able to consult you directly and channel out any issues?

MR. HEBB: Certainly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we have the Department of Justice staff as well.

MR. HEBB: But certainly someone would attend all your deliberations.

MR. PREYRA: We have three lawyers on the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The role of the lawyer is to be independent of what we're doing, to give that direct advice and the last thing you want is someone internal here giving advice, we certainly take opinions and perspectives.

MR. YOUNGER: Mr. Chairman, I tend to agree with you. We probably don't need a lawyer travelling with us because we're just listening.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: No, just for the meetings when we get back here.

MR. YOUNGER: Yes, when we get back here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some other channel and have that objective and deal with it, okay. Mr. Hebb, are you comfortable with that?

MR. HEBB: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The advertisement, just to come back to the advertisement, there's just a standard formula for that anyway so there are no issues for us sitting here on this regard, or does anyone have a question? Ms. Raymond.

MS. RAYMOND: It seems me that it is important to frame this properly for the public who are being invited to participate in this. Now, if this is a completely standard form of advertisement, I understand that but I think that this whole process is probably pretty darned abstruse and given that this is a committee to listen to people establishing a committee that's going to do something else on process, I think it's important that people understand first of all that they're not actually contributing to an Electoral Boundaries Commission and, strangely enough, people sometimes do get that kind of thing confused.

I would hope that it would be possible to put some sort of a paragraph indicating that this is step one of a multi-step process which actually terminates the day you cast a ballot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So if I'm hearing you correctly, the communication should be outlining in a summary form the process overall. Does anybody else have an opinion on that?

MR. SAMSON: If you can put that in writing, good luck, you know. (Interruptions) At the end of the day, you have an ad like this going into the paper. So there's only so much information you can provide in that kind of ad. In fact, I'm not sure if we actually need the list of the members who are on it. That might give you more space but there's not much opportunity other than through the communications made, whether it's through the radio or the papers would do a write-up there possibly but as far as the ad itself, you've got limited space there to put information on a good day, but that can certainly be clarified through the communications that come from the commission.

MS. RAYMOND: And it could be as simple as layout.

MS. LANGILLE: The committee that went around in 1991. In your package is a copy of that ad, and in there they had a little paragraph which says that it is not the select committee's function to determine the constituency boundaries for an electoral redistribution, and that will be the task of the electoral boundaries commission, which will hold public hearings. So that kind of sums it up.

MS. RAYMOND: Yes, that's pretty clear.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MS. LANGILLE: So you'd like something like that included in the ad if at all possible.

MS. RAYMOND: I would. I don't know how everyone else feels.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Preyra.

MR. PREYRA: Just another question on that - and I know we don't want to do all of this in a big group like this, but the committee should invite submissions. There should be something at the top that says, "This is inviting submissions and this is what the committee is about" - not what the committee is not about, but this committee is seeking views on - it's a more positive way of putting it.

MR. BAIN: I think if you look at the ad that we see here, it pretty much tells of an all-party select committee of the Nova Scotia Legislature that is seeking public input on the terms of reference for a commission. Then it goes on and says: The select committee does not determine the redistribution of electoral - it's all there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So on that, what's different today from yesterday is that we have different communication, different methods. We should be accepting information from people through Twitter or whatever types of lines, or Facebook. Is there something we should be setting up there?

MS. BURNS: Do you want me to speak to it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe our communications person would like to speak again, please?

MS. BURNS: Whoever is providing your communication support will develop a communication strategy. In addition to the ads last time, we also issued news releases and we have the government Web site where we can post a feature on that main page which will direct people to the government Web site. In addition, we can look at social media and a number of other options for getting the message out to the public.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So before it comes to par, Mr. Younger, you're saying that the communications person getting on this by tomorrow will work up a strategy for us? Would that

be a fair time, within the next 24 to 48 hours?

MS. BURNS: I have to go back and discuss with our team as to who that person will be, but we will look to put something in place fairly soon in order to meet your deadlines, yes.

MR. YOUNGER: You'd be good at answering questions here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then is it fair for me as the chairman to ask that, as today is Tuesday, we have a reply back on this outline and where we're going with that by Thursday? Would that be fair?

MS. BURNS: That would be fair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: It is agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Preyra and then Mr. Younger.

MR. PREYRA: Just a quick comment. I know it's probably implied in here, but individuals should probably know that by appearing at the committee or sending a submission by e-mail they will be identified in a list of people making submissions, that they will be public submissions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's deal with that point now, and then we'll come to Mr. Younger. I think the issue is, should we accept reports from people who aren't identified? What is the general consensus here?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: They need to be identified as a group.

MR. SAMSON: I've never seen anyone else do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And from where I sit, I think that's a positive step.

MR. PREYRA: But they should also know that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, they should know that upfront. Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: I was just going to say, I think your comment - Facebook, Twitter, whatever else is out there by the time this is done - makes sense. The most recent ad from the last one gives direction for comments by e-mail and also the government Web site for it. If that is done - I think it's probably covered in that last ad that was done, and obviously the links for all those options could be there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Twitter and Facebook weren't there in the last one.

MR. YOUNGER: No, but there's a link, and I don't think you need to put Twitter and Facebook

and everything in the ad. I think you could just have that link available on whatever that Web site is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, so . . .

MS. LANGILLE: What about the deadline for submissions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're talking deadlines from the public?

MS. LANGILLE: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I think that's a good point. The issue with a deadline for submissions to the committee is, if we're looking to cut off the consultation on December 2nd, is that a fair time to say that submissions would be done at the same time so that we have a consistency of pattern and timelines?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes, agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed?

MS. LANGILLE: End of the day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: End of the day, so that means when the clock strikes 11:59 p.m., they've got one minute. Okay, acceptance of the confidential submissions?

MR. HEBB: It's up to the committee.

MR. YOUNGER: No, I thought we just decided that was . . .

MR. HEBB: I thought you just decided against that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I just wanted to make sure I tick it off here. All right, we're clear on that.

MS. LANGILLE: So all information that is received - in a public forum, submissions, via written communication, e-mail, whatever - is deemed to be public.

MR. HEBB: And the question is, I guess, how public do you want to make it? For example, the Law Amendments Committee now, not only is it public, not just available in the Library, but the Library puts it on their Web site, which makes it much more public than if it was just somewhere where you could go and find it. So I don't know to what extent the committee is going to want to make it public.

MR. SAMSON: I can't remember last time if the submissions we received were actually attached to the report or if they were just listed. If they're not, I don't see a reason to include them this time. We can simply list who made presentations and I'm sure their submissions will be all part of our deliberations in the final report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. d'Entremont.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I'm just wondering, is it acceptable, especially with e-mail communication, to have "joeblow@hotmail.com"? That could be anybody, anywhere, so is there going to be a little more of a requirement to actually have a name and address attached to that e-mail as well?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have to identify the person, yes. As we're talking about this, accepting things by e-mail, should we define that they have to have a Nova Scotia address and be a Nova Scotia citizen?

MR. YOUNGER: Anybody can make a submission but we can decide the relative weight based on where they live.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are we all comfortable with that? Ms. Langille.

MS. LANGILLE: I just have a question. What if someone sends something and they have confidential on it? How will that be dealt with? Will it just be returned?

MR. YOUNGER: Maybe they should have read the ad.

MR. PREYRA: Send it back to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we have some discussion a little bit on the issue of confidentiality, what that means here? Mr. Ramey.

MR. RAMEY: I agree with what Mr. Younger said - I don't know if his mike was on or not. We're telling people that this is a public process and when they submit something it's public, and they have to know that. If we get it in the ad, that covers it as far as I'm concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: If we do receive something that's marked as that, I think this committee can have a look at it in camera and make a determination as to whether it's something that, for whatever reason, should be treated as confidential or whether we just advise the individual organization that we're not going to accept it on a confidential basis. I think the committee can deal with that as we move forward, I don't think we need to set too many parameters on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess there are two stages, now that you've framed that point that way. The confidentiality of someone submitting something and us having accepting it, looking at it and then determining its weight rather than letting the public see it at that point. Where do we stand on that?

MR. SAMSON: If necessary, if we have to have an in camera meeting to deal with an issue, then so be it. If it's something of that nature, you have three Parties represented here so we'll police

ourselves as to what should be made public and what shouldn't. I have no fears that we're going to spend an extended period of time in camera dealing with these matters.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: Not to belabour this, but I would just add that it is important for people to understand we're just establishing the terms of reference for a committee. I can't for the life of me imagine what kind of submission somebody would have that would need to be confidential, just in terms of setting the rationale for a committee. Maybe in the next phase that future committee may have reasons to set confidential items but . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may be absolutely right, just from where we're at here tonight, trying to feel out as to us getting an understanding of where we're going so we have some kind of a direct focus together, collectively, so it's good to discuss those points.

MR. BAIN: Just what Andrew said - that's why it's very important that we spell out clearly what the mandate of this committee is so that we're not receiving suggested boundaries.

MS. RAYMOND: Actual submissions of boundaries - I think that's what I'm trying to say. I think it's really going to save everybody a great deal of grief.

MR. HEBB: You are not just determining the terms of reference; you're determining who's going to be on the commission. You conceivably could get an e-mail from somebody wanting to remain anonymous or whatever saying whatever you do, don't appoint John Brown or Mary Smith to the commission. They may not want that to be public.

MS. RAYMOND: I quite honestly wouldn't want to encourage anonymous submissions of that sort. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hebb.

MR. HEBB: One way you could deal with that would be to direct Ms. Langille that if anything was marked "confidential" she was to send it back and say that it wouldn't be considered by the committee. She wouldn't pass it on to you. That's one way to deal with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions so far? Ms. Langille.

MS. LANGILLE: Do we have agreement on that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS. RAYMOND: Do we need a motion on that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think - I assume, as stated here, that we're working on a consensus model. If we have to go to a vote on something we'll do that when that time comes, but if we can make as much on a consensus basis, I think we're better off at this time. Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: One of the outstanding matters to be dealt with is that in the past we've had presentations made to us in French, and it was an issue as to the fact that only certain members were able to understand the presenters. It raises the question, which I think has been raised here, as to whether we will have translation services made available.

If I can put in my two cents, I would recommend that the ad should say that, where requested, they should advise the Committees Office that they intend to make a presentation in a different language, and therefore the Committees Office can prepare for that - that being that we don't have to bring in translation services everywhere if they are not being requested. It would cut down on costs, and I would suspect that you would probably see only one or two of the meeting areas that will request presentations made in French - possibly Yarmouth, if I had to guess, and possibly Halifax.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

MR. YOUNGER: Are you suggesting that we make a note to say that if you are going to require translation services, let us know so we can arrange them?

MR. SAMSON: Yes.

MR. YOUNGER: So that should be in the ad.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. RAMEY: That was done the last time, was it, Mr. Samson?

MR. SAMSON: I'm trying to remember what was done, and I think we'd have to go back. I think we actually were in a situation where they made the presentations in French and there were only one or two members on the committee who understood, because there was no translation. That was 10 years ago, so we've come a long way in 10 years.

At the time I think it wasn't practical to even be able to pull it off, whereas we've already done it in the Red Room now with the Law Amendments Committees, so it's much more realistic to do it now. But again, it would be a requirement that they have to serve notice beforehand. There's no use hauling translation everywhere if we don't need it.

MR. RAMEY: I wasn't asking because I was opposed. I was just wondering if they had done it before, and that sounds like a reasonable approach to it.

MR. SAMSON: That's something that I'm sure that Mr. MacInnes from Legislative TV can probably assist as we do our deliberations here. I don't think we have to make a decision on that tonight, but that might be something that can be discussed with the Chair. If we need to have another meeting to discuss that issue, if there's something outstanding there that needs to be dealt with, then so be it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Langille.

MS. LANGILLE: On the translation thing, I don't think it has been done in the past, to my understanding. I think the most recent select committee was maybe back in 2008 or 2009. I don't think it was done.

I think if they have a written presentation that's in French, it can be translated, or vice versa, here. The other thing that Kim mentioned was if people are contacting us and saying "I'd like to present in French" or whatever language, we need advance notice of that if we are to put the services there to be able to translate it. That becomes an issue as well.

MR. SAMSON: I'm almost prepared to guarantee that you are going to receive presentations in French, due to the fact that we have protected ridings in this province for Acadians. I have no doubt it is going to happen, so it's not a question of "if." It will, and unlike other select committees, this one specifically deals with an issue that's quite close to the Acadian community, so that's why I believe it would be appropriate for us in this day and age to have that service available, once it is indicated that that is going to be requested.

MS. RAYMOND: I assume this is something that would be placed in the advertisement, that translation services are available on request. But of course, this presents the question of how many French speakers are going to respond to an ad in English, so who will be translating the ad?

MR. SAMSON: CNS will run the ad in our French dailies and French weeklies and the radios and everything else.

MS. RAYMOND: Great, okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does anyone else have a question on this? Were you looking to say something?

MR. JAMES MACINNES: I'm Jim MacInnes from Legislative Television. My concern would be if we were to travel from Sydney to Port Hawkesbury, I believe it's about two hours travel time. Depending on weather conditions, to arrive and be set up - and I believe you're talking about a 2:00 p.m. meeting - I don't think it would be possible to have a set-up any earlier than 2:00 p.m.

We'd have to have an interpretation booth set up on site at that location, for example in Port Hawkesbury, and have interpreters available in that area. The only interpreters that I'm aware of are in New Brunswick. There are some on standing offer but I have not worked with those people. There are significant costs associated with that as well, but that's the primary concern.

MS. RAYMOND: There are no interpreters in Nova Scotia?

MR. MACINNES: The only interpreters that we've worked with that were in Nova Scotia have moved to New Brunswick. There are some on the standing offer but from my understanding they

are not accredited as part of the interpreters association.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, on this issue then, if we could allow Communications Nova Scotia and Ms. Langille to follow up on the logistics and the possibilities of that and what the barriers might be. We are under a tight timeline but the issue is not quite a simple one of yes or no. I think we need to do some exploration there. We can talk further here on the issue but we won't really resolve it. Any other points that we want to raise tonight? Mr. Bain.

MR. BAIN: Thank Mr. Chairman, I'm just wondering about the newspaper ads that we are taking out. Are we going with every newspaper that serves a particular community or do we go with the major - I'll use Cape Breton as an example - do we go with the Cape Breton Post and the ChronicleHerald or do we go with those two and include the Victoria Standard, The Inverness Oran? So I guess we should decide that as to how far we go.

MS. BURNS: Placement of ads will depend on what your budget is, what you have to spend. Our adverting team would look at all of the meeting locations and look at where is the best placement for the ads based on what your budget is. So typically, in Cape Breton for example, it would be in the Cape Breton Post and radio. Usually it has been in the smaller papers but again, it depends on what your budget is for advertising and we'll work around that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Ms. Langille, who do we get to establish the budget, does that go through the Speaker's Office?

MS. LANGILLE: Essentially yes. I've got some numbers that have been pulled together based on what happened in the past and that kind of stuff, but yes, we kind of figure a number and then it has to be approved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay and how long will that take to develop that?

MS. LANGILLE: I guess it depends on, you have to decide on the adverting then. Do you want it in all the papers? It all depends on the kinds of information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well with the electronic information that we have today, will it be necessary to put it in every single newspaper? At the same time, let's have some discussion on that, I just throw that out not as a position but just as a starting point. Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: In light of the fact that you're only meeting in five locations, I think you really have no choice but to hit all of the dailies and weeklies that are available in Nova Scotia. The last thing we want is people to say that they had no means of knowing in their community and plus the fact we're only meeting at five locations, which could pose a challenge in itself.

I think in this case, just for all of our interests, the more avenues that we use to get the message out, I think, is in our best interest and hopefully any Nova Scotian who is interested will have their regular means of communication touched through the advertising. So I would certainly recommend we go larger than smaller on this just because of the importance of the issue and the fact that we're only meeting in five locations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Mr. Preyra.

MR. PREYRA: I'm just thinking one start may be to issue a press release based on this discussion tonight outlining dates so that the media can give people an advanced warning that we will be meeting this week and we'll be reporting at this time, so there will be a general expectation to look for meetings.

MR. BAIN: Coming soon to a town near you. (Laughter)

MR. PREYRA: Yes, at least there will be a little bit of a heads-up, but I agree completely with the member for Richmond that we do need to advertise as broadly as we can.

MR. SAMSON: It's a bit of a challenge because we have to give the Committee's Office time to actually identify locations, identify their availability. I think to try to put out dates now would be premature; although I'm sure they'll do their best to get us something as quickly as possible. I would suggest that to avoid confusion, let's make sure we have the dates and the locations settled before we put any communication on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: From a communication perspective are you comfortable with where we are?

MS. BURNS: I would agree with that, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, there's a consensus at the table. I don't know what else to discuss with regard to that because we're starting to go in circles then. Are there any other issues we need to bring to the table tonight? Mr. Bain and then Mr. Younger.

MR. BAIN: I wanted to bring up one more thing, Mr. Chairman. We just talked budget and Kim made reference to depending on what we want. Will the committee participate in the budget process or is it just going to be through the Committee's Office that it's done? Again, I'm going to reference the democratic process committee that we had - the committee determined the budget. I don't think it matters, but as long as we're clear on what we're going to do with it, I guess.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On that point, does someone else want to engage in that particular point before I move to Mr. Younger? Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: If I can make a suggestion. What we did in that case is we created a subcommittee which was just the chairman and a representative from the two other caucuses that basically dealt with some of these internal matters, rather than having to bring all the committee together in light of the scheduling issues, especially now with the House sitting.

May I suggest the chairman may want to look at establishing a subcommittee of three members - himself and a representative from the other two caucuses - who would be able to make decisions on this, non-binding if there are concerns about votes being taken, but could on a consensus basis agree to some of these matters without needing the entire committee to meet on that, and the

budget certainly could be one of those matters.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other comments with regard to that issue?

MR. PREYRA: I think there is a model in Public Accounts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't really see this as a complex matter anyway because the Speaker's Office will come up with a tentative figure and if we're not satisfied with it, we can go back to them and just ask for . . .

MS. LANGILLE: That's certainly what has happened before, sort of numbers were pulled together and a draft budget was prepared - like, this is what we think we're going to spend and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: As long as we have an upper and a lower number, then we probably have some leeway in there. The best we can come in with the most efficient cost, of course, we all agree on that part.

Mr. Younger, you have your point.

MR. YOUNGER: This is very brief, but we're doing an afternoon and an evening. Just looking at last time it was 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and I assume 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., I guess, but it started at 7:00 p.m. I only raise it because the gentlemen from Leg. TV had mentioned two o'clock. Are we going to set preferred times? I think we said an hour and a half was what we were going to advertise, so 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and even 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. would probably make a lot of sense. If we were doing Bible Hill or Truro, we could choose to come back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The real question, I'm thinking, with the second time at night, the client we're trying to serve is a family trying to get through lunch hour and then get the kids ready for school and things like that, so that's why the 7:00 p.m. comes in versus the 6:30 p.m.

MR. YOUNGER: That's fine, you can do 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., but the afternoon going from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. allows people to do it on their way home from work too.

MR. SAMSON: It makes it easier for Leg. TV.

MR. YOUNGER: Well, Leg. TV, as well, but it also allows people with a kid - in my case if I was coming, I'd go on my way home from work as opposed to evening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anybody else have a comment on that particular point? Do we have a consensus on that? Excellent, we can move forward.

I don't really see anything else that we need to capture tonight. I'm open to anything else that someone wants to raise.

MR. SAMSON: Do you want to establish a subcommittee in case you need to deal with some . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's do that right now. The Liberal representative will be Mr. Samson and from the Progressive Conservatives that will be Mr. Bain. I have difficulty with those two selections. (Laughter) You have two Cape Bretoners and that dominates (Interruptions) That's fine - excellent.

All right, is there a tentative time we want to have another meeting?

MS. LANGILLE: Are we going to have another meeting before we go on the road?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Of course, we should.

MS. LANGILLE: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we'll organize that and get back to you. (Interruptions)

The meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 5:25 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES
COMMISSION

Friday, November 18, 2011

COMMITTEE ROOM 1

Organizational Meeting

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES
COMMISSION

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)

Mr. Gary Ramey

Ms. Michele Raymond

Mr. Leonard Preyra

Mr. Jim Boudreau

Hon. Michel Samson

Mr. Andrew Younger

Hon. Chris d'Entremont

Mr. Keith Bain

[Mr. Gary Ramey was replaced by Mr. Howard Epstein.]
[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Mr. Jim Morton.]

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Legislative Committee Clerk

Mr. Gordon Hebb
Legislative Counsel

Mr. James MacInnes
Legislative Television and Recording Services

Mr. Robert Kinsman
Hansard Reporting Services

Ms. Carla Burns
Communications Nova Scotia

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES
COMMISSION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2011

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, we'll now call this meeting to order. We have just a few things on

our agenda this morning and we'll be out of here by 9:00 a.m. at the very latest. The first part is information on items such as listing of meeting date and venues and that's attached here along with the list of hotels. We're going to ask that members provide their cell numbers and the best e-mail address to get hold of you at. Maybe we'll pass the sheet around to do that.

MS. KIM LANGILLE: Or they can have staff email me, or whatever. I do have some of it, but on the road it may be helpful in case we have to get hold of somebody on short notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have mine then.

MS. LANGILLE: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions with regard to that? We will see that Kim gets the complete list of that information. Welcome, Mr. Younger.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Sorry I'm late.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's fine. We just talked about the information items and we're making sure the coordinator for the committee has all your cell phone information and your best e-mail to get hold of you to make sure information is getting out.

I'd also encourage, just between us, that we have information just to confirm with the other parties within our group that they have it too in case there's a mix up. If you know something, or you are meeting, just reconfirm with them that you are meeting, like yesterday, Mr. Samson came to me and reminded me about this morning's meeting, that it starts at 8:00 a.m. That was excellent. It kept me on my toes.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: And you were on time. (Laughter)

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: I'm blaming a two-year-old. (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: When you have a two-year-old or a four-year-old, anything is up for last minute change, that's for sure.

The next item for discussion is the approval of the Select Committee advertisement package. There are the print ads, the press release, the radio script, the signage and the online. I'll turn that over to Kim.

MS. LANGILLE: As you can see in the package, we have the print ad and the only comment I'll make about the print ad is, the ad I've put in your package shows all the venues. When it goes out to the various local papers, I call them, it would only advertise what's happening in that area. So, typically when we are down in Sydney there would be maybe Port Hawkesbury and Sydney - and Carla can explain that further - and there are separate ads for each separate area that we're going to in addition to this, in those various papers. I think all the information there is standard. I don't know if anyone has any comments on that.

The press release is kind of important. I think Minster Landry has signed off on his comments on there. I don't know if anybody else has anything they want to add. I circled and put question marks in a couple of places. I just noticed that the postal code was wrong, so that's a minor deal. I circled the presentations for special needs and to present in French - you must provide advance notice by calling the toll free number - I circled that because, depending on what happens here today, that may or may not have to be changed in some manner, so I just wanted to highlight that.

The only other thing that I noticed was where there's a question mark, it says the Select Committee on Establishing Electoral Boundaries will report their findings to the House by December 31st. I didn't know if that actually had to be in there because according to Gordon, it's worded slightly different this time, the resolution, so I don't know if that has to be there or not.

MR. YOUNGER: I would think that just the commission will report their findings by December 31st.

MS. LANGILLE: Ok.

MR. GORDON HEBB: The report can be to the House. All I'm pointing out on the difference with before is that the committee, this time, makes the determination; they should tell the House what that determination is. Last time, they made a recommendation to the House and then the House had to accept the report and make it official. That's the subtle difference, but the report should go to the House so it is put somewhere on the record.

MS. LANGILLE: We would just take out "to the House" and just say, "report their findings by December 31st." Is that fine?

MR. CHAIRMAN: So who do you report it to if you don't define the House?

MR. HEBB: It can still be reported to the House, it can be by way of filing with the Clerk - "report it to the House" doesn't necessarily mean it's tabled in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Rather than getting too semantical on the issue . . .

MR. HEBB: It's not a legal document, this is just an advertisement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments?

MR. PREYRA: Did we look at "will" as a possible problem?

MR. YOUNGER: We would be required by the resolution to do it no later than that date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So what's the debate here, whether it says "to the House" or "not to the House"?

All right, six of one and half a dozen of the other. Make a decision and put it in. (Interruptions)

MR. YOUNGER: Leave it the way it is, then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. All in agreement? Ok.

MS. LANGILLE: Next up, the radio scripts which are, again - I don't think anyone has any issue. There are examples there of what is going to be run in each locale.

MR. YOUNGER: Is there a French radio script?

MS. LANGILLE: There is a French radio script, I'm assuming. I don't have it.

MS. CARLA BURNS: Yes, there will be. We don't have it here, they translate it for us.

MS. LANGILLE: And then we just have our sign that we put outside of the venues, which is really not all that exciting. We're going to be doing on-line ads this time and maybe Carla might speak to how that's going to work.

MS. BURNS: The on-line ads just include, very high level, what it is and will link to the other information. They'll start running when people go on the Herald and the Metro site, they can click on the ad and read it from there. So it will run all of next week and we'll be able to measure it. You'll be able to know, after the ads are completed, how many people clicked on them and read them, so it's a very effective tool for getting to a large audience - and that's in addition to the print ads that will run in the daily papers.

MR. SAMSON: Can I suggest that ad, if we can have access to that for our own Facebook sites and that, so t we can post it on our own sites, just go get the message.

MS. BURNS: Most certainly. Are you talking about the on-line ad or the print ads?

MR. SAMSON: I guess a bit of both.

MS. BURNS: Okay, I'll check on that. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Morton.

MR. JIM MORTON: Mr. Chairman, will the print ads only run in daily papers?

MS. LANGILLE: They're running in dailies and weeklies.

MR. MORTON: Okay, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other - Mr. Bain.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Chairman, just one question. I'm assuming the radio ads are based on the ratings. I notice there is only one for Sydney and that's The Giant. I don't know if The Eagle

would be included in that - and we also have the three Maritime broadcasting stations in Sydney, so I'm just wondering why The Giant was chosen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can choose one, we could choose two, I guess.

MS. BURNS: It's my understanding from our advertising section that they have the highest ratings. With some of the community newspaper ads, we missed the deadlines on some of them because of the timing sensitivity. We were able to get them into some of the community newspapers, but the ones that we couldn't, the radio ads and the daily ads will cover off in those areas.

MR. BAIN: That's fine, I thought that was the reason, but I just wanted to make sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Mr. Morton?

MR. MORTON: Could I ask another question about advertising? Now that I've looked at the list, I'm just recognizing for weekly papers, which serve much of rural Nova Scotia, the only ones that have been selected seem to be in those areas where the hearings are being held, but yet I would think there may be people from across the province who might be interested in presenting to this commission. I don't know if there's a reason why other weeklies wouldn't have been looked at.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well I guess when you look at around the province, that's where the Herald comes in or the Cape Breton Post, to get the best bang. Mr. d'Entremont?

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Well just on that same issue, let's say the Yarmouth Vanguard for example, since Yarmouth is the only southwestern one, we would hope that people from Shelburne and people from Digby would be travelling to Yarmouth in order to participate. The Yarmouth Vanguard does not cover those two other counties for these kinds of things, so I'm just wondering why you wouldn't use the Digby Courier and the Shelburne Coast Guard as well for something like that. I'm just wondering, because you're trying to draw from a bigger area - and I agree with Jim.

MS. BURNS: These ads are based on what was done the last time. In addition, as I said earlier, we have missed some of the community paper deadlines and it was felt that The ChronicleHerald would cover off in those other areas around the province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about the on-line? Does that add to the exposure as well?

MS. BURNS: Yes, most certainly. It's on-line through the ChronicleHerald and through the Metro.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the individual MLAs Web sites and stuff, okay. Are we okay with this?

MS. BURNS: I can certainly go back and check into whether or not we can reach some of those other community newspapers and give you a price for those, but I don't know about booking -

we were really on a tight deadline for booking the space, and we have the space booked for these papers right now.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Well, Yarmouth's next week, so you're actually there . . .

MS. BURNS: Yes, you almost need two weeks in advance for booking, so we were really on a tight schedule.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I got a guy to call, you're alright.

MS. LANGILLE: But we can go ahead with what we have now and Carla will check.

MS. BURNS: I'll check today.

MS. LANGILLE: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, excellent. The next issue is on the special needs, like sign language and French interpretative services.

MS. LANGILLE: The only comment that I wanted to make is with regard to the sign language interpretation. We have called some folks, and for the dates that we need and the short notice, there's no one available for the person that we called, and it's the Society of Deaf & Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians. They're connected with all kinds of people, and I've tried to contact her again to see if maybe there is some other way to get in touch with other people, but her initial comments were that they couldn't have people available for the dates that we had. That's my understanding. She was going to do further checking, but I haven't been able to get back in contact with her since. So that becomes an issue. I don't know how you want to address that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments?

MR. SAMSON: I would get something in writing from them saying that they've been requested and that it was impossible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good idea. We want to show that we tried.

MR. SAMSON: And even if there was - I don't know if there's a way of contacting the local areas. I would be surprised if there wouldn't be a volunteer or something even in the area. I don't think we're asking for a top professional, but someone who at least can make sure that the communication is there, if there are even ways of checking in the various locations we're going to. Again, the question will be, people are being asked to let us know beforehand.

MS. LANGILLE: Yes.

MR. SAMSON: I would hate to see someone show up and us not have anything at all for them.

MS. LANGILLE: I think her concern was that for the kind of presentations that people may be

making, you need a certain qualified individual to be able to sign in that manner. That was how it was explained to me, anyhow, so that was a bit of the issue as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: I just wonder if somebody does call and register to appear and requires an interpreter, how are we going to handle that? In that case we've been notified.

MS. LANGILLE: Yes, that's my point. It's hard to say in the ad that you're providing something if you don't know that you can provide it. That's my concern.

MR. YOUNGER: I mean, it's obviously a different issue if somebody shows up and didn't let us know.

MS. LANGILLE: Exactly.

MR. YOUNGER: I mean, then if they show up and they do . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the real issue is that if we can't establish someone, then we can't advertise it, but if somebody has a special interest, let us know, and we can discuss it with them in that regard.

MS. LANGILLE: And maybe it's just a fine-tuning to the ad to say - I'm not quite sure what it says now, but if it's something to the effect of "please contact us to discuss any special needs" and then at that point we could say, "well, we don't have anyone in that area but we have someone in this area," or whatever the case may be. I don't know if that's a good way to address it or not.

MR. YOUNGER: It may be we do address it in that if we can't find somebody. If somebody calls and requires that, they may have somebody themselves that we might be able to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: That goes back to Kim's point to discuss. We're open to that. Okay on that issue? Now, the next point?

MS. LANGILLE: Just the French interpretation services, that kind of gets into the budgeting, so I don't know if you want to jump into that or if you want to deal with . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's approximately a \$2,000 cost to do Port Hawkesbury and to do Yarmouth.

MS. LANGILLE: Would there be any other locations?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Halifax, so we're looking at roughly three.

MS. LANGILLE: Three locations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. d'Entremont.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I just had the opportunity last night when we launched the new Web site over at the House of Assembly to speak to the president of the Acadian Federation. They were for sure going to be presenting at one, and he was pushing the local associations to make some presentations in a couple of the areas, so chances are it would be Yarmouth and Port Hawkesbury. I would probably see three presentations from them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And how does that affect our budget overall, it's roughly about \$3,000 then - \$3,500?

MS. LANGILLE: Yes, roughly. I mean it reduces our budget because the numbers that we have there are for providing it in all of them but if . . .

MR. YOUNGER: Why wouldn't we do it in all of them?

MR. SAMSON: I think you have to wait to see who requests it and then you have to adjust according.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: We're budgeting for three.

MS. LANGILLE: I think that the issue is, though, that these people need to know and if we can say, well yes, we're going to provide in these locations, then they can be prepared to show there and they know that, yes, we have to be there. Because we have pay them irrespective of whether they show up or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. d'Entremont.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I was also wondering, and I'm just reading through the Hansard costs as well, where there is recoverables here through the Canada/Nova Scotia agreement on official languages, that you should be able to recoup some of these costs as well, not just the Hansard costs, but probably some of the translation costs through the office. You might want to hook-up with Vaughne just to ask. Like I said, it wouldn't just be Hansard, it would be other costs associated with consulting with the Acadian communities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So what's the feeling here of the group - to establish that we have them in the locations that were mentioned: Port Hawkesbury, Yarmouth and Halifax, and if there's a need to expand that, but to stay within that budget structure, or what's the feeling?

MR. SAMSON: What do you do if someone wants to make a presentation in Sydney or Truro, because you've got Acadian communities in both of those areas, you've got Acadian schools in both of those communities? How do you tell them that they can't make a presentation there that they have to go somewhere else to make a presentation?

MR. CHAIRMAN: How much is in the budget for . . .

MS. LANGILLE: I have basically \$8,800 for translation French, for the interpretation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Alright, what if we ask for notice and no one gives notice that they're going to come and speak French.

MS. LANGILLE: I think that's the issue that either you have to have somebody or you don't have to have someone. I think the cost . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I understand, the service was provided the last time but no one spoke in French. I suspect it will be different this time.

MS. LANGILLE: That may be the case. Certainly in 2001 I don't think anyone spoke in French.

MR. SAMSON: They did at the hearings but there were only some of us could actually understand what they were saying.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: There was you and there was Neil, and there was somebody else in the group.

MR. SAMSON: Paul MacEwan.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Right.

MS. LANGILLE: Yeah, okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Alright so we'll go ahead with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that the consensus or what's the feeling here?

MR. SAMSON: The headaches caused are much greater than the costs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So do we have consensus that we'll go ahead and offer the service in all areas?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, agreed. The report writer and communications person, the person named is?

MS. LANGILLE: Maybe Carla might want to speak to that. There was some concern, we thought they had somebody within their organization and then they had to go outside.

MS. BURNS: We did look internally to see if we had a communications resource that would travel with the committee and write the report but unfortunately, due to demands and commitments and where the House is sitting, we didn't have an internal resource. So we went to our standing offer list, which is made up of communications professionals to provide a variety of services to government.

Given the short time frame we approached probably four or five people who were not available but we were able to get somebody, Ms. Moira Macleod, for a budget of \$5,000. That would be to travel with the Select Committee, to follow up with any meetings, to write the reports and her expenses would be on top of that. So that's where we are seeking approval to secure Moira, and she's on our standing offer list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments? Mr. Preyra.

MR. PREYRA: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I did serve with Moira Macleod on the Democracy 250 Committee and a couple other committees and she has worked in all party contexts and done a very good job. She would be a good suggestion for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do we have a consensus? Done. Thank you very much. The next issue is, now that we have the language issue and special needs and other and the communications completed, is the budget itself and the amount there. Any issues or questions concerning the budget?

MS. LANGILLE: As you can see, I didn't attach everything. I just attached the items that were the large expenses. A lot of it is just hand scribbles from speaking to people at this point. You'll also notice that for the sign language interpreters, there's no amount there, because we were told we couldn't get someone. I haven't been able to speak with her to see if we were able to get somebody or what that amount would be. That would be in addition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we'll be under the \$20,000 no matter which way we turn on this issue. We should be well under. The budget says \$17,000. Am I correct on that?

MS. LANGILLE: No. That's just advertising. That's just print and media, exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that's just the communications.

MS. LANGILLE: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What's the overall budget?

MR. YOUNGER: Is there a contingency? I'm only asking if there's a contingency because if we do end up - first of all, we've already increased the French interpretation services slightly - not significantly, it sounds like.

MS. LANGILLE: No.

MR. YOUNGER: But if we solve the issue of sign language interpretation or if somebody says, "I can bring my person, but they need \$100," I assume we wouldn't refuse that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm just looking over this. The travel mileage is not your car rental, but when you look at the mileage being used by the members here to cover these distances, it's not budgeted.

MS. LANGILLE: I think that's because it falls under the MLA expense system. That's my understanding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, so it'll go under the MLA rules?

MR. YOUNGER: I don't know what the rules are, but being on the other commission, we may have to pass a motion here and we may require the approval of the House of Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we do, because as MLAs, to travel outside of our - I know I do, I bug the heck out of them - to leave your riding you need to get permission. Maybe we'll just get permission from the Speaker's Office confirming that so that there's no ambiguity on that point. It's just a technical thing, and we just want to make sure everything - because on the reporting and on the cost at the end of the day . . .

MR. PREYRA: There's also absence from the House.

MS. LANGILLE: Each one of you would look after that yourself.

MR. BAIN: The only one who would have to request an absence from the House at this point would be the minister, anyway, as long as we make our own caucuses aware.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As I understand the rules - and I do stand to be corrected - each member who is not going to be in the House needs to let the Speaker's Office know, and that can be by e-mail or by any communication, that they will not be in the House. Of course, remember the per diem per day can't be claimed under the House. It'll have to be claimed under the committee. It's little things like that - technical, but just to make sure the bookkeeping is correct.

Maybe the Speaker's Office could be given a copy of who is on the board and the dates of the hearings.

MS. LANGILLE: Just on that, for all committee meetings - select committees, standing committees - an attendance sheet is sent to the Speaker's Office, so they know who was there and who substituted and all that sort of thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As long as they're in the loop. Are there any other questions that we need to know today?

MR. PREYRA: Do we need to go around today and record that Jim is filling in for Michele?

MR. SAMSON: In case you're unavailable for one of the meetings, do you want to appoint one of your colleagues as a vice-chair? So it's clear who's on first if for some reason you're not there?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Who would like to take that role? Mr. Preyra? Thank you.

I want to thank Mr. Morton for coming and thank Mr. Epstein today for filling in for Mr. Ramey.

MS. BURNS: I just wanted to add for your budget, if we do increase advertising to the other community newspapers, that will increase your advertising costs. Just so you're aware of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MS. LANGILLE: So what is the thinking? What contingency would you like to see?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we could ask for \$5,000 and then my goal would be to come under the \$63,000 to start with - and I know the other Parties are certainly as conscious as we are about the dollars. Mr. Preyra?

MR. PREYRA: Just to that point, I think we have agreed in principle with Mr. d'Entremont and Mr. Samson about local advertising. We just have to find the place and the timing and all that. So those are not up in the air - I think we've agreed to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And if it doesn't work out, that's fine. I mean the point is, is there a possibility to do that to expand? And we'll leave it at that.

Is there anything else that we need to bring up for today?

MS. LANGILLE: Well, the budget would be \$68,000 in rough numbers, yes, so that's what I'll - I guess we have to do a letter off to the Management Commission saying we would like this. So is everybody happy with that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the next time we're meeting is Tuesday in Truro?

MS. LANGILLE: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And I would suggest or recommend to the committee members that we be there at least half an hour beforehand. How do you feel about that, like I mean it would give us at least 30 minutes before.

Anything else to discuss? Ms. Langille.

MS. LANGILLE: Just with regard to the print ad and the wording, I know I'm stuck on this, but having to do with how it's going to be worded to deal with special needs and the French issue - is the way it's worded currently acceptable or do we need to make a change? Right now it says: Please contact the committee in advance to discuss any special needs or if you would like to offer a French presentation. Obviously we're providing the interpretation services, so we don't need to say that, or do we need . . .

MR. YOUNGER: French and translation shall be provided.

MS. LANGILLE: Okay, and how are we dealing with this - just "to contact in advance to discuss."

So we can tweet that wording as long as it reflects - okay.

MR. PREYRA: Sorry, Kim, when people call the 1-888, we will also prompt them.

MS. LANGILLE: Yes, would you like to make any comment? Yes, I think that's what happened before. People left comments and suggestions on the 1-888 line. It was all typed up and it was given to the members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many hours is it from Halifax to Yarmouth?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Give yourself three and a half anyway. (Interruptions) I'm just saying give yourselves three and a half.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So if you allow four hours, you have no rush. We're meeting at 3:00 p.m. there, so I can leave at 10:00 a.m. and I have lots of time.

There is nothing further to discuss. I thank you very much for coming at this time of the morning.

The meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 8:33 a.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA

3:00 P.M.

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)
Mr. Gary Ramey
Ms. Michele Raymond
Mr. Leonard Preyra
Mr. Jim Boudreau
Hon. Michel Samson
Mr. Andrew Younger
Hon. Christopher d'Entremont
Mr. Keith Bain

[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Ms. Pam Birdsall.]

WITNESSES

Canadian Taxpayers Federation

Mr. Kevin Lacey

Francophone Community Centre of Truro

Ms. Yvette Saulnier

Ms. Wendy Robichaud

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

Ms. Moira MacLeod
Report Writer

TRURO, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

3:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to these hearings. I have a little dissertation to read here.

My name is Ross Landry and I'm the chairman of this Select Committee on Establishing an Electoral Boundaries Commission. In the interest of public safety, I have been asked to point out the fire exits to the back there and the side, for safety reasons. Sparks sometimes fly in the Legislature, it gets a little heated. If it gets a little heated, I'm fairly confident that if you feel a need to run to the exits, it will not, in all likelihood, be as a result of a fire.

However, in a moment I'll ask my fellow committee members to introduce themselves to you. Before I do that, I would like to provide a little background and briefly comment on the roles of this all-Party committee. Every 10 years, the government is required to examine its electoral boundaries, with a view to making adjustments that, to the greatest degree possible, ensure fair and equitable representation for all of its citizens. Today and over the next week and a half we will be travelling across the province and asking for input on two important questions: who should sit on the Electoral Boundaries Commission and what should be included in the commission's terms of reference?

We are also asking for written and phone-in comments. Essentially, we are step one in a two-step consultative process that is designed to ensure as many Nova Scotians as possible have a direct say in determining what, if any, changes should be made to the province's electoral map. Our goal: to set up an Electoral Boundaries Commission in a way that is open, fair, and non-partisan; to ensure the terms of reference address those issues Nova Scotians deem worthy of consideration - for example, how to address population shifts or to protect communities of interest; and finally, to engage the best people possible to carry out the review.

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With that said, I'd like to thank you for coming here this afternoon. It is a reflection of your interest in, and support for, our democratic process and a tangible demonstration of good citizenship. I also have a few procedural matters that I need to address before we continue with the introduction and begin hearing presentations. First, I would like to point out that this is a public hearing and that it is being recorded by Legislative TV. Presenters should know that the media may be present and that their comments, along with their phone-in or written comments we receive, are a matter of public record and may be included in the final report.

As well, if there is anyone present who did not previously notify the Committees Office of their intention to make a presentation and who now wishes to do so, please let the clerk know - and I'll point out Kim back here - and she will add your name to the list. Also, to ensure we accurately capture your comments, we ask that you begin by stating your name and that you speak clearly into the microphone.

My fellow committee members will now introduce themselves, starting from my right.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. If anyone from the audience wants to speak and hasn't already done so, a community member, you can register with Kim there. Who's the first speaker today? Is it Mr. Lacey?

MS. KIM LANGILLE (Select Committee Clerk): Yes, this lady isn't here yet but Mr. Lacey is here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Mr. Lacey, please come forward to the mike, and you know the procedure to speak into the mike. I don't need to give you any directions; you're very artful at it.

MR. KEVIN LACEY: No, actually I don't know that I know. Please go ahead if you have direction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The direction is just that we speak clearly and that you would state your name.

MR. LACEY: I'll certainly try to speak clearly, Mr. Chairman, thank you. First of all, thank you very much to each of the committee members for having me here today. My name is Kevin Lacey. I'm the Atlantic Director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation has existed for 20 years across Canada. We just began in Atlantic Canada a little over one year ago. We are a group dedicated to lower taxes, less waste in government and more accountable government, which is what brings me here today.

I know that the discussion of the terms of reference for a committee, to set up the terms of reference for another committee, is not something that drums up widespread discussion. With that being said, it is our group's opinion that this presents a unique opportunity, an opportunity to create an effective and smaller Legislature, and that the purpose that we are here today is that we believe it's time for the province to ask the question: how many provincial MLAs are needed for the effective running of a province the size of Nova Scotia?

Therefore, our group would like to make two recommendations, with regards to the terms of reference for drawing up new electoral boundaries. First, we would propose that the terms of reference be set for the committee and that they draw up a maximum of 52 members in the Legislature. By adding the term "maximum" to the terms of reference will allow the independent committee to examine the optimal number of MLAs needed for effective representation of Nova Scotia, as well as efficient running of the legislative functions of government.

Recently, two decisions by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, an independent body, separate from government, decided on the number of municipal politicians needed to represent both the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and the Halifax Regional Municipality. The boards in both cases found that the number of councillors should be reduced without any impact on service, representation, or the decline in legislative functions. The Halifax Regional Municipality took a decline of about 27 per cent of the total number of councillors, while the Cape Breton Regional Municipality took a 25 per cent cut in the total number of councillors.

The level of reductions by the URB has occurred at the municipal level, and now we think it's time for it to happen at the provincial level. If the boundaries were kept the same way as they are today, after the 2012 municipal election in Halifax, there would be about 19 MLAs to represent about 16 municipal districts, which means for the first time we'd have larger municipal districts than we would provincial.

In fact, Nova Scotia is the only province, in the last 22 years in Atlantic Canada, not to reduce the number of politicians within its Legislature. New Brunswick, in 1995, at one time had 58 MLAs; it now has 55. Prince Edward Island had 32 and now it has 27. Newfoundland and Labrador had 52; it now has 47. So the reductions are possible while maintaining and keeping fair representation within the Legislature.

Because of this, and because of the fact that the new electoral boundaries body will be truly independent, like the URB, we believe it's a fair time to have a discussion about the total number of MLAs we need.

The second recommendation we wanted to make today is with regards to minority representation in the Legislature. Our group supports that each Nova Scotian is equal and should be represented as such within the Legislature. As a result, we'd recommend that the province do away with minority representation within its legislative body. In 2009, for example, in the provincial election, the riding of Preston had approximately 8,000 voters, while just down the road, in Bedford-Birch Cove, it had approximately 20,000 total voters within its representation.

In conclusion, we believe that these reforms would create a more effective and better representation for all Nova Scotians and would save taxpayers money. These are the options we would like to put on the table for further discussion. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Just as a point of clarification, with the translation services, is it possible to ask the question in French knowing that it will be translated back into English? With our translator, I take it that's not a problem?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, go ahead.

MR. SAMSON: Merci, M. le Président. Merci, M. Lacey pour ta présentation ici aujourd'hui. Au sujet de la représentation des groupes minoritaires, ici en Nouvelle-Écosse, vous faites la recommandation qu'on abolit les sièges qu'il y a, qui existent, pour les communautés minoritaires ici en Nouvelle-Écosse. Je me demande si votre organisation a eu des discussions avec des groupes minoritaires pour voir quelle était leur impression du succès d'avoir des sièges désignés pour les communautés minoritaires ici en Nouvelle-Écosse?

MR. LACEY: No, we haven't. Frankly, I think our recommendation is due to the fact that we want to see all Nova Scotians treated equally. They should be treated that way, both inside and outside the Legislature.

This was created in 1991, I remember that. Certainly, Nova Scotia has changed significantly since then and there are a number of various minority groups now, with large numbers in the province, so we believe that, ultimately, all ridings should be about similar and hence, treat all Nova Scotians equally.

MR. SAMSON: Je ne suis pas sûr si vous le savez ou pas, mais comme qu'il existe maintenant, même si on n'a pas les quatre circonscriptions qui sont protégées pour les groupes minoritaires acadiens et la communauté africaine, ici en Nouvelle-Écosse, les circonscriptions maintenant ont déjà une variance d'environ 20 à 25 p. 100 de la population, alors même si on enlève les quatre circonscriptions protégées, nous avons encore une différence de la population. Par exemple, si on regarde dans la circonscription de Guysborough-Sheet Harbour, qui est presque la grandeur de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, la population n'est pas la même chose qu'on trouve à Bedford-Birch Cove.

Alors, je me demande, comment est-ce que vous voyez que ça va faire un gros changement, à la fin de la journée, quand nous avons déjà une grande différence entre le montant d'électeurs dans les circonscriptions, hors des quatre circonscriptions protégées, ici en Nouvelle-Écosse?

MR. LACEY: The simple answer is because the variance is not as large.

MR. SAMSON: Je me demande, est-ce que vous pourriez nous dire si votre organisation a des représentants de la communauté acadienne ou de la communauté africaine de la Nouvelle-Écosse?

MR. LACEY: I'm not sure what you mean by representatives. We have only one director here in Atlantic Canada, as staff. We have people across Canada; I could tell you we have Métis representation within our directors, if that was your question.

MR. SAMSON: Non, ce n'est pas la question. Je comprends que vous êtes ici comme délégation. Vous dites que vous représentez des membres. Je vous demande, si partie des membres que vous représentez, ici en Nouvelle-Écosse, est-ce que vous avez de la représentation de la communauté acadienne ou de la communauté africaine de la Nouvelle-Écosse ou autre minorité qui existe ici en Nouvelle-Écosse?

MR. LACEY: We do, but I don't have exactly what kind of numbers those would be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to give someone else an opportunity - and I'll come back to you, Mr. Samson - does anyone else wish to ask a question?

Mr. Bain.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's interesting to note, when you talk, Mr. Lacey, about the reduction of provincial seats, throughout Atlantic Canada over the past few years, and just one question that I have is the population of New Brunswick - I know I don't know it, do you?

MR. LACEY: It's 750,000. Yes, it's 750,000.

MR. BAIN: So, you look at New Brunswick, with 750,000 and 55 seats, and Nova Scotia with almost one million people and you're proposing 33 - what's your justification for doing such a thing?

MR. LACEY: Well, that's a really good question and the reason is this: the URB, an arm's length body of this province, said that we could do - certainly with the municipal councillors - to have more representatives than those provincially, and recommended about a 25 per cent cut in the total number of seats, in both Cape Breton and Halifax. So, as a result, if the committee believes that that's right for municipal, what we're asking for, is that the same rules apply and that the provincial study, within the confines of the upcoming committee, how many MLAs should be available, and I think, you know with respect, Mr. Bain, that's quite a small ask.

MR. BAIN: I guess when we talk about HRM and CBRM; I think the new council will consist of 16 members in HRM, 12 in CBRM - that's 28. If you looked at an equal representation in both those municipalities, that leaves five members to serve the rest of rural Nova Scotia.

MR. LACEY: I think though, what we've recommended, in order to - and you mentioned the 33 and I appreciate that, I didn't get that in - what we've recommended is that you have three by federal ridings. So use the federal constituencies as a marker and that would certainly distribute the ridings. Because they're doing so, redistribution coming federally, between federal - between, excuse me, urban and rural seats.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll go to Mr. Ramey, and then we'll certainly have more.

Mr. Ramey.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, Mr. Lacey, in your comments you mentioned, if I have this correct, that Preston, I think you said 8,000 . . .

MR. LACEY: Yes.

MR. RAMEY: . . . and you mentioned Bedford-Birch Cove with 22,000. Have you done any speculation on what you think the average size of a constituency should be?

MR. LACEY: No, I mean, ultimately, that's going to be a decision for the committee, which you'll pick. What we're recommending here is that, you include in your terms of reference, a maximum of 52 members, and allow them to do the work, to decide, whether that number is - I mean our recommendation will be 33, but whether or not that's 50, 48, 47, that's really up to - you know, according to what we're recommending here - that would be up to the independent committee to make a decision on what the optimal size of a constituency would be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a question. In regards to your analysis of coming to a conclusion of 33, do you have a clear understanding of the workload or what the job description of an MLA is, and the complexity of their job, and to couple that with what the duties and responsibilities are as a minister? If so, how does that fit in with being able to provide the services?

I know this week, this committee alone, or last week, our average day is 10 to 12 hours, and if you take a number of people out of that mix, does that increase the workload, because the work doesn't go away? Is the job requirement similar to a city councillor

versus an MP, with a staff and a number of different offices that they have in their budgets? So, have you done an analysis on the costing and whether or not reducing the number significantly saves money or increases . . .

MR. LACEY: I would say two things. The first is that the - you know, we are in a deficit mess, and you know this better than I do, and everything is being looked at, education, health care, so one of the things we are asking for, is that the same rules apply to the Legislature. So to your point on the workings of the Legislature, that's a very good question. I mean, how would 33 act with regards to committees?

What we're asking for, again, for our recommendation, is not that the committee recommend a specific number, what we're asking is that you give the committee the power to make a decision, over what the optimum numbers would be, which is the exact same process that the municipalities followed - they just gave it to the URB: you'd be giving it to this new committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So if there's something else that I'm hearing, before I go on to Mr. d'Entremont, is that you're accepting of the 52 in saying, you're not asking for it to increase from this, you are asking to stabilize at the maximum of 52 . . .

MR. LACEY: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . and then take a fluctuation from there. I think that's a fair question, so I thank you for that point.

Mr. d'Entremont.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. Kevin, je te demande la question que, si les circonscriptions désignées ne sont pas là, qui ne sont pas là pour offrir des services ou de la représentation dans la Chambre à Halifax, comment est-ce que la population acadienne, francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse, va vraiment avoir sa voix entendue à la Législature? Tu dis qu'on va voir quelque chose de plus responsable à travers de la province, mais comment est-ce que le monde de Richmond, le monde de Clare, le monde d'Argyle, francophone, de descendance francophone, comment est-ce qu'ils vont avoir de chance d'avoir leur voix entendue?

MR. LACEY: What I'd say to that is, I guess, a couple of things: first is specifically to the riding of Clare, I mean there is a fair number - the population may actually warrant a French constituency in that area; and the second thing I'd say, is that there are a number of minority communities now around Nova Scotia, and those communities don't have the same types of representative powers as others do. So what we're saying is, let's even the playing field and treat all Nova Scotia equally.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: L'autre chose, c'est avec la Charte des droits et libertés. Les populations minoritaires ont le droit, spécialement les droits francophones, ont le droit de représentation juste et avez-vous pensé, comme fédération, comment est-ce que vous allez appliquer les droits et les libertés dans la Charte? Parce que, ça semble que vous n'avez pas vraiment - quand on demande ça, vous manquez quelque chose, quand ça vient d'être canadien.

MR. LACEY: Member, with respect, I don't think I'm missing anything. I think, the point being is that we need to have these ridings protect certain minorities, and what I'm essentially saying are a couple of things: let's represent everybody equally, and second,

Nova Scotia has changed, there are a lot of minority groups, and why this group and not another group is, I guess, ultimately the question.

I think the answer to that is, within the terms of reference, to simply do away with them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. Preyra.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Chairman, I just have a quick question about affirmative gerrymandering, which is what, I guess you refer to when you're talking about Clare possibly having enough of a population base to have its own constituency. So, you don't disagree in principle with a constituency that tries to get a community of interest represented, as long as it fits the rough numbers, in rough proportion?

MR. LACEY: You raise a great point. Communities of interest, when the committee eventually takes a look at that, may actually end up with ridings that have certain minority populations in them - so you're absolutely right. Clare would be the obvious one, I mean, given its population, size, and geography. I'm not going to pretend to be here to do a redraw of boundaries, but it would seem to make sense that that riding may still exist and there would still be an Acadian representative within the Legislature.

MR. PREYRA: So you don't really object, also, to the idea of a Preston constituency in principle, it's just that the numbers included in it are too small for your liking?

MR. LACEY: And the reasons why, is really, I think, it's the reason for why that riding is so small, that we object to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. I might add a point in here too. If I'm hearing you correctly then, you're not opposed, for example, in Clare, of having an Acadian representative, for being designated - if I'm hearing you then, you're saying three might be too many for the province. Is that one of the points you're trying to make?

MR LACEY: No. I think, minister, what I'm saying is that one, because of the community of interest, it may survive, but what we're saying is, do away with the term of reference that would simply mandate that these ridings exist.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was another point ... Does anyone else have a question?

Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: Merci, M. le Président. C'est un point intéressant que vous indiquez que Clare, à cause de sa population, pourrait être grande assez, pour avoir sa propre circonscription. Dans les quatre circonscriptions protégées, Clare est la deuxième, en terme de nombre d'électeurs. C'est le comté de Richmond qui a le plus grand numéro d'électeurs et maintenant, Richmond est beaucoup moins - moins que la moitié de Bedford-Birch Cove, alors je ne comprends pas comment vous suggérez que Clare pourra rester comme circonscription avec presque 8 000 électeurs.

Quand on regarde, si on va premièrement, abandonner les circonscriptions protégées, deuxièmement, réduire les montants de députés jusqu'à 33. Le problème avec la communauté acadienne, historiquement, c'est que les Acadiens se trouvent partout dans la province, dans des petits groupes. Nous avons Clare, Argyle. Il y a la communauté de Greenwood. Il y a la communauté de Pomquet, à Antigonish. La communauté de

Chéticamp, à Inverness. Sydney a un groupe d'Acadiens et même ici, à Halifax maintenant, un grand groupe d'Acadiens, en même temps. Alors c'est presque impossible, pour les communautés acadiennes elles-mêmes, sans cette protection, de justifier avoir leur propre circonscription. Alors je ne comprends pas comment vous pouvez suggérer que Clare pourra rester comme circonscription avec les changements que vous proposez à ce Comité.

MR. LACEY: Well, the answer to that is simple. These ridings are based on geography, and we shouldn't be gerrymandering seats just to fit in one group or another. I'm not going to sit here and try and redraw the electoral map. It was my impression, to the member, that this is about setting the terms of reference. What I'm doing is recommending a change, within the terms of reference that have been there since 1991.

Look, I'm not going to challenge your knowledge of Richmond County, but what I will say is, what I know is that, Nova Scotians deserve to be treated equally, and they're not if you are gerrymandering seats to put some in the Legislature and others not. That's not what ridings were built and made to do. I mean, you could argue - I'll let you go ahead, sir.

MR. SAMSON: Juste un autre point – premièrement, il faut comprendre, qu'avec les quatre circonscriptions désignées, il n'y a aucune assurance, ou garantie, que, dans les circonscriptions acadiennes, que ça va être un Acadien qui sera élu, ou dans la communauté de Preston, que ça sera un Africain de la Nouvelle-Écosse qui sera élu. L'idée, quand ça été créé, c'est d'avoir la situation qui donnerait la meilleure chance possible aux communautés minoritaires d'élire un représentant de leur communauté. Quand Richmond a premier été protégé, en 1991, Richie Mann était le député de Richmond. Même s'il n'était pas acadien, il était certainement un grand champion pour la communauté acadienne, mais il n'y a aucune garantie que Richmond va continuer à élire quelqu'un qui est acadien. Faudrait dire, dans mes cinq élections, les candidats de tous les autres partis n'étaient pas des Acadiens. Alors, si je n'avais pas gagné moi-même, on n'aurait pas eu un Acadien pour représenter Richmond.

Mais, sur l'autre question, si vous suggérez que tout le monde doit être traité également et puis qu'on abandonne les quatre circonscriptions protégées, qu'est-ce qu'on fait avec le bureau des Affaires acadiennes, le bureau des Affaires autochtones, le bureau pour les Africains de la Nouvelle-Écosse et le bureau des Affaires gaéliques? Est-ce qu'on abandonne ça aussi? Parce que là, comme vous avez dit déjà, il faut que tout le monde soit égal. Mais si tout le monde est égal, est-ce qu'il faut qu'on abolit ces quatre bureaux-là, en même temps?

MR. LACEY: With respect, I'm here to talk about the Electoral Boundaries Commission, so I mean we'll have to leave that for Finance, when you can ask me lots of questions, because I've got lots of ideas on budget cuts and taxes as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next two questions are coming from Mr. d'Entremont, and then Mr. Preyra and then Mr. Bain.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much. I am going to do this one in English because I think it warrants it - I'm just trying to figure out how to exactly say this.

I understand the lineup, that you're trying to say that there are other minority groups in this province, but I'm saying with the history that we've had of Acadians in this province - I'm not going to do a history lesson - to see the changes in this Legislature after 250

years of anglophone rule, to see the changes that we have celebrated since 2004, the changes in services to our Acadian populations, to see the possible stop of assimilation and loss of culture and language, I think the experiment of having protected ridings has more than proved itself to actually have worked.

Michel is quite correct in saying that regardless of the fact that they are protected, there is no guarantee that there is going to be a French-speaking Acadian in those seats. So in my mind, these have contributed to a culture, to a province that has been inclusive, but in its absence, I wonder where assimilation, where these services are going to go, and quite much too, to what Michel said, what happens to these other programs that have been brought in, that have acceptance now in the province? Just some ideas there - without that, what's left?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Preyra.

MR. PREYRA: Just following on that question - I know that your presentation here, the principle of the presentation is based largely on the principle of one member, one vote, and effective representation. I'm wondering, whether or not, you would tolerate any variance, because you seem prepared to accommodate communities of interest, and I'm wondering, how far you would go in allowing for variances to reach that goal?

MR. LACEY: I think for us, we'd support what has happened in the previous two commissions with regards to variance. I think there is reason for that, so that the changes are not radical, one way or the other. I think that's kind of where we come down, just to ensure that you don't see a massive change from one group to another.

MR. PREYRA: Is there a number that you would tolerate - would you say 10 per cent or have you thought about that?

MR. LACEY: Oh I think the last two were 25, and that's certainly kind of where we would come down on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bain.

MR. BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess one of the questions I have is whether or not, in your deliberations - you have to have had deliberations to make a recommendation, of course - how much consideration was given to geography when you come up with a number that you have? I recognize Jim is from Guysborough-Sheet Harbour, which is the largest constituency in this province, and mine is not too far behind. As a matter of fact, if I started in one end of my constituency, in Frenchvale, and drove to Bay St. Lawrence, that's pretty much the same as me leaving Sydney and driving to Halifax. So how much weight, or any, was put into that when you make this recommendation?

MR. LACEY: Certainly I've heard from lots of MLAs about the axles in their cars, driving over the roads through these big ridings.

Look, I think that this is a determination that the committee should set to the committee to make a decision on. I mean, Mr. Bain, to your point, what we are recommending here is that you allow an independent body to make a determination of how many MLAs should sit in the Legislature - that's what we're recommending.

When that happens, we'll recommend 33. We can have a debate on whether that's right or not, but I think at this point, what we're asking for is that this committee, at least

lay on the table, the number 52, and as arbitrary as you may feel 33 is, it is as arbitrary as the 52 that we sit under now. You can't justify the number that's currently before us, so I think the solution to this is to allow an independent committee to make that decision.

MR. BAIN: Don't get me wrong, I'm not arguing about any number that's up there. I'm not saying that 33 is not the right number - I'm just asking whether or not you've taken these into consideration in your recommendations.

MR. LACEY: I hear you. I think you make a really good point, but I think that's a point that deserves to be made at the next phase.

MR. BAIN: Thanks.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: Yes, just a quick question with regard to your 33 number - I'm curious to see how you arrived at that and how you justified that number.

MR. LACEY: There were a couple of reasons, actually. The first was I had spoken to a number of former politicians, who had served in the Legislature, about what they felt was a fair and representative number in their area; and the second was when you look at a 25 and 27 per cent cut that the URB made a decision - if you take that to the 52, you get somewhere between 35 and 39 members.

One of the advantages, then, from our group's perspective, is to use the federal boundaries as kind of a way to help in the "redistricting" process. Essentially, what you'd end up doing is slicing up the various federal constituencies.

MR. BOUDREAU: So you're looking at sort of applying the federal boundaries?

MR. LACEY: No, I'm saying that you can use those to help guide your principles of setting the provincial ones up.

MR. BOUDREAU: Okay. You did make reference to some reductions in New Brunswick, P.E.I., and Newfoundland and Labrador. When you look at those numbers, in relation to population, I'm at a loss to see where you come across with the 33 if you're looking . . .

MR. LACEY: Because, sir, with respect, I think there are opportunities to be leaders without necessarily deferring to every other jurisdiction in the country. Look, we've laid a number on the table; that's an open discussion. We can have an argument, but I think for the purposes of this committee, it's about - I don't mean to go back to it, but ultimately, for our group, we just want to see this looked at, and no one really has. We could argue about 33, but I could also argue with you about 52.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I accept your point about 33, and I think on that point we should move on from there. You've stated the rationale behind it, and I respect that . . .

MR. LACEY: I hope so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . and your range is between 33 and 52, and you're asking the selection committee to come to a determination based on some factual structure. You've provided some suggestions, one being the electoral boundaries of the federal process and dividing them up proportionately as to how that balances.

Another key point I heard you say today is that, on the issue of minority representation, we're diversifying the province in many other areas in that it no longer has the merit it once did. There's also a question raised about the continuation of the different minority interest groups - the Acadian position, the First Nations, African Nova Scotians - and I want to comment on that.

No matter what structure or formula we move forward, I still see a need as to why we would keep those positions and portfolios in place. At some point, we may want to expand to other minority groups, but I think it's important, whether it's Gaelic Affairs or whatever, that we acknowledge that you made a distinct separation in your discussion today, that that's not where your point is, and that's for a future debate - and I agree with you fully.

I support the positions that are there and I respect the fact that you have made a distinction, not based on that you're against the minority group representation, you believe in equality and from your perspective equality is measured in equal representation, one vote, one person, amongst the broader base - does that basically capture what you're trying to say here today?

MR. LACEY: I think that's fair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions?

Mr. Boudreau.

MR. BOUDREAU: Yes, I just wanted - you sort of cut me off there - some clarity. The reason I asked the question was for clarity, in trying to fully understand your position, it's really not to debate the issue of the number. My feeling is if we have to set terms of reference, then we have to have some complete understanding of what you're proposing, so that's where I was going with my line of questioning.

MR. LACEY: Look, I think it's fair to ask me lots of questions - I certainly have lots to say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, there is another point that you made earlier - it was on the costing, and correct me on this point, you're implying that the fewer MLAs in the context of what you're proposing means a direct saving, and you're also, if I'm correct in reading between the lines, what you're saying is that government, in all its forms, needs to find ways to reduce its costs.

MR. LACEY: Well, essentially, sir, your government has entered into a rationalization and what we're saying is that the rationalization that you have going on in your own department should be extended to the Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, I think I understand fully where you're coming from, and if there are no other questions I want to thank you very, very much for coming and sharing your perspective and your organization's perspective. Thank you very much.

MR. LACEY: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not seeing anyone else in the room to come to speak, we're going to take a brief interlude and walk around and wait for the next client to come forward.

[3:41 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[4:08 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll now call the committee to order. I want to thank Yvette Saulnier from the Francophone Community Centre of Truro for being here - we're excited to hear from you and thank for coming. We will now start.

MS. YVETTE SAULNIER: I'm Yvette Saulnier, I'm from the Francophone Community Centre here in Truro. I'm just going to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to interrupt you for a second, because I see I should have just given you a notice that this complete meeting is public; it's being recorded and it's a matter of public record for that purpose. Okay? You may proceed.

MS. SAULNIER: Je m'appelle Yvette Saulnier. Je viens de la Baie Sainte-Marie. On a déménagé ici il y a à peu près un an et demi passé, à cause du travail de mon mari, et je suis maintenant directrice au Centre communautaire de Truro. J'ai commencé à la fin de septembre et j'aime beaucoup ça, c'est vraiment le « fun ».

Ici à Truro, la population est à peu près 5 000. Je pense que ça grandit toujours. L'école acadienne aussi, grandit toujours. Cette année, il y a une augmentation de 30 p. 100 des élèves, qui est excellent. Nous, au Centre, on fait notre possible, à travers du Centre et à travers de l'école acadienne, pour promouvoir le français, de vivre en français, s'amuser en français.

Notre nouveau Centre, qui ouvre dans le proche avenir, présentement on offre des classes conversationnelles en français, des soirées de musique avec les aînés, « Bon appétit! » qui est une classe de cuisine avec les tout-petits. On a justement lancé notre nouveau programme pilote, à travers d'alphabétisation, samedi dernier, c'est appelé « Chaque enfant prépare à sa lecture ». C'est avec les six compétences nécessaires à la lecture. C'est une heure de comptines, chants et activités. Je pense que le programme a six familles qui participent, qui est vraiment bien.

Le programme après l'école qu'on offre maintenant en français, est rappelé. Il n'y a plus de place pour personne. On a une liste d'attente, qui est vraiment bien. On pensait grandir l'année prochaine. Tout ça pour dire que notre culture est unique, le français existe ici à Truro et on est parti de l'avant, je pense, avec toute la population et on a besoin de l'aide pour grandir et on n'aimerait pas prendre un pas d'arrière, on aimerait d'aller par en avant.

Présentement, je pense, il y a trois députés acadiens qui siègent. Il y a M. Wayne Gaudet, Michel Samson et Chris d'Entremont. On n'aimerait pas vraiment de risquer de perdre ces Acadiens francophones sur le Comité, donc on demande au Comité de considérer ces éléments suivants. C'est le Centre communautaire appui ces cinq éléments. Ça sera demandé par la FANE que vous considérez.

Numéro un, c'est que les consultations de la Commission aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes, pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'impliquer sur les possibilités de changements aux circonscriptions électorales; les régions acadiennes immédiates de Chéticamp, Isle Madame, Clare et Argyle. Une deuxième, c'est que toutes les sessions de consultation se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tous les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais. Un troisième, que l'un des facteurs primaires à être considérés par les termes de référence, soit que la minorité

acadienne est de première importance en Nouvelle-Écosse et respecte le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles, dans le respect de leur diversité, leur histoire et leurs traditions.

Aussi, que le facteur primaire de la proportion des langues officielles soit considéré a être ajouté aux termes de référence et qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent au Comité ou à la Commission qui sera chargée de recommander des révisions, ou non, aux délimitations des circonscriptions électorales actuelles.

Donc, ça c'est les cinq points que la FANE suggère et notre Centre communautaire les appuie et, merci. Si vous avez des questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions? Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: Merci beaucoup, Yvette. Tu m'avais dis que tu étais un peu nerveuse, mais je peux dire que vous avez fait une très bonne présentation et félicitations.

Je voulais juste te poser quelques questions, parce que c'est très intéressant et je pense que mes collègues seront peut-être surpris de savoir que la communauté acadienne francophone ici à Truro, vous avez dit, que c'est presque 5 000 personnes?

MS. SAULNIER : Oui, oui, je pense que oui. Notre école a présentement 200, presque 230 élèves de « Grandir en français » jusqu'à la douzième année. Je pense qu'il y a 27 élèves qui sont inscrits dans « Grandir en français » pour l'année prochaine déjà, qui veut dire qu'il y aura, qui s'en viennent – présentement, il y a deux classes de maternelle. Il s'en vient deux classes de première année, l'année prochaine et ainsi, ça commence, c'est toutes des classes doubles, maintenant.

Il y a aussi la communauté francophone qui sera dans les écoles d'immersion. Il y a quatre écoles, je pense, qu'on fait de la publicité avec. Il y a 80 élèves dans les classes d'immersion, juste dans ces écoles-là. Donc, c'est juste un commencement de toute la population qui existe.

MR. SAMSON: Je ne sais pas si vous pouvez répondre à cette question ou pas mais, savez-vous combien d'étudiants qu'il y avait à l'école acadienne de Truro quand c'est premier ouvert? Parce que le chiffre de 230 élèves, c'est remarquable. Parce que si je m'en rappelle bien, l'école, ici à Truro, c'était une petite école avec très peu d'étudiants.

MS. SAULNIER: Wendy, do you know how many students were at the school when it started? There was - was it 92 in the very beginning?

MS. WENDY ROBICHAUD: In the very beginning, 37

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, I'm going to interrupt for a second. If you would like to come up and sit next to her, you're more than welcome. Just for the record, I can't really recall - I did say your name, so I'm sure that they got that on the record, but I'll ask if you could just state your name.

MS. ROBICHAUD: Yes. Good afternoon, my name is Wendy Robichaud. I am a volunteer with the Centre and I work in community development with the Acadian communities. As well, there are communities with Coastal Communities Network.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Go ahead, Yvette, please.

MS. SAULNIER: In the beginning, the school that was begun, basically by concerned parents, who wanted to not only maintain the language, but also the culture. What we were dealing with at that time was mostly Acadian families and those from Québec, and a few from Manitoba. When we started, we had 37 in a small office space, attached to the school board. It has grown substantially, and what we are dealing with now is not only the francophones who are within Canada, but now our immigrant population. Within this, we have Moroccan, we have Arabic, and we have people from Chile, who have an option of learning in French as well.

What we get to is the opportunity of the immigrant communities here - their first language is French, and, when it comes to representation that's how they express themselves and their issues first. We're finding that very evident, particularly with the new professionals coming in, in immigration, as attached to the school now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: Juste un point final sur ça c'est, peut-être que mes collègues ne sont pas au courant, mais le seul conseil scolaire en Nouvelle-Écosse qui a vu une augmentation dans le numéro d'étudiants cette année, c'est le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial. Alors, ce n'est pas Halifax Regional School Board, ce n'est aucun des conseils scolaires anglophones. Ils ont tous vu une réduction de leur population, sauf le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial et je vous félicite pour le bon travail que vous avez fait ici à Truro, pas juste avec la communauté acadienne, mais, comme vous dites, les immigrants, les nouveaux Canadiens qui sont venus avoir l'option d'avoir leur éducation en français. Je vous félicite pour ça et puis, c'est remarquable, de 37 étudiants à 230. C'est une histoire de succès. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions? I thank you very much for coming today. It was very kind of you to take your time and be here with us.

MS. SAULNIER: Thank you. I am very proud to be Acadian, and for the three members who represent us in the government, at whatever level they are, I really wish that they'd continue being there and representing us. It's very important to us. We just don't want to lose our culture and our language. It's great. Thanks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. We will take a recess now, and I think our time slated for here was from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Is that correct?

Maybe what we'll do is take this break, and then we'll come back and have our in-camera meeting to discuss a few points that we need to do.

[The select committee adjourned at 4:18 p.m.]

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NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA

7:00 P.M.

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON

ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)
Mr. Gary Ramey
Ms. Michele Raymond
Mr. Leonard Preyra
Mr. Jim Boudreau
Hon. Michel Samson
Mr. Andrew Younger
Hon. Christopher d'Entremont
Mr. Keith Bain

[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Ms. Pam Birdsall.]

WITNESS

Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE)
J. Ronald Robichaud, President

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

Ms. Moira MacLeod
Report Writer

TRURO, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

7:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now call this meeting to order. Welcome, everyone. I will just take a few moments. Mr. Robichaud, you are there and I'll just say a few things. I have to say the safety features; the exits are there, in case there's a fire. It's not likely that there's going to be a fire but if there is, that's the way you want to go.

One of the other key things is that this is a public hearing so everything you say is recorded and your word will be a matter of record. I'm going to have the group here introduce themselves so that you know who you are speaking with.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will also say to make sure that you state your full name into the microphone and we'll all do the same. Speak right into it and be clear, if you can. Thank you. You may proceed, sir.

MR. J. RONALD ROBICHAUD: Merci beaucoup. Mon nom c'est Joseph Ronald Robichaud. Je suis Marcel Ronald Robichaud, parce que tous les hommes dans ma famille sont appelés Joseph, parce que c'est une famille très religieuse, et puis, on n'est pas capable de se distinguer comme ça.

Je voudrais vous remercier pour m'avoir ici ce soir, vous n'avez personne... *De nada personas? No habla? Commensar?*

Spanish doesn't work either?

No, okay.

Lo siento, por favor.

Merci beaucoup. Je suis très fier d'être ici ce soir, de vous parler à l'égard des inquiétudes qu'on a, que les critères, pour établir ce Comité qui va regarder comment les discussions vont se dérouler, pour établir les circonscriptions dans la province.

J'ai élevé ma famille ici, à Truro, dans une communauté anglophone. Je suis encore le président du Centre communautaire francophone, ici à Truro, qu'on a commencé en 2007, et puis, avec une petite école. Je suis très inquiet de la première chose, que les

chiffres qu'on utilise pour établir dans les régions, pour les groupes minoritaires, c'est Statistique Canada et je comprends que c'est ça qu'on a besoin d'utiliser, mais, j'ai une inquiétude et j'ai parlé à plusieurs gens à l'égard de ceci, qui ont aussi une inquiétude, parce qu'on a une école ici avec 230 élèves, avec beaucoup d'élèves qui viennent. On sait qu'on n'a pas 50 p, 100 des ayants droit qui peuvent aller à une école acadienne. On a beaucoup des Acadiens, des francophones, qui vont à des écoles d'immersion, des écoles anglophones, parce qu'ils ont des amis là, c'est leur droit d'aller aux écoles qu'ils veulent. Mais, Statistique Canada nous dit que, dans le comté de Colchester, qu'on a 1 500 personnes qui s'expriment en langue française. Puis, si on a tant d'élèves dans les écoles, je ne comprends pas la manière qu'ils ont répondu au sondage de Statistique Canada – ne répond pas bien à combien d'Acadiens francophones qu'on a dans le comté.

C'est une inquiétude, parce que j'ai commencé mon devoir à créer un centre communautaire ici en 2007, c'était après le Congrès mondial acadien. Puis, pour le Congrès mondial, on a commencé ça en Nouvelle-Écosse, avec une messe à l'église catholique, ici à Truro. Puis, j'ai eu un évêque français, Bishop Champagne, qui est venu, puis notre église tient 500 personnes. Puis quand on a eu la messe, on avait 35 femmes et puis des hommes qui chantaient en français. On avait plus que 500 personnes qui on participé à la messe pour le lancement pour le Congrès mondial acadien, ici en Nouvelle-Écosse.

Puis, s'il y rien que 1 500 personnes dans le comté, je ne comprends pas où ces personnes étaient, parce qu'ils parlaient tous français. Donc, pour moi, c'est une inquiétude. C'est pour ça que moi, je suis très heureux que vous êtes venus nous voir ici à Truro parce qu'ici, les Français, c'est un groupe très minoritaire. Puis, pour moi, pour établir les critères, pour établir ce Comité ici, c'est très important qu'on aille dans les régions acadiennes pour que les personnes acadiennes aient une chance de s'exprimer. Parce que vous voyez, ici là, dans notre communauté, il n'y a pas grand personnes qui viennent. C'est une communauté anglophone, les francophones ne se présentent pas. Ils sont minoritaires. On a sûrement beaucoup de francophones qui sont des Acadiens ici, des francophones ici, qui ont des entreprises, mais ils ne veulent pas que les gens le savent, parce que ça va peut-être leur faire du tort. Donc, quand on parle des groupes minoritaires, on ne parle pas juste linguistique et culturel. On parle qu'ils n'ont pas une fierté de s'exprimer en français, et pour moi ça, ça c'est important dans ces jours. Ça ne devrait pas être comme ça.

C'est très important que les critères pour établir ce comité ici, c'est qu'il y ait des francophones sur ce Comité-là. En somme, si on en a deux, ça serait extrêmement bon, parce qu'ils pourraient présenter le point de vue des personnes de la communauté. On voudrait aussi qu'il y ait des présentations faites dans les communautés acadiennes. Les communautés rurales, on a 10 régions établies qui sont des communautés acadiennes, ici, à la province. Neuf sur 10 sont rurales. Pour que les gens-là déménagent pour aller à une plus grande ville pour présenter à un comité, c'est très difficile pour eux. Ils ont des familles, du travail et des responsabilités. Ça coûte cher pour eux. Il y en a d'eux qui n'ont pas vraiment les moyens. On sait que dans la ruralité à la province, ici, beaucoup de nos gens acadiens sont pauvres. Pour nous là, ça serait très important que le Comité va voir dans les communautés pour avoir, vraiment, un bon rapport avec les personnes-là, pour entendre leurs inquiétudes, et puis, l'autre chose, c'est qu'on a un procès ici, à la province, qui marche très bien, parce qu'on a une représentation dans la Législature provinciale, ici, qui répond aux besoins de la communauté, parce qu'on a des personnes là qui sont acadiennes, qui répondent pour les besoins des communautés acadiennes, et puis qui connaissent les communautés, et puis qui connaissent les personnes et ils sont capables de répondre quand quelqu'un parle, ils sont là et ils savent.

On a vu aujourd'hui qu'il y avait un Monsieur Kevin Lacey qui a parlé, il représente le Canadian Taxpayers Federation. Il dit qu'il ne devrait pas avoir de représentation des communautés acadiennes ni les communautés africaines noires. C'est une personne urbaine, qui ne comprend pas bien la richesse que la culture acadienne francophone apporte à la province. Aussi que, beaucoup des personnes dans la communauté acadienne et francophone apportent un appui financier aussi : ils gèrent des entreprises. C'est un bénéfice pour la province d'avoir des groupes minoritaires qui font partie de la province, qui sont des gens qui ont une fierté d'être acadien.

Pour moi, la province n'a rien à perdre, de développer et supporter les communautés acadiennes et francophones ici à la province. Pour moi, c'est très évident que c'est une bonne chose. On n'a pas besoin de le dire, mais on ne devrait pas en avoir besoin, mais c'est évident qu'on a besoin de le dire, parce que sans nos représentants dans la maison de l'Assemblée, on n'aurait personne qui parlerait pour les Acadiens et les francophones.

J'étais vice-président de la Fédération des parents acadiens, et puis on avait une rencontre avec notre ministre du jour, puis le CSAP était prêt à présenter et les School Board Associations étaient là et il y avait un gars là, un bonhomme, je suis certain, du Cap-Breton, et puis il a dit, si tu penses que moi je vais supporter que des financements aillent aux communautés acadiennes, à part que ma communauté au Cap-Breton, je vais te dire une autre chose. J'ai dit M. le Ministre, je pense qu'on a fini ici aujourd'hui. Si on ne peut pas s'accorder, qu'il y a des besoins dans les différentes communautés qui sont différents d'une à l'autre, si on ne peut pas faire ça, et comment est-ce qu'on va travailler ensemble? Parce que les communautés ici sont différentes. On parle que les communautés acadiennes, c'est une langue. Ce n'est pas une langue. Dans les régions de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Chéticamp est une communauté qui a été établie après la Déportation. On sait qu'à Pubnico, c'est une communauté qui a été établie en 1600, puis le monde a vécu là toujours depuis.

À Truro, ma famille était ici dans les 1700. Mon ancêtre était le député qui représentait la communauté acadienne ici, à Halifax, pour le gouvernement anglais du jour. On voit que quand les personnes pensent que ça ne vaut pas la peine d'avoir des représentants francophones dans la Législature, qu'on est « back » dans les années 1700 où est-ce que c'était difficile d'avoir une représentation au gouvernement, et puis on a vu en 1755, qu'est-ce que ça voulait dire. Puis ma famille a été vivre avec les Autochtones l'hiver de la Déportation.

On sait que dans ces temps-là, c'était difficile, mais je vous dis, le Comité, que, la communauté à Chéticamp s'était établie après la Déportation, mais les communautés acadiennes vivent encore la Déportation. À tous les jours, parce qu'on est épanoui partout dans la province. De Pomquet à Pubnico, il y en a 10 des régions, et puis il y en a d'autres des communautés qui ont beaucoup de francophones, qui ne sont pas représentées. C'est très important que c'est par ces groupes-là, ils ont quelqu'un qui dans une circonscription, représente les communautés acadiennes, les plus grosses, qui ont vraiment une chance de s'exprimer, que quelqu'un parle pour eux à la Législature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. d'Entremont.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup, Ron. C'est bon de te voir ce soir. Je me demandais une question sur la FANE elle-même, pour commencer. La FANE

est la Fédération d'associations membres. Combien est-ce que la FANE a de membres? Pas de membres, mais d'associations membres que la FANE représente?

MR. ROBICHAUD: Moi, je suis le président du Centre communautaire francophone ici à Truro, mais je suis élu le président de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, et puis, la Fédération acadienne, ça fait une quarantaine d'années qu'elle travaille ensemble. Mais ce qui est spécial de la Fédération, c'est qu'il y a 29 associations membres. L'Université Sainte-Anne en est une, le CSAP, le Centre communautaire de Truro en est une, l'Association des femmes acadiennes, l'Association de la jeunesse, les Juristes d'expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse, il y a 29 de ces associations. Chacune de ces associations-là ont des exécutifs, ils gèrent des besoins provinciaux, dans toutes les régions de la province. C'est très spécial. À la FANE, on a une équipe qui est une coopérative financière. On a notre propre CA, « Chartered Accountant » en anglais? Puis on écrit toutes les demandes et les chèques et on fait tout les comptes pour faire sûr que les petites associations ont des bonnes ressources financières, et puis on fait ça pour qu'est-ce que ça coûte. C'est comme quatre pour cent de leur budget. Donc, on ne fait pas ça pour faire de l'argent, on fait ça pour apporter un service à nos communautés dans toutes les régions, pour faire sûr que tout est aussi bien fait que possible. Donc, à la FANE, à la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, on travaille pour tous les Acadiens de la province. Ils ont fierté que la FANE va les représenter, ou seulement un Acadien du Nouveau-Brunswick qui vit à Truro, ici, qui a élevé ses enfants dans les écoles anglaises, ils m'ont élu comme président l'année passée, pour faire mon tour.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Pour deux ans, au moins.

MR. ROBICHAUD: Pour deux ans. Oui, aux deux ans.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: On parle souvent des trois députés acadiens, mais vraiment, ces trois députés acadiens, qui représentent des régions acadiennes, il y a aussi d'autres régions acadiennes. Donc, je te demande la question, comment est-ce que les trois députés ou les trois régions peuvent représenter tous les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse? Comment est-ce que ça travaille? Où trouves-tu comment est-ce que ça travaille?

MR. ROBICHAUD: C'est une très bonne question. Ici, à Truro, avec notre école acadienne, on est dans la même circonscription que Pomquet. Puis, Pomquet a une école acadienne, puis on gère un représentant sur le conseil du CSAP qui vit à Pomquet. Je ne l'ai pas encore rencontré, je n'ai pas eu l'occasion. Ça veut dire que, parce qu'on est épanoui partout autour de la province, dans nos régions, il faut qu'on aille parler à quelqu'un ici qui est anglophone, si on veut avoir une représentation dans la Législature provinciale ou fédérale.

C'est qu'il y a beaucoup de régions acadiennes, des communautés acadiennes ou parce qu'elles sont isolées et elles sont accoutumées de ne pas avoir un appui. C'est dommage, et puis, ils n'ont pas confiance que leurs voix vont valoir et on est très fiers d'avoir nos trois représentants acadiens dans la Législature. C'est certainement vrai qu'ils ne peuvent pas, physiquement, aller voir toutes les communautés et présenter tous les besoins de toutes les communautés, parce qu'on en a 10. Une est Halifax, mais on a Pomquet, on a Isle Madame. Tu sais, l'Isle Madame, c'est une ancienne région acadienne, qui a un historique très spécial. C'est là depuis Louisbourg. Les Américains apportaient leurs bateaux à Arichat, qui était un village anglais, ils mettaient les choses dans le bateau français, et puis ils vendaient ça à Louisbourg, c'était le commerce du jour. Les lignes anglaises-françaises, quand ça vient au commerce, ça n'existait pas. Le commerce se fait à tous les jours, comme ça se fait aujourd'hui. Pour nous, dans les communautés

acadiennes, c'est très difficile d'avoir seulement... on a trois, on est fiers de nos trois, parce que nos régions de Clare et puis d'Argyle, ce sont des régions et communautés différentes. On a des représentants dans ces communautés-là. Un des gros défis qu'on a à la province, dans nos communautés acadiennes, c'est que les Acadiens ne se connaissent pas un à l'autre dans les régions, parce qu'ils ne sont pas capables de se déménager. Il faut qu'ils gagnent leur vie.

À la FANE on a un Conseil jeunesse provincial et les jeunes on est capable de les partager, parce que dans les écoles là, on a une capacité de faire ça. Les jeunes se connaissent, mais les parents, les grands-parents ne se connaissent pas si tant. C'est un grand défi pour nous, seulement qu'on ait trois. Si on perdait seulement un de nos trois représentants, ça serait un grand dommage. Ça serait un défi pour la communauté pour longtemps. On voit que quand on parle à des personnes urbaines, ils ne voient pas qu'il y a un besoin qu'on soit représenté. Incroyable. Vous parlez que tout le monde parle anglais, « well », c'est vrai. Au jour, toutes les écoles, il y des cours en anglais. Mais, moi-là, ma mère a été élevée en français et j'étais au grade 11, grade 12 avant avoir appris à s'exprimer en anglais. Nous autres-là, c'était le français à la maison. Puis, dans la communauté, elle ne pouvait pas rencontrer des gens, elle ne pouvait pas parler. C'est un gros défi quand les communautés ne se connaissent pas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Does anyone else have a question? You mentioned that Mr. Lacey had some points and I couldn't help but listen to some of the interesting perspectives you gave on the Acadians. Should that same offer be extended to the African Nova Scotian and to the First Nations peoples because of their population disproportion? Is it an unfair advantage to one group versus another? I don't say that to take a position one way or another, I just threw it out because you did raise the point in opposition to what Mr. Lacey was saying and I understand why you're saying it and how it touched you. I took the sense that it emotionally touched you and I think, hopefully I'm making the right assumption, if I heard the interpretation.

MR. ROBICHAUD: C'est certainement vrai que dans les communautés acadiennes, on a beaucoup de liens avec les Autochtones, et certainement, parce qu'on était ici en 1700 et puis je peux vous dire que quand ma famille est venue ici en 1700, en 1630, ils ont apporté des hommes. Il n'y avait pas de femmes dans les premières années, et on sait que dans les familles, on est marié avec les Autochtones, il n'y a pas de question à l'égard de ça. J'avais une ancêtre, de 1744, elle a emporté ses 50 autochtones et elle a fait la guerre après les Anglais à Port-Royal et le Roi de la France lui a donné 500 livres d'argent pour payer ses dépenses. Parce qu'elle était mariée avec le chef des Autochtones au Nouveau-Brunswick. On sait que les liens avec les Autochtones et les Acadiens, c'est très bien.

Quand j'ai fait ma messe, ici, en français, à l'église catholique, j'avais une madame et des gens de la communauté autochtone qui sont venus faire leurs prières en mi'kmak. Donc, les Acadiens et les Autochtones, on a une grande histoire et ici, à Truro et dans les régions, puis je sais, dans les autres régions de la province, c'est que c'est toujours comme ça. Mais la communauté acadienne, on appuie tous les gens des différentes nationalités et puis certainement, la communauté acadienne francophone appuie la communauté afro-canadienne. On a beaucoup d'amis dans ces communautés-là et puis on travaille très bien ensemble. On connaît ce que c'est d'être en minorité. On sait ce que c'est d'être assez pauvre, qu'il faut que tu donnes à des communautés pour que tout le monde survive.

Dans ma famille au Nouveau-Brunswick, on prenait une partie de tout ce qui était récolté de la ferme et on donnait une partie de ça, à toutes les années, aux groupes autochtones, pour qu'ils survivent l'hiver. Donc, la FANE à l'Acadie, on supporte nos

autres minorités à la province, parce qu'on pense que c'est des peuples qui ont une histoire, un historique très fier, et puis aussi, comme minoritaires, ils ont des besoins pareils comme nous.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Ramey.

MR. ROBICHAUD: Bienvenue.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Merci. Bonsoir. Je ne parle pas français bien, je voudrais parler en anglais s'il vous plaît.

MR. ROBICHAUD: Pas de problème.

MR. RAMEY: As it would take me a long time to say what I want to in French but I apologize for that, I'd like to speak in your language. I was interested in a comment that you made during your remarks about - it didn't come across that you were suggesting discrimination but you did suggest that people in the Acadian community, francophones, sometimes do not want to admit that they are francophones because they ostensibly feel that that is something that would impact negatively on perhaps doing business or whatever. Could you just elaborate on that?

I'm assuming, as a Nova Scotian who was born here and raised here - on the South Shore, as a matter of fact, near Bridgewater - I was not aware that that would be something, that today, would still be something that would be of concern. That's why I'm interested to hear what you say about that. You certainly may answer in French, if you wish; I'll listen to you in French.

MR. ROBICHAUD: C'est un point très intéressant, parce que, pourquoi que les personnes qui sont françaises acadiennes voudraient pas que les autres le sachent? Pour moi là, j'ai fait une maîtrise en éducation de l'Université Sainte-Anne, l'Université de Moncton et puis l'Université Saint Mary's et sur les personnes de pouvoir dans les communautés acadiennes, qu'est-ce que c'était qu'ils ont fait pour leurs communautés? Comment est-ce que les communautés acadiennes se sont développées et puis épanouies et supportées, l'une à l'autre? J'ai trouvé, dans les temps anciens, ils avaient une fierté d'être acadiens.

Moi j'enseigne, ça fait une vingtaine d'années, au Collège communautaire à Dartmouth. J'enseigne des programmes d'entreprise, l'économie et puis la loi et des programmes comme ça et j'enseigne tout ça en anglais. J'enseigne avec des gens qui sont des Acadiens, des régions rurales de la province, qui ont des noms français, et j'en ai dit à un gars là, à ton âge-là, comme moi, tu parlais français à ta maison. C'est pas possible que tu ne parles pas français. Il m'a répondu en français « Certainement! » J'ai dit : « Ça fait 10 ans que j'enseigne avec toi et puis tu n'as jamais, une fois, utilisé un mot français. Personne que tu travaille avec, pour 30 ans, sait que tu parles français. » Qu'est-ce qui se passe? Comment ça se fait? Il dit : « Je ne veux pas me faire distinguer, je ne veux pas me faire séparer, je ne veux pas me faire diminuer. Si je voulais appliquer pour un poste, et puis ils savent que je suis français, je ne l'aurais jamais. » C'est une vérité.

Un de mes amis, c'est un archevêque à Halifax. Son nom était Austin Bourque. Tu le connais Chris. Tu le connais bien.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Je le connais bien. Je le connaissais bien.

MR. ROBICHAUD: Tu le connaissais bien. Il est juste mort un mois passé. Toutes les personnes dans le diocèse, tous les hommes, toutes les personnes dans l'église catholique au Canada, pensent que son nom était Austin Burke. Il m'a dit, personnellement, à la fin de sa vie : « Si les gens avaient su que j'étais Acadien, je serais jamais devenu archevêque. Ça n'aurait jamais été possible. »

Mon oncle était archevêque à l'Université de Moncton. Moi, j'étais dans le séminaire là, quand j'étais jeune, bien, je n'ai pas resté là, il y avait d'autres intérêts. Il a travaillé beaucoup fort pour établir l'Université de Moncton et puis je peux vous dire que seulement dans l'église catholique, qu'il y avait des grands débats avec les prêtres des autres nationalités, qui ne supportaient pas que la communauté acadienne ait un diocèse et des prêtres français pour gérer notre communauté française.

En somme, aujourd'hui, on a un prêtre et un diacre à Halifax qui parlent français, dans le diocèse d'Halifax. Mais notre archevêque, Mancini, m'a parlé la semaine passée et puis on va offrir des cours aux prêtres pour apprendre le français pour donner aux communautés, et pour commencer à être servies dans leur première langue.

Donc, à tous les coins, on essaie de supporter nos minorités pour se développer, mais, c'est dommage que, ici, à Truro, je sais des personnes qui sont acadiennes. Mais, ils gèrent des entreprises. Ils ne veulent pas que les gens le savent. En somme, notre ministre d'Agriculture, son garçon m'a dit : « On vient d'Angleterre, nous autres-là. On n'était pas francophones. » Ils ont été de France en Angleterre et puis ils sont venus au Canada de l'Angleterre là, mais, je ne vais pas dire ça en public. Je ne veux pas lui causer des problèmes. Ce n'est pas mon devoir et puis je veux supporter les personnes qui ont une fierté d'être acadien, mais je voudrais que tout le monde ait une fierté de parler français et d'être acadien. Mais si je te parle en anglais, vous allez savoir, ou pas savoir, que je n'ai pas d'accent en français. Parce que moi j'ai géré des compagnies de construction industrielle et dans mon temps, si tu parlais avec un accent français et tu gérais une compagnie industrielle de construction, ça marchait mal. Puis, des personnes qui me donnaient des problèmes là, fallait que tu les sacres une autre fois, prends le chemin. Puis on a géré notre compagnie pour une vingtaine d'années, on a bien fait, on avait des compagnies de photographie aussi, au Nouveau-Brunswick et en Nouvelle-Écosse, mais, pour avoir un accent en français là, ça, ça ne marchait pas. Il fallait que je développe mon anglais, que je n'aie pas d'accent, pour être capable de gérer une entreprise. C'est dommage, dans ces jours, qu'il faut faire ça, c'est incroyable vraiment. Je suis désolé.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I'll do this in English, it's further information to what Ron is saying.

The reason in, a lot of our Acadian regions, that you'll find this very same sentiment, that a lot of them have become Deveaux, have become Burkes, have become something other than what their name would actually allude them to be. It's really from the history of 250 years ago, when the Acadians were allowed to come back to Nova Scotia, to Acadia at the time, they didn't want to stir up the water. So they stayed in their little communities, they basically went into each other; they sort of hid in the wilderness for a lot of the time.

As they started to grow, as our communities started to grow, as they went out into the world, they didn't want to stir up any water there, so culturally, they have become really very timid, very proud of what they are but realizing they don't want to stir up anything. Even to a point when you talk to some of my friends, some of my older friends, down in Yarmouth County, that it wasn't so long ago - in the 1960s, maybe the 1950s - where in

some of the storefronts that you would see that French Acadians need not apply for the jobs that were available there. That's not that far, that's in a memory.

The best example that I have is something that happened in church this weekend. Many of you know - maybe you don't, depending if you're Catholic or not - that there's going to be a new missal, so there's going to be a new way of doing the Mass in the Catholic Church starting in December, starting pretty soon. So the French missal is not going to be ready for a while, but what the priests are now asking is, to make some changes in how the Mass is being conducted. So he's trying to tell the folks exactly, you know, here's a couple of changes, here's how you're going to bow, here's a few of those changes.

Well, some of the people got right upset, that they were trying to tell them what to do, because in the Acadian world, in the way that they're ingrained and the way their culture is, is that, if you're telling me to change something, it means I was doing something wrong in the first place. So it fits into that cultural issue, that they didn't want to stir anything up, so that's why they're, in some cases, were ashamed for a long time to be French speakers, and that just sort of goes with what Ron was trying to convey as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Younger.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to try this in French but if you don't understand, I won't be offended and I'll say it in English.

J'habite à Dartmouth et beaucoup d'Acadiens habitent à Dartmouth et ce n'est pas un député spécial, pour les Acadiens qui habitent à Dartmouth. Donc, est-ce que c'est vrai? Les trois députés de l'Assemblée représentent tout les Acadiens et Acadiennes dans la province?

MR. ROBICHAUD: I'll answer in English and then you can see that I don't have an accent, except I learned to speak English in Newfoundland, so I do have a bit of a Newfoundland accent. (Laughter)

MR. YOUNGER: A Newfoundland Acadian.

MR. ROBICHAUD: It is interesting that, because we consider Acadie to be all of Atlantic Canada and parts of Maine and at our next Acadian Congress, we are actually including Maine and the Acadians who went to Québec, because we consider ourselves one people. It's very interesting because the three representatives that we have aren't the only ones in the Assembly that speak for the Acadians. It's like our gentleman here, who really has no understanding of rural Atlantic Canada, or rural minorities, and especially the Acadian francophone population, who really doesn't have a sensibility. It's difficult if you don't work in that domain and get to know those people, to develop that facility and that sensibility, because if you're not of that culture, they don't have a comfort and they won't talk to you. They will never express what they really feel and it's only when you get to know them that you really get to understand.

You know, I sat on the historical society here for Truro and there was a wonderful bagpiper and he was a retired teacher and his name was White. I said we need to have a chat because there are no Whites. The Whites are all - they changed their name, they stayed in Cape Breton and they hid during the deportation and they were all LeBlanc. He said that's not true and I said, my son, you need to go talk to your grandmother. He came back a couple of weeks later and he said, my gosh, you were right, we're Acadian. He said, I didn't know I was Acadian.

I just found out two weeks ago when I visited my cousin, who doesn't have to show a band card, that my grandmother was First Nations. It was so looked down upon, that they did not document it in the church records, even though if you married a First Nations woman, she was called a "savagesse", a savage woman, but that was in the day, how it was done, but certainly, in today's generation, people were ashamed to say that they had First Nations ancestry. I'm very proud to have some First Nations ancestry, especially because I just found out. I thought it was really odd but it turns out that my grandmother was First Nations in New Brunswick. So that would be Maliseet, I think, so you know, very interesting.

To specifically answer your question, how do we represent a people? Certainly, we think we're being well represented by the government of the province today. It certainly helps us when we have elected representatives from our major Acadian regions. It certainly is a big challenge for me in Truro. I can tell you that I've become active in the Acadian and the francophone issues in the last several years here in Nova Scotia, and in my region in Truro, it's now well known, I'm out of the closet, okay? I've had friends and colleagues that I've worked with for 40 years in Nova Scotia who no longer talk to me. (Interruption) Yes, those days are over and I mean you have to face the reality, if that's where they are, then that's where they live and I'm just going to have to live with that.

I can tell you that it does make life more difficult and it does make your social interactions in the town that you've raised your children in very difficult. It's sad, you know, I'm not upset about it, I'm not mad about it, but I'm sad. I don't know how to say that in English, to express myself, but the reality is, like, it's in your face and you go, oh my gosh, how can this be today? So, you know, and I think about my children and my daughter, she went to Université Sainte-Anne for the first time to take a course and she called up and the first thing she said - she was down at Church Point - it's the first time I feel at home. You know, it's a very sad testament that in today's culture in Nova Scotia today, that minorities don't feel comfortable and that they don't have this level of inclusion that they feel included in the community.

I've expressed to you that the African-Canadian society, cultures in Nova Scotia, we have a great sympathy with. At the community college we have a Black coordinator, his name is Archy Beals - he calls me Uncle Ron and I call him Cousin Archy. People say, you guys aren't related - Ron, you're not African-Canadian and I go we're in the brotherhood of man, so of course we're related.

We have words for that in French but we have sympathy for our minorities and we certainly have a lot of empathy for what they have to deal with. I can tell you that in Truro, 20 years ago, when my children were going to school, there wasn't one Mi'kmaq person who worked in any business in Truro, not one. They were not welcome, do not apply.

Thirty years ago, when my friends who are in their 70s now, 30 and 40 years ago, they had to sit upstairs in the theatre, they couldn't sit downstairs. So segregation is not that far behind us, it's a sad day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Are there any other questions?

Very enlightening, very interesting overall and I thank you very much for coming.

MR. ROBICHAUD: C'est mon plaisir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam, I see that you're here and welcome. Would you be interested in speaking?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I hadn't intended to speak, no. I thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're welcome to and I just extend the offer, that's it. Thank you very much.

We will take a five-minute recess, then we'll reassemble and if there's nothing new, we'll make a decision at that point.

[7:57 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[8:09 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now call the meeting back to order. Thank you very much. I do not see anyone else coming at this late hour, the roads at this time of night, if anybody's going to commute I don't see the need to sit and wait for 20 minutes. If someone was coming, I would suspect that they'd be here. If I have a consensus - Mr. Younger.

MR. YOUNGER: I don't know if you need a motion but I'd move to adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think we need a motion but we accept it and I say thank you and we'll call it an evening.

This meeting is adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 p.m. at the Civic Centre in Port Hawkesbury, thank you.

[The select committee adjourned at 8:10 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Wednesday, November 23, 2011

PORT HAWKESBURY, NOVA SCOTIA

3:00 P.M.

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

SELECT COMMITTEE ON

ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)
Mr. Gary Ramey
Ms. Michele Raymond
Mr. Leonard Preyra
Mr. Jim Boudreau
Hon. Michel Samson
Mr. Andrew Younger
Hon. Christopher d'Entremont
Mr. Keith Bain

[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Ms. Pam Birdsall.]

WITNESSES

Mr. Richard Cotton
Mr. Yvon Samson
Ms. Jacqueline Samson - LaPicasse

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

Ms. Moira MacLeod
Report Writer

PORT HAWKESBURY, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

3:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon. We'll now call this committee to order.

Bonne après-midi. J'aimerais appeler la réunion à l'ordre.

Just for the record, did the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP come prepared?
(Laughter) That's just a joke.

Thank you for getting here, Andrew. We waited, and we would have waited a little longer. We didn't want to start without at least one of you being here. We felt that was important.

My name is Ross Landry. I'm the chairman of this committee and I'll be introducing my colleagues here this afternoon, but I just want to go over a couple of little things.

The standard practice of exiting from the room that we are in is the back door. It's the only way out that I see at this time, so should there be an emergency situation, just follow the exit signs.

When you come up to speak this afternoon, I would ask you to clearly state your name and who you are representing - if you are representing anyone other than yourself. Also, speak directly and clearly into the microphone. There will be simultaneous translation occurring.

This is a public meeting, and remember, what you have to say is a matter of public record, so my little humour there, as I caught myself realizing that that is part of the record. So be conscious of that fact and if you don't want it on the record, don't say it. So that will be where we're at.

The first person we're going to call this afternoon, and, according to this sheet, it is Richard Cotton. Mr. Cotton, are you here, sir? Please come forward and take one of the three seats in front of us here. So, before you start, we'll do the introductions.

We'll start on my right, this afternoon.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, Mr. Cotton, you have the floor and we're very pleased to see you.

MR. RICHARD COTTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I understand there are two questions - one is the makeup of the committee, and the other is what the commission should consider. I'll address the first one - the makeup of the committee.

When you say "independent," I'm assuming that there are going to be no provincial volunteers, so I don't think I need to make any remarks on that. I believe that there should be eight members plus a chairman, and that the makeup should be approximately as follows: two members from HRM; one from CBRM; three from rural Nova Scotia, representing the eastern, central, and western parts; and there should be representatives from the Acadian, African Nova Scotian, and Mi'kmaq communities.

I would suggest, when you make your appointments, those people are there not for the weight of their vote, but for their knowledge of the area that they are going to represent. In other words, you need fair-minded people, as I am sure you are going to appoint, who will make decisions based on what they hear from the public and not based on what their own personal opinions might be. That might be a difficult task, or it might not be.

What the commission should consider: I guess, without saying, population should still be the weighty part of the makeup of the Legislature; geography would be next in importance - the rural ridings should have less voters per riding, to make up for their large geographical size, but the 25 per cent, plus or minus, should be the maximum of those ridings; minority representation should be kept, and when I say that I'm not suggesting that the status quo should be kept - that would be one of the options.

Another option that I could think of would be electing those members at large, very similar to how the school boards do it across Nova Scotia, where a person in a particular riding - let's say, for instance, I'll use my own riding, which is Richmond - what happens now is when they register for the school board elections, the residents have a choice to vote for the Acadian school board member or for the - and I still refer to my old school days as the core, but that would be their choice, they would have to register for one or the other.

I'm not suggesting that we should increase the number of seats to 55, what I'm suggesting is that - and again when I suggest, I'm talking about a consideration. I haven't received enough information yet to decide what should or shouldn't be. I do think the status quo is one of the options that have to be considered, but I also think that you're probably going to get other options out there. One of the things that I would not want to see is to have the minority representation disbanded altogether. There may be better ways of doing it because I do know that the protected seats fall well below the plus or minus 25 per cent, so there may be other ways to do that.

I think the other question that needs to be asked is whether the old municipal county boundaries should still be considered. Again, I'm not suggesting they should or shouldn't, but demographic population has changed dramatically over the number of years. HRM becomes more and more populous; Cape Breton is less and less populous. We won't get into reasons as to why that is, but nevertheless it is a fact. Whether or not, in looking for representation, county boundaries should still be represented or not, any community interest is more important than the municipal county boundaries.

As I stated, the factor of 25 per cent should be an absolute maximum unless, of course, you decided to go with the four seats now, three Acadian seats.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many? Sorry, I didn't hear you.

MR. COTTON: The four seats that are protected now from the plus or minus 25 - that being Clare, Argyle, Richmond, and the riding in Preston, which by the way hasn't been represented since 1999, I believe. Wayne Adams was the last black Nova Scotian to represent that riding.

That's about it from my ideas in the presentation. Certainly once you set your mandate, I would imagine there will be a second round of hearings and I'll have some opinions then.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you, Richie, for your presentation. You touched on the geography part and being from a rural area, probably one of the most rural, I think when you look around the Cape Breton area we have a lot of rural seats there and I'm glad you brought that up.

I just want to get your opinion on something. Yesterday we had a presentation from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

MR. COTTON: Kevin Lacey, yes.

MR. BAIN: During that presentation the suggestion was made that we look at the possibility of recommending to the commission that the number of seats be reduced and the number that was used at that time was from 52 to 33, but I don't think that was a hard and fast number. I'd just like to get your opinion on whether or not there should be that number - that's a reduction of 19 - should there be a reduction, what's your general feeling?

MR. COTTON: Two things on that. I don't know what he said before the hearing but his remarks in The Halifax Herald today were pretty clear. He wanted three seats per federal riding, which would be 11, by three, up to 33. Actually, I think the Premier handled that well - I think that that would certainly hurt rural Nova Scotia. If you're going to have 33 seats, and you're looking at population as the main part of the core on it, which I believe that has to be, you certainly have to look at the rural areas. But going down to 33, I certainly wouldn't suggest going to 52 but going down to 33, in my opinion, would not be something I would agree with.

MR. BAIN: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. GARY RAMEY: I thank you for your presentation, Mr. Cotton - just a quick question. I was interested in the way you talked about members at large as opposed to protected or designated ridings. You also mentioned, in your presentation, about the depopulation of rural areas and the increase in population in urban areas like HRM. I don't know if you agree or not, but I think that's a shift that we're seeing from rural to urban in many provinces in Canada and many parts of the world; that has been happening for some time. However, as Mr. Bain just pointed out, when you start reducing seats you sometimes put even an extra burden on the rural areas because of what we've talked about.

Would you mind just saying a few more things about the member-at-large philosophy that you have, please?

MR. COTTON: Looking at the last figures, it didn't give the Native vote and I know they had talked about having Native representation and I'm assuming it was quiet in the presentation 10 years ago, but I'm assuming one of the considerations was just that. I don't think there was a whole lot of agreement among the band councils. There was not a whole lot of agreement as to how they should do it. I suspect one of the reasons why there wasn't, was because they didn't really know what the Native people wanted. That's why I think it's very important to have a member of the Native community on this commission that you're going to appoint.

The way it works in school board elections is the seats are determined - I can't give you the boundaries, probably Yvon would be able to give it better in Richmond than I would. When you register to vote, you'd have the school board member ballot, the Acadian - or the CSAP now - ballot, and people with Acadian ancestry would have the right to vote for either/or, not both. I would suggest to you that with the Acadian population you may have to look at two seats rather than one. I don't know, I haven't got the report from the last census; I don't know what the count is, but that would, obviously, have to be a consideration.

Let's say, just use the figures of one, one, and one for now. I would see the election being right across Nova Scotia with the Acadian community deciding whether they wanted to vote for people in their own riding - their own riding being where the geographic part would be. That would mean a cut in three seats, as far as that part of it goes. It may mean more.

The same with the African Nova Scotian community, and of course, even getting a representative from the Native community on the commission, I'm not sure that would be an easy task or not - it might well be. But those are all things that have to be taken into consideration.

I didn't try to skate - I hope I answered your question the best I could.

MR. RAMEY: You did. Thank you very much, Mr. Cotton.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Thank you for the presentation. I just had two questions. The first one was if the positions for Acadians and African Nova Scotians were elected at large, as one of the options you suggested trying, how would you - for example, now when you go in on the school board elections that you referenced, people self-identify. Would you have them do that in the same way for an at-large seat in the Legislature?

MR. COTTON: Yes, the biggest thing is how would you - what the criteria would be to be able to exercise the dual option. I don't know if you should have to dig out your family tree to do that but there have to be some criteria of whether you had the option to vote or not, depending on your heritage.

MR. YOUNGER: That's why I asked, in the school board ones you simply go in and you choose to vote for the African Nova Scotian representative or you choose to vote for the CSAP representative. I think CSAP you may have to have a child in the school, I'm not sure. Certainly for the African Nova Scotian representative in the Halifax Regional School Board, anybody could choose to vote for that position, which is at large.

MR. COTTON: Yes, you could be right. The last time I was involved in the school board was back in 1988, other than voting for the school board member, so I don't know what

the standard is now. I know back then there was a means test, it wasn't a strong one by any means. I would suggest to you that you're probably right; it was probably given to the integrity of the individual.

MR. YOUNGER: That's fine. You mentioned keeping the 25 per cent variance to help with the geographic issues. I was just wondering if there was a particular reason. I know 25 per cent is used a lot, and we heard the board use 10 per cent and 15 per cent before, I just wondered why you settled on 25 per cent.

MR. COTTON: Well, 25 per cent was the criteria used last time except for the four protected seats. They made allowances for that. I guess 25 per cent, in my opinion, would be the absolute maximum, but I think in fairness to rural Nova Scotia, the rural ridings have a tendency to be very diverse in their needs. There are a lot of communities of interest - and I'm not suggesting there aren't in Halifax, but at least the area is condensed enough, where you're representing a lot more people. Now, mind you, like I said, a population still has to have the heaviest weight, but I think there have to be allowances for rural areas. That's why I used the 25 per cent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a couple of questions. You mentioned the four seats, and you're saying that's a maximum of designated seats? Or should there be more, or should there be less? That's the first part of my question.

MR. COTTON: No, I'm not suggesting that at all. I'm just suggesting that that should be a consideration. I'm suggesting what it is now. The commission, when they hear the hearings - right now, basically all I'm suggesting is what the commission should consider. I would have some ideas on some, but I don't think this would be the place to do it right now. I just want to make sure that the commission has the consideration to be able to have different options. It shouldn't be black and white. In other words, you shouldn't protect the seats, but by the other extreme, you shouldn't have a situation where there is no minority representation at all. I think you have to have minority representation. How you do it should be the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, that's very good. Thank you very much. Mr. d'Entremont.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: I wanted to maybe use a little bit of an example - I don't know how I'm going to do this one, but if we're saying that we would take the Acadian representation or the African Nova Scotian representation and make it more at large, what would become of the existing constituencies that are representative at this point? So what would happen to Richmond, Argyle, Clare, and Preston?

MR. COTTON: Well, I believe that those seats - there wouldn't be any areas cut out. They would still be in what - obviously if you do it that way, Richmond, Argyle, Preston won't exist as a whole. It might be what happened in Keith's riding the last election, where they ran from Victoria in - not the last election, but the last into Victoria-The Lakes. You may have to do that in those particular ridings, but they still would be included as a whole. There will be no areas of the province that would be written out. They would all be represented by regular representation.

If you want minority representation, then it shouldn't be done necessarily by riding - maybe it should be done that way. I have no problem with the status quo, by the way, but nevertheless I think that the public should have - I guess my biggest fear would be if you stick with one, the public may decide to say this is not fair because it's over and above the

25 per cent. So I would like the commission to look at other ways of doing that, because I think the minority representation in Nova Scotia is still important. It's just how you do it.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Yes, because I think in the end, if you take Richmond, for example, you would probably have to split it up partly into the west and partly into Inverness. So you maybe lose that history of a representation that way. The same thing would happen in Argyle. It would become part of Yarmouth or what have you.

MR. COTTON: Yes.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: So I just wanted to hear your thoughts on that.

MR. COTTON: Yes, exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Preyra, and then Mr. Ramey.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Yes, just to clarify, you would entertain the possibility of reducing the total number of seats directly elected to 48 and then have four at-large seats for designated groups?

MR. COTTON: Okay, the only reason the 48 number comes into being is because there happen to be four seats now. I'm not going to suggest - there might be more or there might be less. I can't really see there being less, but maybe because there's probably - and again, I don't know the census from this report - more Acadians than there are African Nova Scotians. So you may have to look at whether it should be two seats. I don't know the Native population. So those would all be things the commission, when they get the presentations and look at the figures, would have to consider. But let's say if it was the four seats, then yes, I'm saying 48 and four.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey and then Mr. Bain.

MR. RAMEY: Yes, just going back, again in relation to something you said about electing at large for minority groups and that sort of thing, something that came up yesterday in the presentations that I was not aware of - or at least I wasn't aware of it to the degree that it exists - we had a presentation in Truro last night from a gentleman who described to me significant growth in the French population in the school board there, in the Truro area. I mean, Truro is not an area I think of as traditionally being a hotbed of French activity.

He also referenced Halifax. I did bump into that one a little while ago. I met some people who were talking about the significant growth in the French population in Halifax. So I guess my question is, in relation to your hypothesis about presenting members at large, would that be part of why you would be suggesting that? There are significant pockets of francophones in areas other than the designated areas who, because they are in these other areas, aren't really being represented by the people in the designated ridings. Would that be one of the arguments for it, for the at-large concept?

MR. COTTON: I'm just trying to get my thoughts together. I used to know the mandate of the CSAP, but I do know in Nova Scotia - the people that I am familiar with, at least - find it very important to have their children educated in French. They believe very strongly - and I think rightly so - that that education would allow them to have more job opportunities, would have them more well-rounded, to be able to speak both of our official languages.

There are Acadians who I would imagine would have moved into the Halifax area who would be part of that. How you would distinguish one from the other, I'm not sure, but certainly when you set - if you go in that direction, you would have to set the parameters for who could vote in those seats and who can't. Maybe it is strictly by what their own feelings are.

MR. RAMEY: Okay, but if I may again, Mr. Chairman - just a follow-up. I'm just trying to clarify this in my own head. Would your suggestion be that, since there are - let's say there are significant francophone populations in Halifax and even in Truro. Do you think that the at-large system that you suggested might be a way of looking at it, would be a fairer way, a more equitable way of making sure that those populations are also represented in the Legislature - the at-large system as opposed to the designated riding system?

MR. COTTON: I was going to save that for the next presentation, but that's a good question. Yes, I would think when you look - from a person from Richmond, I would like to see the Richmond seat stay put. That might be a selfish approach, but when you look at Nova Scotia as a whole - and I'll take my Richmond hat off for awhile - probably the fairest way you would do it would be the members at large, because that way you are having a representative in the House who is there for one reason and one reason only, whereas the way the system works now, you are representing your Acadian or your Black Nova Scotian vote, but you are also representing the riding.

I'm not suggesting that the same members don't do a good job on that. They do. They wouldn't be there if they didn't. When you look at the overall population - and I'm sure that people in Halifax, when they look at their ridings and the amount of people per MLA, there would be an issue there. So you have to look at it fairly. You have to make sure you have the rural representation and minority representation, but you've got to look at the fairest way possible to do it. That's why it's going to be very important when you appoint your commission members, to have people who have knowledge in their particular area but who are also fair-minded enough to be able to make a decision based on the presentations and the criteria they have, rather than a vested position going in. If you know that a person has a vested position going in, they should not be part of this commission. Have I answered it for you?

MR. RAMEY: I think you did. Thank you very much, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excellent, thank you. Mr. Bain.

MR. BAIN: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. The more I think about members at large, the more I begin to wonder. Richard, I'm familiar with the African Nova Scotian representation on the school board because of my years on the school board. It's much easier to manage at a board level, because its size would make it that way.

I wonder - I can use Argyle or Richmond or Clare as an example. The voters of those three constituencies, if there was a member at large, they have to ask themselves, do I want to vote for a person who is going to support the French community in Nova Scotia or am I going to vote for someone who is going to look after my needs within the constituency? They can't vote for an MLA representing their constituency and at the same time vote for a member at large representing Acadian Nova Scotians. I guess that poses the degree of difficulty no different than the African Nova Scotian does for school boards, as it stands right now.

It's possible that - and I don't know how you would propose the members at large - but it's quite possible that the people in Richmond, the people in Argyle, the people in Clare could have someone from Lunenburg or from Halifax representing their wishes and their needs, where now what these three constituencies see is somebody that's not only representing their needs as a constituent but they are representing their needs as a French-speaking person in this province. That's where I see some difficulties and, again, it's not my place to determine what should be done, I know that, but I'm just throwing that out there to see what your thought might be.

MR COTTON: Looking at it from the reverse of that, if you're going to have protected ridings based on Acadian status, Native status - well, we don't have Native status right now but African Nova Scotians - that's kind of a mark against the system and the way it works because really, what are you looking for in your member - a person who is Acadian or a person who's going to represent you well? I'm not suggesting that the people that are on there now can't do both effectively but if you have to ask that question then maybe the system is not working the way it is.

Like I said, it's going to be interesting after you set the mandate for the committee. This is going to be one of the areas they should be looking and I think it should be that way. There may be better suggestions than the one - this is the only one that I can come up with but I'm sure you're going to hear from other Nova Scotians who may have a better way than that. I'm just saying you've got to look at the status quo plus different areas to make it as fair as we can for every Nova Scotian who exists in Nova Scotia.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much and thank you for appearing here today. Our next speaker will be Yvon Samson. Mr. Samson, I'll remind you again about the mike and to speak into it clearly, and I thank you very much for coming today. By any chance are you related to this gentleman here?

MR. YVON SAMSON: Fortunately, no. (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll reiterate what I said earlier when you were sitting there that this is all public and whatever is said is recorded, and I thank you for coming.

MR. YVON SAMSON: Merci beaucoup, Je peux parler français? OK. Merci. M. le Président, chers membres du Comité. À toutes les décennies, le gouvernement provincial met sur pied ce Comité spécial sur l'établissement d'une Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. Il me fait plaisir de me présenter devant vous aujourd'hui afin d'émettre mon opinion sur la composition et les termes de référence de cette Commission, qui sera chargée d'évaluer les circonscriptions électorales et des enjeux sur lesquels cette Commission sera appelée à considérer.

Je suis de souche acadienne et ma première langue apprise et encore comprise est le français. Je travaille quotidiennement dans ma langue maternelle à partir de ma communauté natale, Petit-de-Grat, au comté de Richmond. Le Comité a le mandat d'obtenir les opinions de personnes provenant de la communauté acadienne en Nouvelle-Écosse. Je crois important de défendre le droit de représentation de la communauté acadienne au sein de l'Assemblée législative et les droits des Acadiens d'exercer le droit de vote pour élire la personne la plus apte à représenter les intérêts de notre communauté au sein de l'Assemblée législative de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

En Nouvelle-Écosse, les Acadiens et les francophones ont réalisé des progrès notables aux cours des dernières décennies, grâce aux décisions des gouvernements successifs, qui ont

permis du maintien ou de la création de divers outils, dans notre langue, pour faciliter le développement et l'épanouissement de la communauté acadienne. Il est important de mentionner l'acquisition de la gestion de notre propre système scolaire, le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, le maintien de l'Université Sainte-Anne à la Pointe-de-l'Église et les progrès d'offrir les services gouvernementaux provinciaux en français.

Au cours des années, j'observe des progrès pour renverser des tendances d'assimilation, car les inscriptions aux écoles du CSAP sont à la hausse, un indicateur prometteur pour la vitalité de la communauté acadienne et francophone de notre province.

Il y a des parlementaires acadiens, francophones et bilingues dans la Législature. Le gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse peut participer activement aux institutions parlementaires de la francophonie mondiale par l'entremise de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la francophonie. Ce forum et d'autres forums de ce genre, tel que le Forum francophone des affaires, permet aux parlementaires et aux hommes et femmes d'affaires dans ma communauté, de participer aux marchés mondiaux. Cette communauté d'affaires peut ainsi profiter de la valeur ajoutée des deux langues officielles du Canada en participant aux Réseaux internationaux des deux communautés linguistiques du Canada, soit la francophonie et le Commonwealth. Il est dans mon opinion que les termes de référence de l'éventuelle Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales 2011 doit protéger les circonscriptions électorales dites acadiennes de Richmond, Clare et d'Argyle. Ce geste de votre part tiendra compte des droits historiques de représentation de la minorité acadienne et francophone en Nouvelle-Écosse.

En ce qui a trait à la composition de cette Commission, il est dans mon opinion que la composition doit inclure une représentation acadienne et francophone afin que cette commission puisse entendre et j'espère, comprendre, et défendre le point de vue de la communauté acadienne sur la nécessité d'avoir des voix de la minorité acadienne et francophone dans leur processus décisionnel parlementaire majoritairement anglophone.

Je vous remercie de votre écoute et je suis disponible pour répondre à vos questions.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Merci Yvon pour ta présentation. Tantôt ou plus de bonne heure, M. Cotton avait suggéré d'avoir des députés acadiens élus à travers de la province. Comme ça existe maintenant, les députés de Richmond, Argyle et Clare, nous avons une circonscription. Nous avons un bureau. Nous savons qui nous représentons. Si on ne fait pas une bonne « job », on sera remplacé. En sachant le montant de communautés acadiennes qu'il y a dans la Nouvelle-Écosse, d'un bout de la province à l'autre, comme député, peux-tu voir que ça fonctionnerait d'avoir des députés élus à travers de la province sans une communauté spécifique et qu'ils pourraient bien faire leur travail et bien être responsables à leurs électeurs sous cette sorte de système?

MR. YVON SAMSON: Ayant été président du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial et ayant été, disons, mis en face de territoires géographiques de besoins différents, de façons de faire différentes, j'ai du mal à voir, géographiquement, comment tu pourrais faire ce genre d'initiative. Avoir une personne ou une élection « at large » de façon à représenter tout ces intérêts divergents-là. Au CSAP, il y a 17 membres, parce que, géographiquement, le URB a décidé qu'il était mieux que chacun de ces secteurs géographiques où il y avait une école, avait une représentation spécifique au conseil scolaire donc, déjà le URB avait déterminé que c'était important que ces communautés-là aient une représentation spécifique.

Il y a aussi le fait que dans le jugement du procureur général de la Saskatchewan est Roger Carter. Je ne sais pas si vous êtes au courant de ça, mais il a quand même été dit clairement, et je vous ai amené une copie, qu'il faut, c'est pas seulement élire, avoir un vote pour une personne. Il y a d'autres considérations qu'il faut avoir pour avoir une représentation effective. Parce qu'on parle pas au Canada comme aux États-Unis, c'est plutôt, un vote, une voix. Au Canada, on parle de représentation effective de façon à représenter les intérêts géographiques, communautaires et autres et même la juge McLachlin, dans son jugement, a dit, on peut avoir, aussi, au delà de 25 p. 100 et parler de circonstances extraordinaires. Donc, il faudrait probablement que le Comité soit – du moins vous ayez ces informations-là – de façon à pouvoir regarder ces conséquences-là également.

MR. MICHEL SAMSON: Juste une dernière question, Yvon. Je sais que ça fait des années que tu travailles au niveau du gouvernement avec différents projets. Ici en Nouvelle-Écosse, à cause des circonscriptions protégées, nous avons eu des ministres acadiens pendant les derniers 40 ans. Gerry Doucet, Guy LeBlanc, Neil LeBlanc, Leroy Leger, Chris d'Entremont, Wayne Gaudet, Allister Surette, et même moi-même, pour un petit bout de temps. Dans ton opinion, avec tes expériences et le succès qui a été accompli par la communauté acadienne, est-ce qu'on aurait vu cette sorte de succès sans avoir des ministres et des députés qui siégeaient au Cabinet et puis qui siégeaient au gouvernement pour pousser ces projets à une réalité?

MR. YVON SAMSON: Je pense, personnellement, que ça aurait été très difficile à rendre les gouvernements successifs sensibles à la question acadienne. Parce qu'on a eu des batailles, juste pour le système scolaire, si tu t'en souviens en 1982, il y a eu des batailles extraordinaires dans les communautés de Clare, Argyle et de Chéticamp. Donc, si des représentants acadiens n'ont pas pu expliquer pourquoi cette dynamique-là jouait dans la communauté. Le gouvernement a probablement balayé toute la question et puis a mis ça de côté. Donc, l'importance est cruciale, je crois, d'avoir la représentation acadienne au sein du Cabinet et au sein du gouvernement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. d'Entremont.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup M. le Président. La question que je me demande, c'est vraiment si qu'on regarde la présentation du Canadian Taxpayers Federation ou même, des discussions qu'on a vu à des questions dernièrement, des hommes politiques, c'est que, « you know », on est 20 ans, 40 ans dans le futur, que tout marche bien « asteure », on pense que tout va travailler bien dans le futur. Qu'est-ce que tu penses que si qu'on dit, on a pas besoin des circonscriptions protégées, on a pas besoin vraiment de désigner quelqu'un acadien pour être à la Législature, comment est-ce que tu crois que le futur de la communauté ou de projet va être? On va-tu voir le même type d'intérêt dans la communauté sans quelqu'un à la Législature?

MR. YVON SAMSON: Une des choses que j'observe, si on ne donne pas à nos jeunes l'espoir qu'ils peuvent participer activement à la vie politique, que ça soit en Nouvelle-Écosse, ou dans la municipalité ou dans d'autres, parce qu'on a enlevé un droit, parce que c'est comme ça que je peux le voir, dans ma perspective, je crois qu'on ferait beaucoup de tort à la communauté acadienne dans son avenir, parce qu'elle sentira ne pas avoir des outils qui sont nécessaires pour son développement et elle n'aura pas cette – on appelle ça « disengagement » – le désengagement assez important de notre communauté envers le système, parce que le système ne répond plus à ses besoins.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Penses-tu, dans le présent qu'on est maintenant, que tout va bien, qu'il n'y a pas de préjudices, il n'y pas – la façon que la population anglophone regarde

la population acadienne et, vois-tu que culturellement, vois-tu que les Acadiens vont pouvoir leur pousser eux-mêmes, sans la représentation de même? Vois-tu encore qu'on est bien maintenant?

MR. YVON SAMSON: Parce que ta question est un peu sur la discrimination, mais tu vas toujours avoir des gens qui ont une différente opinion dans les questions de représentation et des questions comme ça. C'est la société même. C'est pour ça qu'on a au Canada, certaines lois qui protègent certaines minorités. C'est pour ça que la Charte des droits a donné l'article 23 qui protège la gestion scolaire. C'est pour ça qu'en Nouvelle-Écosse on a eu une histoire de protéger ces sièges-là.

Je pense qu'il y a une acceptation de la communauté anglophone de ce qu'on est. Beaucoup plus qu'il y avait 40, 50 ans passés. Alors que tu pouvais voir une bataille dans la région d'Halifax pour une classe en français dans une école anglaise. Ça n'existe plus maintenant, parce que c'est un « non-issu », on n'a plus besoin de ça. Il y a d'autres domaines où est-ce qu'on pourrait faire du progrès, et on en fait, les services en français c'est énorme. Hier, le gouvernement a annoncé le site pour la Législature, pour la première fois, c'est du jamais vu en Nouvelle-Écosse et pour moi, ça fait chaud au cœur que finalement je peux parler à mon gouvernement dans ma langue. Donc, ça fait une différence. Je ne sais pas si je répons...

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Très bien répondu. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. If there are no other questions, I thank you for coming this afternoon and giving us a very good presentation.

Our next speaker will be Jacqueline Samson. Welcome. It's very nice to see you. I'll just remind you, as well, about this being recorded. It's a public hearing and, as I said, will be recorded. The time is yours now.

MS. JACQUELINE SAMSON: Merci, M. le Président, Comité. J'aimerais commencer par vous dire merci d'avoir le système de traduction disponible qui me permet de faire ma présentation dans ma langue.

La communauté acadienne de Richmond voudrait que le Comité considère les points suivants : comme facteur primaire, la *Loi sur les services en français* de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui permet d'obtenir des services en français, mais aussi de favoriser la préservation et les arts de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province. Que l'un des facteurs primaires à être considéré, par les termes de référence, soit que la minorité acadienne est de première importance en Nouvelle-Écosse et le respect du caractère spécifique de notre circonscription acadienne de Richmond, actuelle, dans le respect de nos diversités, nos histoires et nos traditions.

Qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent sur la Commission qui sera chargée de recommander des révisions, des délimitations, des circonscriptions électorales. Ces deux personnes doivent avoir une connaissance et une sensibilité envers le peuple acadien. Que notre façon de vivre, dans notre milieu rural, ne soit pas interrompue par un changement et notre suggestion est de retenir le comté de Richmond comme tel. Ceci travaille bien pour nous.

Enfin, notre grand désir est de continuer à vivre dans notre langue. Grâce à l'aide du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial et l'Université Sainte-Anne, nos jeunes ont le droit d'une éducation en français. De plus, la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse et

ses membres, le ministre des Affaires acadiennes, les autres régions de la Nouvelle-Écosse, et le nouveau site Web de l'Assemblée législative de la Nouvelle-Écosse, sont tout des grands atouts à notre héritage et notre patrimoine acadiens.

Nous espérons fortement que nos suggestions seront retenues. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Mr. Samson.

MR. MICHEL SAMSON: Merci Jacqueline et c'est comme moi-même et même Chris ici, sommes bien au courant de qu'est-ce qui se passe au centre La Picasse mais pour les autres membres du comité, je me demande si tu pourrais peut-être leur expliquer quels services et quels bureaux se trouvent sous la couverture du Centre La Picasse, pour qu'ils puissent mieux comprendre les services qui sont là pour la communauté acadienne.

MS. JACQUELINE SAMSON: Pour nous autres, au comté de Richmond, seulement pour expliquer un peu en avant. Avant que je suis devenue la directrice générale de La Picasse, j'étais la présidente de La Picasse pour six ans. Dans la bâtisse même, l'Université Sainte-Anne, campus de Petit-de-Grat, est droite à côté de nous autres avec le nouveau service du Centre marin. Là, on a la bibliothèque régionale, on a un programme qui est appelé la Pirouette. C'est pour des enfants, des bébés, et même avant être bébé, d'avant naissance, jusqu'à l'âge de six ans. Comme ça, il y a une tradition de ce programme-là, d'aller « Grandir en français », d'aller dans l'école du CSAP.

Là, il y a un restaurant, une boutique où est-ce que tout nos artistes acadiens peuvent mettre leur peintures, toutes sortes de choses qu'ils font comme artistes puis on démontre ça pour la communauté. Il y a le bureau du Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Tous les bureaux du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial du nord-est sont dans notre bâtisse, il y a quelques « Addiction Services » qui offrent des services dans notre bureau, aussi, le département de Justice pour probation. On a notre propre radio communautaire, dans la bâtisse. On a un service et un bureau local de Service Canada et on a notre propre cuisine et grande salle avec un système de son de haute, haute qualité qu'on offre des noces, des spectacles, des réunions de famille, des « partys » : n'importe quoi. Ça c'est dans notre bâtisse.

MR. MICHEL SAMSON: Je vais suivre un peu sur la question que Chris avait demandée. Le représentant du Canadian Taxpayers Federation, il a dit, on a plus besoin des circonscriptions protégées parce que le travail de la communauté acadienne, c'est fini. C'est accompli. On n'en a plus besoin. Ça c'était dans le passé et maintenant, ce qui existe, c'est bon et puis, on peut tous nous asseoir derrière, et puis, c'est fini. Je me demande, comme directrice générale du Centre La Picasse, est-ce que le travail, pour La Picasse, est fini? Dans tes yeux? Ou est-ce que l'argent dont vous avez besoin et les services que vous avez, est-ce que c'est tout fini, ou est-ce que c'est du travail qui continue toujours?

MS. JACQUELINE SAMSON: J'étais pas à cette session-là, mais si ça c'est l'attitude, ou qu'est-ce que le monde comprend, moi j'ai manqué ce mémo-là. Parce que, c'est pas même possible. Oui, je ne dis pas que les affaires n'ont pas changé. Moi-là, je suis pas prête à la section de vieillesse encore, mais je suis plus « teenager » non plus, là. Il y a des affaires qui ont changé. Mais, pour nous autres, c'est toujours une bataille, et c'est tous les jours. Puis pour nous autres, et pour tous les individus, et tous les Acadiens du côté de Richmond, et partout dans la province, ça va jamais être fini. Parce que c'est des services dont on a besoin. Pour des années puis des années on avait peur de demander, pour dire, OK, bien, je veux être servi en français. Et « asteure » on n'a plus peur.

Il y a des fois qu'on reçoit pas, mais on n'a plus peur. Il y a encore du monde qui a peur, mais, ça s'en vient, et puis avec l'éducation, et comme j'ai dit dans ce que j'ai présenté, avec le CSAP, avec l'Université Sainte-Anne, avec le ministre, avec la Fédération acadienne, ça a changé l'attitude du monde que, on n'a plus besoin de se cacher pour dire, écoute, viens voir-là, on est acadien et on est fier d'être ici. Puis, pour nous autres, la manière que ça travaille « asteure », ça travaille bien. Donc on voudrait pas que ça changerait.

MR. MICHEL SAMSON: Merci Jacqueline. Merci M. le Président.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there anyone else? Ms. Birdsall.

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: Thank you, Jacqueline. When you say you feel there should be two Acadian members on the commission, what would your hope be - the conclusion they would come to? Would it be to maintain the status quo, or we heard earlier about a member at large - what would you think would be your best outcome?

MS. JACQUELINE SAMSON: Bien, j'ai pas vraiment pensé si loin que ça. Pour moi, c'est plus de faire sûr qu'on est bien représenté et puis bien représenté. Pour nous autres, ça travaille bien comme que c'est tout de suite. Mais s'il y aurait besoin d'avoir une pour les régions qui ne sont pas protégées, là, je pourrais voir ça comme un vote général. Je ne comprends pas comment est-ce que quelqu'un de la ville d'Halifax pourrait représenter les Acadiens du comté de Richmond.

MS. BIRDSALL: Good, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Are there any other questions?

Thank you very much for coming this afternoon.

MS. JACQUELINE SAMSON: Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other speakers in the audience? No other speakers? We will take a 10-minute break.

[3:59 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[4:13 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now call this committee to order.

Given that there is no one else to speak at this time, we will recommence at 7:00 p.m. this evening and this portion of the hearings will be concluded at this time. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 4:14 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Wednesday, November 23, 2011

PORT HAWKESBURY, NOVA SCOTIA

7:00 P.M.

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)

Mr. Gary Ramey

Ms. Michele Raymond

Mr. Leonard Preyra

Mr. Jim Boudreau

Hon. Michel Samson

Mr. Andrew Younger

Hon. Christopher d'Entremont

Mr. Keith Bain

[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Ms. Pam Birdsall.]

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

Ms. Moira MacLeod
Report Writer

PORT HAWKESBURY, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

7:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry

MR. LEONARD PREYRA (Chairman): I'm ready to call this meeting to order. Seeing no one here, I don't think we need to go through introductions of the Select Committee on Establishing an Electoral Boundaries Commission.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: I think we have a motion on the floor, Mr. Chairman.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Do the introductions, I want the record to show I was here. (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, for official purposes, we have to record members present.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I am Chris d'Entremont, député de Argyle.

MR. ANDREW YOUNGER: Andrew Younger, member for Dartmouth East.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: Jim Boudreau, MLA for Guysborough-Sheet Harbour.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Gary Ramey, MLA for Lunenburg West.

MS. PAM BIRDSALL: Pam Birdsall, Lunenburg.

MS. KIM LANGILLE (Legislative Committee Clerk): Kim Langille, Committee Clerk.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I must commend all the members for making their way out here tonight on this snowy winter evening in Port Hawkesbury, with just about every store closed down.

We do have one participant in the audience, I'm not sure if you'd like to come up and present something or say something to us . . .

MR. D'ENTREMONT: We'd love to have a chat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But if not, we will have a brief recess and maybe you can talk to us during the recess.

We will recess for 10 minutes or so.

[7:11 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[7:22 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to call this meeting back to order. Seeing no presenters, we're going to adjourn the meeting and leave behind a skeleton staff of people who will call us back. We'll be at the place next door in the event that someone does show up to make a presentation.

If we have agreement on that, we'll adjourn this meeting now. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 7:23 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Thursday, November 24, 2011

SYDNEY, NOVA SCOTIA

3:00 P.M.

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)
Mr. Gary Ramey
Ms. Michele Raymond
Mr. Leonard Preyra
Mr. Jim Boudreau
Hon. Michel Samson
Mr. Andrew Younger
Hon. Christopher d'Entremont
Mr. Keith Bain

[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Ms. Pam Birdsall.]
[Hon. Christopher d'Entremont was replaced by Mr. Eddie Orrell.]

WITNESS

Mr. Ron MacDonald

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

Ms. Moira MacLeod
Report Writer

SYDNEY, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

3:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now call this meeting to order. Thank you very much for coming. In the absence of having anyone who's wishing to appear at this time, even though I'm calling it to order, does anyone have any questions? No questions, then we will take a break for the next 15 minutes.

There's a gentleman in the back there. Are you interested in coming and sharing your points of view, sir, or are you just here? (Interruption) That's very good, thank you. Is there anyone else who has questions or points? Okay, we'll take a recess.

[3:03 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[3:35 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll now call this committee back to order. I'll just go over a few things. The exits are there, you know, in case there's an emergency. Today the hearing will be recorded and anything that you do say, sir, will be a matter of public record. I would ask you to speak directly into the microphone when you do. I'll ask my colleagues to introduce themselves.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your name, sir.

MR. RON MACDONALD: Ron MacDonald, and I'm from Cape Breton North. The main reason that I wanted to come here today was to determine just what the rules were, more or less, because I just received notice in the paper a week ago, or so, and I would suggest

that in a future time, perhaps it might be a bit more advertised for these hearings and if it could be done when the House isn't in session because those of us representing constituencies often would like to make the presentation when our own MLA is available, or MLAs in the neighbouring districts, in order that we are able to have that input as well as ours. When an MLA is away, especially in the rural areas, when he or she is away in Halifax, it's very difficult to get this opportunity for information.

I was rather shocked to see the presentation of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation - that we should be put on par with the federal seats which, to me, was rather ridiculous. I would think, I know here, for instance, in Sydney-Victoria, a federal constituency, there are five and a half provincial constituencies. This would be much more, perhaps, than some of the more urban areas and certainly representation by population has not been followed since 1867. We have lower populations per constituency in the rural ridings but this balances out because of the distance and the work involved. It doesn't have the same requirements as those in the urban areas and we have come through 100-odd years with this situation. It can be improved upon, I have no doubt.

The other thing is that when a committee is being formed to establish boundaries, or at least provide this information to the House, I would suggest, not like last time when there were five members from the Halifax regional areas and four from the rest of the province, that it be patterned out a bit more to reflect it. I have some worry that Nova Scotia is becoming much like Manitoba where Winnipeg is the sole voice, practically, for the rest of the province because of the population in Winnipeg with regard to the rest of the province. We don't have that in New Brunswick and certainly not in Prince Edward Island. In Newfoundland and Labrador it is a bit coming that St. John's is this way but I do not think it fair to the rural areas, here, that Halifax should become the sole tool to wag the rest of the province.

I would hope - I think your deadline is December 2nd - to perhaps put some of these words down in a more comprehensive fashion with some statistics to back up my presentation and provide it to the committee. I will do that in consultation with various other members from the community who are interested in this.

I think at this time, if there's anything that you can, perhaps, inform me of, I thank the committee very much for the opportunity to make this slight presentation. I would certainly be amenable to answering anything if I can and I will be making a presentation, officially, by writing in, and this goes to the committee. Now, I would make one request, that when the committee has a report to present to the members of the Legislature, that people from the constituencies be consulted about this and given an opportunity to make either a critique of it or to have some input along the way. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions? Mr. Bain.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ron. I realize it was short notice but it's certainly good to have someone here this afternoon, at least, making a statement.

Yesterday I asked the question and I think you already answered it. We did have the presentation for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation where the CEO, Kevin Lacey, suggested that we have 33 seats and it goes along with the federal boundaries, the 11 federal ridings, and he says there should be three MLAs from each federal riding. I think you've certainly made your views known on that.

I questioned Mr. Lacey as to whether or not they considered geography when they were making that determination and, indeed, when I say "they," I don't know who made the decision, whether it's just a recommendation from Mr. Lacey, or from the federation. I'm sure he spoke on behalf of the federation but I continue to ask that question because it's the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the presenters that we had yesterday. You are taxpayers of this country, and I think it's important that we hear your views, too, as well as the federation.

One of the things that was also suggested, and maybe Michel might be planning on asking it, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation is also suggesting that we do away with our protected seats. Presently we have three Acadian seats in the province: Richmond, Clare, and Argyle; and we have an African Nova Scotian seat in Preston. I don't know if you wish to make a comment on that, Ron, whether you think we should maintain those protected seats or if you have another suggestion.

MR. RON MACDONALD: Certainly it seems to me that the Acadian population has elected people through the years to represent the various areas that are in question. We've had three or four Acadian members for as long as I can recall. As for the Preston seat, of course, it turns back and forth because it isn't always a Black person being elected there and, to me, in the neighbouring constituency, there is a Black person elected. I just don't see why one should be designated as such. I don't think we can follow through on that. We don't have the authority.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Preyra.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Thank you very much and thank you for coming in and speaking to this committee, Mr. MacDonald. Really two things - one is just on your question of procedure. The procedure is really spelled out in the House of Assembly Act, and there are extra copies of that at the back of the room, but you will have an opportunity to write to this committee and certainly we would encourage you to do that. We want to get as many submissions as we possibly can and, certainly, if you would like to flesh out your comments, we would like to look at that as well.

On the Electoral Boundaries Commission itself, we have accepted the idea of having a commission that's broadly representative. It is spelled out in the House of Assembly Act itself, but in terms of making submissions, you could make a submission to the Electoral Boundaries Commission when it's established and they will then have a preliminary report and you will have an opportunity to respond to that preliminary report as well. This is kind of a preparatory committee for the real work that will be done on the Electoral Boundaries

Commission. Certainly we're hoping that a lot of people will participate, because it is an important task.

But on a question on your presentation, are you able to outline a set of principles that you think are important? When we recommend the terms of reference to the Electoral Boundaries Commission, we'll be asked to set out some broad principles and you seem to have some in mind in terms of rural representation and in terms of ridings and all that. Do you have things that you use as your touchstones?

MR. RON MACDONALD: To enunciate my principles would perhaps be the simplest thing - to find them fair is another thing.

MR. PREYRA: Exactly. What would you consider fair, I guess is what we're asking?

MR. RON MACDONALD: I do believe that we have at present a balance with the urban and rural population, although there is no mistake that the urban population in the Halifax area is growing and will need additional representation at times. I'm not particularly anxious to see this done at the expense of the rural seats which we now have.

I lived in Halifax for over 30 years and I knew several of the MLAs there and I knew them quite well. Their workload was extremely different than it was for those who represented rural areas. And I must say that I felt for many of the people in the rural areas, especially ministers in rural areas who had to combine not only their constituency work, but also the work of a minister. This was really cutting into their time, as I'm sure you, Mr. Chairman, would realize at this time, and Mr. Samson the same thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a question. With regard to the point you just made about the balance between urban and rural, what is your view? Should the seats of 52 be increased, decreased, or remain the same and find a balance within the 52?

MR. RON MACDONALD: I would think finding the balance within the 52 would be acceptable. I read this morning, I think, that New Brunswick is attempting to cut back on the seats they have. I think a reduction in representation right now - there's going to have to be a growth in the seats surrounding Halifax and this might be passed along to some of the rural areas - to cut back on the number of seats now, I don't think we should.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're aware that New Brunswick has more seats than Nova Scotia and less population?

MR. RON MACDONALD: Oh, yes. Yes. They're smaller.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If they're to align themselves, I think they'd have to go down around 48, I think, would balance it - just off the top of my head. So that's about a seven-seat difference, is it - there are 55 now? But if I'm hearing you correctly then, you're saying the 52 is acceptable and there should be some realignment to balance out the population within

Halifax and that would take - do you have a number from the rural that would be the adjustment?

MR. RON MACDONALD: No, not at this point, although I will attempt to come up with that when I make a presentation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I appreciate that, and we'll be looking forward to that presentation. Does anyone else have a question for Mr. MacDonald?

MR. BAIN: Mr. Chairman, it's not a question. And I think Andrew might confirm it, but I think New Brunswick has already announced today that they're lowering their seats to 52, which is the same as ours. So a population of 750,000 and 52 members - we have a population of a million and 52 members.

MR. RON MACDONALD: Newfoundland and Labrador is caught in that too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for coming in. We appreciate the fact that you did show up and you took the time to reflect. Not only was it nice that you did do that, but I think you provided us with some good information. I truly look forward to your report.

MR. RON MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're quite welcome.

Since the next speaker has not arrived yet, we will take a 15-minute recess.

[3:49 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[4:09 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now call this meeting to order. Since no other individual or presenter has arrived - it must be due to the stormy weather - we will call this portion to an end and we'll resume this evening at seven o'clock. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 4:09 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON

ESTABLISHING AN

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

Thursday, November 24, 2011

SYDNEY, NOVA SCOTIA

7:00 P.M.

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)

Mr. Gary Ramey

Ms. Michele Raymond

Mr. Leonard Preyra

Mr. Jim Boudreau

Hon. Michel Samson

Mr. Andrew Younger

Hon. Christopher d'Entremont

Mr. Keith Bain

[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Ms. Pam Birdsall.]

[Hon. Christopher d'Entremont was replaced by Mr. Eddie Orrell.]

WITNESSES

Mr. Stephen Tobin

Ms. Allison Haley

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

Ms. Moira MacLeod
Report Writer

SYDNEY, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

7:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN

Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: I call the meeting to order. I see someone from the media is here tonight; we're going to welcome them. You're welcome to come up and make a presentation if you want.

[7:02 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[7:22 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now call this committee back to order.

I understand we're going to have a couple of brief sessions here so would you like to both come up, or one at a time? (Interruption)

It's up to you, I certainly don't want to make you feel uncomfortable but if you feel you have something to contribute to this, we won't turn you away. All right? Going once, going twice.

I will adjourn if there are no speakers coming forward. There's no need of procrastinating, tying up time. That's it, they're not coming.

Okay, thank you, this meeting is recessed.

[7:24 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[7:25 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now resume this committee. We have Stephen Tobin and Allison Haley. We would ask that when you speak, you speak into the microphone. What you say is a matter of public record, it will be recorded. Should there be an emergency, you know where the exits are, when you came into the building - plus there's an exit door just straight out here to my right.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Remember to speak into the microphone and thank you for appearing.

MR. STEPHEN TOBIN: My name is Stephen Tobin; I'm a resident here in Sydney. I'm a small-business owner as well as a part-time teacher here in Sydney.

MS. ALLISON HALEY: I'm Allison Haley; I'm from Sydney, Nova Scotia. I recently moved to Halifax to look for some employment, it hasn't been going good. I just came home to visit family and I wanted to check out this meeting and see what you guys were talking about and see if I had any opinions that could help.

MR. TOBIN: I think Allison and I were a bit confused in terms of the agenda for tonight. We were just more or less curious, we thought it was more of an open forum but we would be happy to participate in some discussions.

I, myself, have a particular interest; I'm a past candidate of record here in this particular riding for Cape Breton South. I have an interest, of course, in this particular riding and just finding out if there are going to be any particular changes and, if so, what they would be.

The format, I suppose, for us would be to just ask some questions and gain some feedback. Allison, did you have anything in particular? Perhaps, can the committee update us as to what the focus is of these particular sessions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. GARY RAMEY: I wasn't going to speak; I was going to let you do that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The purpose of this committee is to gather information from the general public as to how they see the structure for the next election of the Legislature and to get that cross-section of opinion from the province and to help in the selection of the committee that will actually examine the issues concerning the electoral boundaries in Nova Scotia.

Our mandate is to have this phase of what we're doing done by the end of December and to have a presentation to the Legislature by the Fall of 2012. At that time, the outcomes of that process will be decided and decisions made.

MR. TOBIN: Are all ridings under consideration or are there particular areas of focus?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Others can certainly speak, but my understanding is everything's on the table. Whether we keep the minority seats, whether we keep 52 seats, we add, we subtract, whether we look at the geographical structure - everything's on the table. Whether we should add seats to the City of Halifax, whether we should add or take away from the rural area and how that should play out, it's up in the air.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Just to confirm, this committee doesn't make that decision. This committee selects members for the Electoral Boundaries Commission that will conduct hearings across the province to make those decisions. At that point, everything will be open. All we're doing is setting the terms of reference within the terms that are set out in the House of Assembly Act and to that extent some constituencies may be affected, but not necessarily all.

MR. TOBIN: The commission will be reviewing this when? At what point will the actual commission be making these decisions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have to be done by December 2012.

MR. TOBIN: So essentially one year from now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we have to have our portion done by the end of December of this year and by the Fall of next year the committee has to have their presentation to the Legislature. Do you have anything different to add Mr. Samson?

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Let me see if I can take a kick at it. What we have here is a select committee of elected members. What we've been asked is to set up the terms of reference that will then be used by what's called the Electoral Boundaries Commission. That commission will be private individuals, not elected members. We're not sure yet how many there should be, that's one of the terms of reference. That commission itself will then undertake to do much more broad consultations throughout the province and actually look at population figures, look at the map of Nova Scotia and make determinations. What we need to basically tell them is here's the footprint that we want you to use in making those determinations.

We have already received some submissions recommending there be fewer members, we've received some submissions about keeping the four protected ridings that we have now. So that's all part of the terms of reference, what variance should exist between ridings population-wise, should geography and the size of a riding be a factor in determining the makeup of those ridings.

That's the phase we're at now of trying to determine what mandate we give that commission and saying here's what we want you to keep in mind as your guiding principles and go forth and do your consultations. The way that commission will work, if it's the same as last time, they'll bring in an interim report with their first recommendations. They'll do a whole other round of public meetings and then they'll have a final report, which will then be sent to the Legislature, and from there the government will have to introduce legislation to change the Elections Act and possibly the House of Assembly Act to reflect the recommendations that come out of it.

MR. TOBIN: One more question and then I'll jump in with any opinions that I might have. This particular format is something that's happening across the province in various locations so you're asking for public feedback to draft your terms of reference, okay. So is this one of the first sessions that you've undertaken?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's the third.

MR. TOBIN: And they are publicly advertised sessions that you're seeking public input, okay. I guess in my opinion, as it relates to the boundaries, it has been a couple of years now that people have been talking about this as something that may or may not be happening in the near future, as our Cape Breton members can attest here in Cape Breton, we obviously have a lot of rural areas just as across Nova Scotia so I think rural representation is incredibly important. I think when it comes time to be making these decisions that population probably shouldn't be the only consideration when you look at a riding like Victoria-The Lakes. It's a very large area geographically which would make a member's job much different than somebody who's representing a very urban riding, obviously that makes a difference in representation in terms of responsibilities and roles of the member.

Aside from that I think as it relates to the terms of reference - one more question when it comes to choosing the commission, who actually is making that selection? Is that this committee that's choosing the private commission?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we put the names forward. Do we make the final selection?

MR. SAMSON: That hasn't been decided yet but certainly the last time it was nine commissioners and it was a Progressive Conservative majority government. They named five members to the commission and both the Liberal and NDP caucus were asked to submit two names each. What will happen this time, I don't think that's written in stone as to how that works so I think we are still waiting for the government to give a bit of direction.

We have a majority government so obviously this committee, you can see how it's structured, so there is a majority situation but actually who sits on that commission is one of the items that we're looking for input as well. I think the presenter earlier today recommended that there be a significant representation that the commissioners be from rural Nova Scotia, not simply - I think you pointed out last time - there was a majority that were from HRM which caused some concern. The gentleman who presented today and I think some of the Acadian presentations we've received have indicated that they would like to see one or two of the commissioners be of Acadian origin as well. So those are some of the items that we're looking to hear on and, again, what it will all look like in the end remains to be seen but that's part of the feedback that we're looking for.

MR. TOBIN: I think Acadian representation is important as would be the First Nations representation, you know, if you're looking at areas like Cape Breton as well, it's another important factor to consider. Again, and I know it was just sort of an informal thing, but when you were speaking, you had mentioned whether it be adding additional representation in Halifax, or taking away from representation in rural areas and, in my opinion, that would

be the wrong direction when we're looking at the vast majority of rural Nova Scotia ridings and the representation that they would require from a geographic perspective.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Preyra.

MR. PREYRA: I was just going to speak to that earlier question about the composition. The mandate of the commission and its operations are pretty well spelled out in the House of Assembly Act and I'll just put that there in front of you. Just two broad principles that are specifically mentioned and become part of the convention: one is that the commission has to be broadly representative of the province and how that's defined, I guess, is open to interpretation, but it's broadly representative; and by convention it has been non-partisan and that the members who are appointed, however they're appointed, are not Party representatives as such. They're members of the commission and, you know, they're appointed in a non-partisan way and they operate in a non-partisan way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bain.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You mentioned, Stephen, about Mi'kmaq representation and there is an allowance for a Mi'kmaq seat presently in the Legislature but that hasn't happened.

MR. TOBIN: A Mi'kmaq seat on the committee, on the commission, a Mi'kmaq seat representation for this particular . . .

MR. BAIN: No, a seat within the Legislature.

MR. TOBIN: A seat within the Legislature.

MR. BAIN: Yes, and as far as what we're doing here, the Act states that every 10 years the boundaries have to be reviewed. It was done in 1991 and Michel, correct me if I'm wrong, that's when the protected seats came into being?

MR. SAMSON: In 1991, yes.

MR. BAIN: That's when the Acadian seats and the African Nova Scotian seats, so there was one in 1991, one in 2001, and we're in 2011 this year.

I know you're still asking questions but I'm going to ask a question that I've asked everybody. I hope I'm not going to put you on the spot when I ask it but we had a presentation from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. Actually our first presentation was

from Kevin Lacey. The suggestion that he put forward was that the number of members be reduced from 52 to 33. He did use the 33 number but basically made it broader than that after awhile and said less than 52.

As two young people within this province, as taxpayers within this province, I would like to ask your opinion, your feelings on whether it should be 33. Do you think 33 is a good number? Do you think 52 is the right number? Is it too much? Where should we go?

MR. TOBIN: Do you want to go first?

MS. HALEY: That's an interesting question. I saw that report that was put out. They wanted to take away 19 members but I guess it would depend on how those 33 members were spread across the province. If we're going, you know, if Cape Breton is affected and loses way more seats than the mainland, then obviously I would be totally against it because I want to see the same sort of representation in Cape Breton and on the mainland.

Do I think 52 people are too much or too many? No, because I think that there is such a broad representation across the province and there are so many different intricacies in our province that we do need a larger number of people to represent the different sectors that are in our province.

MR. TOBIN: My opinion on it would be - obviously what this committee is going to have to do, or what this commission is going to have to do, is really dig down and study individual ridings on a case-by-case basis and have an understanding that, you know, (Interruption) Well, I'll answer the question first. Reducing the members to 33? No, not acceptable in my opinion. We need effective representation across the province and we need effective representation for all types of ridings, not just urban ridings but rural ridings as well and, again, I think there is a significant difference between the type of representation required in an urban riding versus the type of representation that's required in a rural riding.

I think that really what you should be doing is gauging the members, as well, which I know that obviously you're doing, but to find out even at the representation we have now - I can attest to the fact that some of these members and many of you are quite busy as it is, so I'm certain that by reducing members down to 33, you're taking on a much larger load of additional responsibilities. At this time I would say that 52 members is, in itself, pushing it so I think that by reducing it down to 33 members, you're losing effective representation and, in turn, you're losing the voice of constituents and you're losing the effectiveness of the role of members of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. BAIN: Just for information, the 33 number that was presented to us came from the fact that there are 11 federal ridings in the Province of Nova Scotia. The Taxpayers Federation is saying that there should be three MLAs representing each of those 11 ridings, and that's where the 33 came from. Again, that's just in case you're wondering why 33, that was the explanation we were given.

MR. TOBIN: So in other words, the justification being that federal representation should be able to balance out the reduction in provincial representation?

MR. BAIN: No, I don't think it played a part whatsoever, except to say that there were 11 federal ridings and just as an example, I'll use our speaker from this afternoon. Sydney-Victoria, as it stands today, there are 5.5 MLAs - Eddie takes up 1.5. (Laughter) That's the way it is now and their proposal is three per riding.

MR. TOBIN: Again, my opinion would be that obviously federal representation is a lot different than provincial representation. You're talking two very different areas of responsibility and focus. I think it's very important on a provincial level, especially given these uncertain times across the country, across the province, that we have effective representation in Halifax or in the Legislature.

I think when we're talking about that, Mr. Lacey would like to focus on - I'm sure he looks at the bottom line, and I know what he has been going on about over the last number of years and that's no surprise to anybody. But let's take it away from a cost perspective and look at it simply from a representation standpoint. That's why people are elected: to effectively represent the people of Nova Scotia. Can the people of Nova Scotia be effectively represented with 33 members? No.

MR. BAIN: I guess to put it into perspective, as it stands today, Cape Breton Island has nine MLAs; under this new proposal there would be six in Cape Breton. That's just if you wanted to think about comparisons.

MS. HALEY: Does the proposal say which ridings would be affected in Cape Breton?

MR. BAIN: No, and he felt that that's up to the commission to determine that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for coming, Ms. Haley and Mr. Tobin. I have just a tiny bit to add and it's in relation to what some of my colleagues have already discussed. You asked us if this was the first meeting and we said no, and you should

know where we've been. We've been in Truro, Port Hawkesbury, we're in Sydney obviously now, Tuesday we'll go to Yarmouth, and then we'll come back to Halifax. That will be our little road tour for our part.

We were talking about the way the pie was carved up, according to Mr. Lacey's hypothesis. I think Mr. Bain has already addressed what that would look like. Certainly in our area, our MP is Mr. Keddy and the federal riding is called South Shore-St. Margaret's. It extends from roughly part of Halifax County down to Shelburne. There are several MLAs - there would be six there if you go right through to Shelburne. Under that hypothesis again, we would be - I mean I think it's very simplistic: you take the federal riding, you split it into three pieces and that's how you get the count, right?

I think that is simplistic, personally. I'm not here to make opinions on that, but that carves it up in a very simple way.

You should also know that we talked about protected ridings and I'm not sure if you know which ones those are but there's the riding of Preston, and there are the ridings of Argyle, Clare, and Richmond - three Acadian and one African-Canadian. It was explained a few minutes ago that those were put in place.

You should also know that there are some constituencies in the Halifax area that have 22,000 constituents and there are some constituencies that may have 9,000 constituents or something. They vary greatly but then again, some of them might be in the protected ones, some of them might be in rural areas.

This gentleman has a constituency roughly the size of Prince Edward Island and, Mr. Bain, you're right behind him in terms of geographic size, so really, it's not a simplistic thing to just quickly look at and say, oh well, let's use some very simplistic formula and figure this out.

I'm really just passing that on for what it's worth, so that when you're making your deliberations, should you present again, that you're aware of those things.

MR. TOBIN: Certainly, and I mean you just said it but it's not a simplistic consideration, a simplistic recommendation doesn't work. Again, just to reiterate, even though I've said it before, the issues that would come forward in a riding that may have more constituents per riding in an urban area are still much different than the issues and/or the responsibilities that come with a rural area.

MR. RAMEY: And if I may, just to add, Mr. Chairman, and then I'll stop talking. I think Mr. Samson mentioned when he was speaking that there were nine members on the last commission. Five of them came from what we call HRM - the Halifax Regional Municipality - the other four were from other areas. That's how it was constituted last time. Some people may agree or disagree that that was the right mix but that's the way it was.

MR. TOBIN: There was a session in Truro, a session in Port Hawkesbury, you're heading to Yarmouth. I understand from the afternoon session that there was one person present; there are only two here tonight. So do you feel that there has been adequate uptake and buy-in into this session from the public, or is there a reason why there aren't more people here tonight, or is that just because this is not a (Interruption) Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to answer and then I'm going to go over to Mr. Samson. There are two parts to that: one, I think the storm contributed to the low turnout today; the other is that there are many other vehicles in which people can communicate with the panel. They can do that on-line and they can do it by getting direct with the government, or writing in as well. Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: Thank you. Ten years ago it was no different; I think we had a total of 31 presentations throughout the province, which is not a high number. At this point, Stephen, I think the public hasn't been engaged in understanding what changes could take place. Right now, unofficially, it's being presumed that there will be one seat lost in industrial Cape Breton. Now, do the people in industrial Cape Breton understand that? I don't think so. I think if they did, especially the potential ridings that could disappear, I think you'd see quite a few more people here, which I think once the commission starts, if not in their first round of hearings, I think after their first recommendations come out you'll see much more interest.

At this point I don't think communities have yet come to the realization that they may lose representation or some of the communities in Halifax which may feel that they need further representation, I guess it's a double-edged sword. I think at this point, without anyone having suggested what the changes might look like, I think that's why there's a bit less interest but I'm not surprised by that.

I would suspect that when we go to Yarmouth, there may be more presentations there and I suspect that in Halifax we might see quite a few presentations as well. I think, as the chairman has pointed out, in this day and age a lot of people are e-mailing in their comments or they're faxing them in or they're going to the Web site. The days of people showing up at public meetings, I think it's a lot easier reflecting on your thoughts and sending them via your computer than sitting in front of a microphone at the Delta.

I think society has changed a little bit in that regard. In fact, that's one of the questions we asked ourselves earlier, as to whether this was still the best way of hearing from Nova Scotians in 2011. So I'm not surprised at the low turnout but I would suspect once the commission starts doing its work, it's going to draw a lot more attention.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's also a 1-888 number, as well, that people can phone in.

We'll take one more question from Mr. Bain.

MR. BAIN: It's just a statement, Mr. Chairman, and it's just following up on what you said with the e-mails and faxes and everything. I hope I'm not going too far with this but I encourage both Stephen and Allison, if they want to make a submission in writing or by e-mail, please feel free to do it. Now that you know the general gist of . . .

MR. PREYRA: Or in Yarmouth or Halifax . . .

MR. BAIN: Yes, if you want to come to Yarmouth or Halifax, sure.

MR. TOBIN: We can get on your tour bus. (Laughter)

MR. BAIN: But I think it's important that you know your voice will be heard, if you have some opinions that you have up until December 2nd.

MR. TOBIN: I guess one last thought I would put in is that - and we've already established that it's going to be a non-partisan commission. This is incredibly important just simply because, of course, from a political perspective, as well, when you're changing boundaries, you know, changing the political makeup, with a majority government in place, et cetera, we would want to make sure that obviously there's equal and fair representation in terms of the selection of that because we don't want to see ridings change purely for political purposes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And neither do we.

MS. HALEY: When you're thinking of the people to select for this commission, what type of person, what kind of background do these people have; what type of credentials do they have to pretty much put together a report and say that these boundaries need to change?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think there are a few things: that they're a Nova Scotian; that they have a diversity of skills - we're looking for diversified panel representation that encompasses much understanding of the people of Nova Scotia; that they keep an open

mind and are objective in their approach; and that they look at the best interests of the taxpayer at the end of the day and the individual voter.

MS. HALEY: So did I hear you correctly that you have already selected people potentially?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MS. HALEY: Okay, so how can people put their name - if they're interested to sit on this committee, is there a process if someone is interested?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll take your name tonight. (Interruptions) Yes, they can bring their names forward and say that they have an interest in it and then, you know, submit a resumé so that we get some understanding. I think it's very important that whoever gets selected, that we have a broad range of life experiences and a broad range of understanding of Nova Scotia, the various interest groups, and the culture of the province.

MS. HALEY: I think that's great. I'm just wondering how people could kind of put their name forward. So I think that's great.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we're looking forward to seeing you put your name forward.

MS. HALEY: Maybe.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions? I want to thank you for coming tonight and it was really nice that you did stir up the desire to sit at the table. We appreciate your questions and getting your points on record and getting the questions out to the panel. I think that worked out very well. So I thank you.

MR. TOBIN: Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other witnesses? Going once, going twice.

I will now adjourn this meeting for the final time this evening. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 7:53 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON

ESTABLISHING AN

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

**Tuesday, November 29, 2011
3:00 P.M.**

YARMOUTH, NOVA SCOTIA

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)

Mr. Gary Ramey

Ms. Michele Raymond

Mr. Leonard Preyra

Mr. Jim Boudreau

Hon. Michel Samson

Mr. Andrew Younger

Hon. Christopher d'Entremont

Mr. Keith Bain

[Hon. Michel Samson was replaced by Mr Wayne Gaudet]

[Mr. Andrew Younger was replaced by Mr. Zach Churchill]

Witnesses

Mr. Norbert LeBlanc, Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas

Mr. Gerald Boudreau

Ms. Marie-Germaine Churtrand, Université Sainte-Anne

Mr. Lester Doucet, Société acadienne de Clare

Ms. Elaine Surette, Acadian Historical Society of West Pubnico

Mr. Cyrille Leblanc

Mr. Aldric d'Entremont, Warden, Municipality of Argyle

Mr. Phil Mooney, Mayor, Town of Yarmouth

Ms. Suzanne Saulnier, Early Childhood Education, District of Clare

Ms. Ghislaine d'Eon, Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse

Père Maurice LeBlanc, Conseil des Arts de Par-en-Bas

Ms. Jean d'Entremont

Mr. Paul Comeau

Mr. Réal Boudreau, Chambre d'Argyle Commerce

Mr. Jean Melanson, Warden, Municipal District of Clare

Ms. Pauline d'Entremont, Le Réveil de Pobcoup

Ms. Ghislain Boudreau, Association Radio CIFA

Mr. Kenneth Deveau, Université Sainte-Anne

Mr. Paul Gaudet

Mr. Neil LeBlanc

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

YARMOUTH, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE
ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

3:00 P.M.

**CHAIRMAN
Mr. Ross Landry**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This hearing is now open and ready to go, and I would ask all to take their seats and all committee members to please come to the table so we can proceed. We have a number of people who do want to make presentations.

I want to start off by saying welcome to everyone. My name is Ross Landry and I'm the chairman of this committee. I'll be introducing my colleagues here at the table shortly, giving them an opportunity to say who they are.

It is exciting to be in Yarmouth, as always, I like coming down here. The only regret I have about coming here today is I didn't bring my bicycle with me. The roads are great; the weather is great - it's just like the new Florida, it's quite nice.

The hearings today, we're going to try and stay with roughly 10 minutes per person, so if you can try and judge your presentation to 10 minutes or less, if that's possible. We will leave some leeway for questioning. We have quite an extensive list here for people to appear, and yet this evening is open, so if we can't get through everyone this afternoon, there is some this evening, but we will run a little bit later than the 4:30 p.m. today to try and accommodate as best we can.

When you come to the mike, I would ask that you speak directly into the mike and that you introduce yourself and state your name clearly. Everything said here today will be a matter of public record. It is recorded, and it is a matter of the record, so if you don't want it heard, don't say it. That's the rule there.

We have had the pleasure to go across the province and this is our fourth appearance, but the most prosperous in numbers, compared to other areas. I'm looking forward to your comments.

The Electoral Boundaries Committee will be making recommendations to the board that will be doing the report.

I will now get my colleagues to introduce themselves.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

Our first person to appear today is Norbert LeBlanc.

Mr. LeBlanc. You are welcome to take anyone you wish with you - there are mikes available for each.

MR. NORBERT LEBLANC: Merci, M. le Président. Je m'appelle Norbert LeBlanc et mon rôle, c'est que je suis le président du Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas. Avec moi, à ma gauche, il s'agit de Clyde de Viller. Clyde de Viller est directeur général du CAPEB – du Conseil acadien de Par-en-Haut – et je voudrais reconnaître dans la salle, avec votre permission, la présence de deux personnes – ce sont deux jeunes – je demanderais à Noé Bourque et à Ashley White de se lever, qu'on puisse noter leur présence. Ils font partie du Conseil jeunesse provincial de la région de Par-en-Bas.

D'abord, le Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas, le CAPEB, désire remercier le Comité de lui permettre cette occasion de présenter ses points de vue, en ce qui touche les termes de référence de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales en Nouvelle-Écosse, et de le faire dans ma langue maternelle.

Comme mission, le CAPEB s'engage à promouvoir et à faciliter l'épanouissement et le développement global de la communauté acadienne et francophone de la région d'Argyle, en collaboration avec ses membres. Argyle est une des plus grandes et importantes régions acadiennes en Nouvelle-Écosse. On peut dire que j'ai une opinion, sans doute préjugée là-dessus, en vue de sa population et de son histoire. Le CAPEB est membre de la FANE, la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

En ce qui touche les termes de référence, le CAPEB recommande que la Commission reprenne ceux établis par un comité semblable en 2001-2002, c'est-à-dire de considérer la géographie, l'histoire, les intérêts et la représentation des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Quant à la variance normalement acceptée de 25 p. 100, de plus haut ou plus bas, du nombre moyen d'électeurs dans une circonscription, le CAPEB reconnaît l'importance de ce chiffre mais demande que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne et respecte son désir de promouvoir la représentation de cette minorité à la Législature.

Ceci fut le cas en 2002, en Nouvelle-Écosse. Il existe d'autres précédents au Canada, tel que le cas de la Cour suprême du Canada en Saskatchewan où madame la juge McLachlin a constaté que la parité absolue d'électeurs, bien qu'importante, est impossible et que la représentation des groupes minoritaires peut devoir être prise en considération afin de garantir que nos Assemblées législatives représentent réellement la diversité de notre

mosaïque sociale. On pourrait demander pourquoi le CAPEB demande que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne. Voici, selon nous, quelques raisons de justification.

D'abord, celle-ci est un peuple fondateur de cette province et joue toujours un rôle primordial dans le développement et l'épanouissement de la Nouvelle-Écosse. On doit reconnaître le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes, actuelles, dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires et leurs traditions. Les Acadiens font partie d'une minorité de langue officielle au Canada. Il faut tenir compte de la *Loi sur les services en français* de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui permet d'obtenir des services en français, mais aussi de favoriser la préservation et l'essor de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province.

La communauté acadienne en Nouvelle-Écosse s'est beaucoup développée pendant les dernières années. Au niveau provincial, notons la création du CSAP, le seul conseil scolaire en Nouvelle-Écosse à connaître une augmentation du nombre d'élèves. La création d'associations dévouées à l'avancement de la communauté acadienne, telle que la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse, le Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse et j'en passe. Le fusionnement entre l'Université Sainte-Anne et le Collège de l'Acadie, avec des campus dans cinq régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse. La création de l'Office des affaires acadiennes par le gouvernement provincial, et cætera.

Au niveau local, la région d'Argyle a vu la construction du Centre communautaire de Par-en-Bas, qui comprend, entre autres, une salle de spectacle et la première garderie française dans l'histoire de la région, du Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse à Pubnico-Ouest, du Musée de Wedgeport, l'expansion du Musée des Acadiens des Pubnicos et j'en passe. Ces développements sont grâce en partie à une meilleure représentation politique des Acadiens à la Législature depuis les derniers 30 ans.

Au niveau de la circonscription d'Argyle, je veux donner une statistique importante. Entre 1957 et 1984, la circonscription jumelée de Yarmouth, n'a pas été représentée par un Acadien qu'une seule fois. Depuis 1984, Argyle a toujours été représentée par un des leurs. La province de la Nouvelle-Écosse, via certaines initiatives, notamment l'intégration du développement rural au ministère du Développement économique et rural et du Tourisme, reconnaît les besoins des régions rurales. Nos régions acadiennes sont en région rurale. Enlever son pouvoir politique va à l'encontre de son développement.

Une représentation adéquate permet un meilleur exercice démocratique. Par contre, si la Commission se voit obligée d'augmenter la représentation urbaine en raison de sa population croissante, surtout dans la Municipalité régionale d'Halifax, nous ne serions pas contre. L'idée d'augmenter le nombre de circonscriptions en Nouvelle-Écosse, pour en ajouter à cette région urbaine, mais seulement si le nombre de circonscriptions rurales, dites acadiennes, n'est pas diminué. Au Canada, c'est ça qui est proposé actuellement. C'est-à-dire, d'augmenter le nombre de circonscriptions en Ontario, en

Colombie-Britannique, entre autres, au lieu de diminuer le nombre de circonscriptions en Nouvelle-Écosse, par exemple.

En ce qui concerne la composition et les procédures de la Commission, le CAPEB recommande le suivant : que les consultations aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur des possibilités de changements aux circonscriptions électorales, notamment les régions acadiennes, traditionnelles de Chéticamp, Isle-Madame, Clare et Argyle.

Que toutes les sessions de consultation se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tous les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais.

Qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent à la Commission afin d'assurer une représentation adéquate de notre communauté.

En terminant, le CAPEB remercie les membres du comité pour votre attention et nous souhaitons que nos points de vue seront mis en valeur lors de la création de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. Merci Messieurs et Mesdames.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Gerald Boudreau is the next presenter. I would just like to reiterate what I said before about speaking directly into the microphone, and slowly. We have a phenomenal translator in there. He does an excellent job, and if we slow down just a little bit, he'll be able to do an even greater job. But he's doing very well in there. Thank you. Go ahead.

MR. GERALD BOUDREAU: M. le Président, merci beaucoup de m'accorder ces quelques minutes et membres du Comité spécial. Mon nom est Gérald Boudreau. Je suis un Acadien francophone, citoyen de la Municipalité d'Argyle. Je suis également natif de cette municipalité. Je suis à la retraite, présentement. Je suis à la retraite d'une carrière à l'Université Sainte-Anne comme administrateur cadre pendant une trentaine d'années. J'ai également été et je suis toujours engagé dans différents organismes francophones, autant au niveau de la province qu'au niveau des provinces Maritimes et même au niveau national. Alors, j'ai travaillé, je crois, pendant toute ma vie pour la francophonie et pour les organismes acadiens dont je suis membre. Donc je suis membre, décidément, je suis membre du Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas.

Mon message est assez court et simple. Je veux tout simplement vous partager que j'appuie entièrement la présentation que le Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas vient de vous présenter. J'accepte entièrement toutes les recommandations et les arguments qui ont amené le Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas à faire ces recommandations. Alors, je crois que cela termine ma petite présentation, mais, simplement, qui ne manque pas de grandeur d'appui pour le Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas. Merci beaucoup M. le Président et chers membres.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for coming, Mr. Boudreau. Our next presenter is Marie-Germaine Chartrand.

MS. MARIE-GERMAINE CHARTRAND: Bonjour. Je m'appelle Marie-Germaine Chartrand. Je vous adresse la parole en tant que directrice de l'Université Sainte-Anne, campus de Tusket, la seule institution postsecondaire de langue française en Nouvelle-Écosse. Je tiens à remercier les membres du Comité législatif pour me donner l'occasion de faire part de nos recommandations quant à la composition et aux termes de référence d'une Commission sur les frontières électorales, un sujet d'une importance capitale pour le développement et l'épanouissement des minorités des langues officielles de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Notre présentation d'aujourd'hui portera surtout sur la région d'Argyle. Le campus de Tusket est situé dans la Municipalité d'Argyle. Il s'agit d'une région ayant 6 474 « voteurs », selon 2009, sur une superficie de 1 527 kilomètres carrés. Cette municipalité comprend plusieurs communautés de concentrations importantes de population acadienne, telles que Pubnico-Est, Pubnico, Pubnico-Ouest, Sainte-Anne-du-Ruisseau, Abrams River, Tusket, Pointe de Hubbard, Buttes-Amirault, Pointe du Sault, Isle Surette, Isle Morris, Belleville, Bell Neck, Springhaven, Quinan, Wedgeport, Butte-des-Comeau et la Petite-Rivière.

Selon le recensement canadien de 2006, 46,6 p. 100 de la population totale de la Municipalité d'Argyle est de langue maternelle française. La circonscription provinciale d'Argyle fut créée en 1981. Depuis 1984, la région bénéficie d'une représentation acadienne à l'Assemblée législative en passant par LeBlanc, Surette, LeBlanc et d'Entremont. Lors de la révision des frontières électorales en 2001, le Comité législatif sur l'établissement d'une Commission sur les frontières électorales recommandait que la représentation de la minorité, particulièrement la représentation du peuple acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse, soit un des facteurs primaires à considérer par la Commission sur les frontières électorales.

La volonté de promouvoir la représentation de la minorité de langue officielle de la Nouvelle-Écosse, dont les communautés acadiennes, était donc une circonstance extraordinaire à la parité électorale. Il fut également proposé de nommer une représentation acadienne pour siéger à la Commission sur les frontières électorales, dont la personne de Hayden Landry, un résident de la Municipalité d'Argyle. Notre message à vous aujourd'hui est simple. Le système politique actuel, avec une députation pour la circonscription d'Argyle, fonctionne. Il assure une représentation de la minorité acadienne à l'Assemblée législative, tout en contribuant à l'épanouissement d'un meilleur gouvernement pour l'ensemble de la population néo-écossaise.

Depuis que la population acadienne de la région d'Argyle bénéficie d'une représentation législative, elle s'est vue obtenir d'importants gains pour le développement et l'épanouissement du peuple acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse. La communauté acadienne de la région d'Argyle tient à cette représentation législative par l'entremise de la circonscription d'Argyle et ne veut absolument pas perdre des acquis qu'elle bénéficie maintenant depuis 30 ans. Nous recommandons donc que les consultations de la Commission sur les frontières électorales se dotent d'un service de traduction simultanée afin de permettre aux gens des communautés de langues officielles partout en Nouvelle-

Écosse de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais, selon la langue de leur choix. Que les consultations de la Commission aient lieu dans la région d'Argyle. Que la Commission sur les frontières électorales considère comme facteur primaire, la représentation des communautés de la minorité de langues officielles comme une circonstance extraordinaire à la parité électorale, tel que c'était le cas en 2001 et que deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse siègent à la Commission sur les frontières électorales.

Nous vous remercions de nous avoir donné l'occasion de présenter notre mémoire en français et apprécions qu'il ait dans votre mandat de consulter les personnes provenant des communautés acadiennes. La représentation des communautés de langues officielles, comme circonstance extraordinaire, se situe dans une catégorie tout à fait à part, qui est bien différent de ce que l'on peut entendre par autres facteurs, tels que la géographie, l'histoire communautaire et les intérêts communautaires. En effet, il s'agit de droits protégés par la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés. Je vous remercie de votre attention et suis disponible pour répondre à vos questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Mr. d'Entremont.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. Je voulais simplement demander une question sur le recensement canadien de 2006. Quand ça parle de la population acadienne en Argyle, que ça dit 46,6 p. 100, les informations « anecdotales », c'est que c'est actuellement une petite miette plus haut que 46 p. 100, que c'est plus proche de 60 p. 100, 55 à 60 p. 100. As-tu des idées sur ça? Pourquoi est-ce que peut-être les Acadiens de la région d'Argyle ne se « self-proclaim », se dit à eux-mêmes qu'il sont des Acadiens?

MS. CHARTRAND: Je ne peux pas répondre pour tout le monde de la Municipalité d'Argyle, de la région d'Argyle, mais je pense que certaines personnes se considèrent bilingues donc, quand que ça vient pour la langue maternelle française, ils ne vont pas nécessairement mettre qu'ils sont francophones d'abord.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Oui. Donc, c'est une question que le nombre, dans mon idée, est plus haut que 46 p. 100, dans la région d'Argyle, et je vois Clyde, bouger sa tête en haut et en bas là. Merci.

That is a question on the numbers. I think the number is higher than 46 per cent, and I can see Clyde nodding, yes. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Merci beaucoup. Je ne parle pas français bien. Je voudrais parler en anglais, s'il vous plaît.

We had a presentation in Truro, last week, from Kevin Lacey in which he suggested that the number of seats in the provincial Legislature should be dramatically reduced from 52. His suggestion came out to around 33. I think what he was suggesting is that we take the federal ridings; we split them into three pieces and end up with 33 seats.

I'm just wondering - from your presentation, I gather you would not be supportive of that - what is your opinion on such a proposition? You may certainly answer in French, if you wish.

MS. CHARTRAND: Moi, je ne suis pas ici pour vous, pour vous donner des recommandations sur l'ensemble de nombre de sièges qui doit avoir à l'Assemblée législative, mais, je vous dis quand même que c'est primordial qu'il ait quand même une représentation et que ces droits-là soient protégés pour la minorité des langues officielles. Alors, il faut absolument qu'il ait des sièges pour représenter la minorité acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse qui, comme je dis, vous pouvez réduire les sièges ailleurs. Je sais que mes collègues ont dit tout à l'heure que s'il fallait augmenter des chiffres pour représenter la région métropolitaine. Mon point de vue c'est qu'il faut absolument - d'une façon ou d'une autre - si on réduit, quand même, on doit avoir la représentation acadienne représentée - ou là. Ça va être des choix difficiles.

MR. RAMEY: May I . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have another question, a follow-up? Yes, go ahead.

MR. RAMEY: So if the number of seats was to be reduced to 33, you would want at least several of those seats to be protected seats for Acadian populations - is that correct?

MS. CHARTRAND: Absolument.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Raymond.

MS. MICHELE RAYMOND: Pardon et merci beaucoup. Il vous faut m'excuser mon français - je ne suis pas francophone mais j'aimerais l'être - tantôt, essayer de parler en français parce que je suis fière d'avoir été la personne qui, au début de ma carrière à l'Assemblée de la Nouvelle-Écosse, on a reconnu qu'il y avait beaucoup de gens qui ne connaissaient pas vraiment, qu'il y aurait des gens qui comprennent le français et qui voudraient, soit beaucoup plus de députés qui comprennent le français, mais c'est pas nécessairement avec des liens géographiques.

Ça m'a fait beaucoup de surprise lorsque j'ai demandé au ministre des Ressources humaines s'il y avait personne dans la pièce entre les fonctionnaires qui pourrait comprendre la question en français et il n'y avait personne. Maintenant, ce n'est plus le cas. Mais ce n'était pas une fonction d'avoir des sièges protégés. Ce n'est pas à dire qu'il ne devrait pas avoir des sièges protégés, mais est-ce que vous voulez dire qu'il doit avoir

un pourcentage, peut-être, de gens francophones, qui aient des représentations aux populations générales ou s'il doit être lié aux endroits géographiques?

En représentations à Halifax, j'ai peu, peu, peu, peu de constituants qui parlent français dans ma région, mais il y a des énormes régions de Dartmouth et des autres gens ou il y a des écoles CSAP et seulement francophone – et qu'est-ce qu'on va dire à ces endroits-là?

MS. CHARTRAND: Ici, on parle de peuple fondateur, on parle de la Charte canadienne des droits et des libertés, on parle de la *Loi sur les langues officielles*, on parle des racines qui vont de très loin, on parle des acquis qui nous avaient été donnés 30 ans passés et, là, ce qu'on est là pour vous dire, c'est que c'est très important pour le développement et l'épanouissement des communautés et, c'est seulement quand, une fois, qu'on a eu des députations dans Clare, Argyle et le comté de Richmond qu'on a vraiment vu un essor en terme de structure et d'infrastructure et de protection des choses que nous, on a besoin, comme peuple, pour nous épanouir et avancer.

D'après moi, ces choses-là, ce n'est pas seulement bon pour les communautés acadiennes de Clare et d'Argyle : c'est pour le mieux du peuple acadien, de la Nouvelle-Écosse en général. Alors, avoir une personne qui dit que je veux être un « token » représentant de la communauté acadienne», d'après moi, ce n'est pas suffisant.

MS. RAYMOND: Ce n'est pas suffisant. Ça suffit, merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a question. Just as I heard the discussion here, and I couldn't help but reflect, if the number - if I heard correctly - is there's a theme that you want to protect the three seats, but looking at the issues surrounding our First Nations people and our African Nova Scotians, should there be proportional representation there as well, because of their historical roots and connection with the province?

I don't know if you have an opinion, or want to express that, but I couldn't help but - the passion you were showing in regards to that and that others have shown, how does that equate and, as a province with 52 seats, how we would formulate a formula that would accommodate this diversity - or should we? And does that mean adding seats, or if we took seats away, what does that mean? I was just wondering if you had an opinion or feeling on that.

MS. CHARTRAND: Moi, je ne peux pas parler pour les autres communautés, mais ce que je veux dire, c'est que pour nous, ça fonctionne. Le but d'avoir des circonstances extraordinaires pour la communauté acadienne a fonctionné pour la région d'Argyle. On a eu des francophones, on a eu des Acadiens qui nous ont représentés, et de là, c'est comme ça qu'on a des choses que nous avons besoin pour notre communauté, pour notre survie, pour notre épanouissement.

Je ne sais pas si ça a marché de la même façon dans les deux autres communautés et je laisserais à ces deux communautés-là de vous en parler.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Thank you for coming and for sharing so much.

Our next speaker will be Lester Doucet.

MR. LESTER DOUCET: Bonjour, mon nom est Lester Doucet. Je représente la Société acadienne de Clare, donc, je vais lire ma lettre.

Le mandat ultime de la Société acadienne de Clare est de valoriser la langue et la culture acadienne à Clare, afin de contrebalancer l'assimilation qui continuellement menace notre quotidien. Notre mandat nous amène à faire cette présentation au Comité législatif, de développement des termes de référence en vue de la révision de la carte électorale provinciale.

Au niveau fédéral, les Acadiens de Clare jouissent d'une protection de la *Loi sur les langues officielles* et de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés du Canada. Les Acadiens peuvent compter sur la *Loi sur les langues officielles* pour améliorer leur langue maternelle et leur identité culturelle. Étant donné le fait que la Baie Sainte-Marie rencontre les critères d'une région francophone, en situation minoritaire, pour le gouvernement du Canada, cela nous donne un privilège d'être financièrement soutenu par divers programmes, en particulier les programmes de Patrimoine canadien. Ce privilège est important pour la survie linguistique et culturelle du peuple acadien. Ce privilège nous permet d'obtenir des subventions et contributions financières qui contribuent par la suite au développement économique de nos régions acadiennes, qui sont en majorité des régions rurales éloignées. Ces programmes créent des emplois, renforcent notre tourisme culturel, aident dans la création de certaines de nos infrastructures, ainsi qu'aux coûts associés au maintien de ces infrastructures. Le gouvernement provincial doit considérer sérieusement que la Municipalité de Clare est la région rurale qui regroupe la plus grande proportion d'Acadiens français en Nouvelle-Écosse et que depuis sa fondation, que ce conseil municipal a toujours fonctionné dans sa langue première, qui est le français.

On sait que la province apprécie le fait d'avoir au moins un conseil municipal francophone en Nouvelle-Écosse. Un des nombreux facteurs qui a aidé le conseil municipal de Clare, à protéger son identité linguistique et culturelle acadienne, la représentativité de nos membres acadiens à la Législature a été essentielle. Comme toute autre minorité, les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse doivent travailler quotidiennement afin de contrebalancer l'assimilation qui les menace.

La sauvegarde de notre identité n'est pas un facteur acquis. Le fait d'avoir au moins trois, même possiblement quatre Acadiens ou Acadiennes membres de la Législature est primordial à la survie de la minorité linguistique de la Nouvelle-Écosse. La Société acadienne de Clare, comme toutes les autres régions acadiennes, demande au Comité de considérer les éléments suivants.

Que les consultations aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes, pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur des possibilités de changements aux circonscriptions électorales, notamment les régions acadiennes immédiates de Chéticamp, Isle Madame, Clare et Argyle.

Que toutes les sessions de consultation se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tous les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais. Que l'un des facteurs primaires à être considéré par les termes de référence soit que la minorité acadienne est de première importance en Nouvelle-Écosse et respecte le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires, leurs traditions.

Que le facteur primaire de la proportion des langues officielles soit considéré à être ajouté aux termes de référence. Qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent au Comité ou Commission qui sera chargée de recommander des révisions ou non aux délimitations des circonscriptions électorales actuelles.

Que le Comité considère d'ajouter des circonscriptions électorales plutôt que d'en enlever. Une représentation adéquate à la Législature permettra un meilleur exercice démocratique et sera non seulement avantageux, mais essentiel, pour nos régions acadiennes rurales. Nous remercions le gouvernement provincial pour l'obtention de l'Office des affaires acadiennes à Halifax, ainsi que pour l'obtention de la loi provinciale sur les services en français. Cela représente un gain significatif pour le futur de nos régions acadiennes.

Merci de nous avoir permis de vous faire cette présentation et je pense qu'il y a une lettre de support de la Chambre de commerce qui est avec la lettre. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, I see the letter there.

Any questions?

Thank you very much - oh just a moment, Ms. Raymond, yes, go ahead.

MS. RAYMOND: Un petit moment, simplement. Vous parlez, vous dites que le Comité pourrait peut-être considérer d'ajouter des circonscriptions électorales plutôt que d'en enlever. Pourriez dire un peu plus sur ça? Sur la représentation?

MR. DOUCET: Bien, je pense que ça, c'est dans la veine de penser qu'on ne veut pas perdre ce qu'on a. Jusqu'à date, c'est comme le dicton, si ça travaille, on le laisse tranquille. Si qu'on veut faire des changements, on peut peut-être le faire meilleur avec une autre personne de plus qui va nous représenter.

MS. RAYMOND: Oui, je comprends.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Our next speaker will be Elaine Surette.

MS. ELAINE SURETTE: Bon après-midi, Messieurs et Mesdames. Mon nom c'est Elaine Surette. Je présente, cet après-midi, au nom de la Société historique acadienne de Pubnico-

Ouest. La Société historique acadienne de Pubnico-Ouest, la SHAPO, désire remercier le Comité législatif de lui permettre cette occasion de présenter ses points de vue en ce qui touche les termes de référence de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales 2011 en Nouvelle-Écosse, et ceci, en français.

La mission de la SHAPO est l'étude de l'histoire du peuple acadien, en particulier celui de Pubnico-Ouest et du comté de Yarmouth. Le maintien du Musée des Acadiens des Pubnicos et du Centre de recherche les Archives Père Clarence-d'Entremont, ainsi que le maintien et la préservation des artefacts et des archives qui s'y retrouvent. Argyle est l'une des plus grandes et importantes régions acadiennes en Nouvelle-Écosse du point de vue de sa population et de son histoire. La SHAPO est un musée communautaire et fait partie du « Community Assistance Program » de la Nouvelle-Écosse. La SHAPO est aussi membre de « The Association of Nova Scotia Museums » et de « Council of Nova Scotia Archives ».

En ce qui touche les termes de référence, la SHAPO recommande que la Commission reprenne ceux établis par un Comité semblable en 2001-2002, c'est-à-dire de considérer la géographie, l'histoire, les intérêts et la représentation des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Quant à la variance normalement acceptée de 25 p. 100 de plus haut, ou de plus bas, du nombre moyen d'électeurs dans une circonscription, la SHAPO reconnaît l'importance de ce chiffre mais demande que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne et respecte son désir de promouvoir la représentation de cette minorité à la Législature. Ceci fut le cas en 2001, en Nouvelle-Écosse, et il existe d'autres précédents au Canada, tel que le cas de la Cour suprême du Canada en Saskatchewan, où madame la juge McLachlin a constaté que la parité absolue d'électeurs, bien qu'importante, est impossible et que nos Assemblées législatives représentent réellement la diversité de notre mosaïque sociale.

L'on pourrait demander pourquoi la SHAPO demande que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne. Voici, selon nous, quelques raisons.

D'abord, ce premier est un peuple fondateur de cette province et joue toujours un rôle primordial dans le développement et l'épanouissement de ce dernier. On doit reconnaître le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires et leurs traditions.

Les Acadiens font partie d'une minorité de langue officielle au Canada. La *Loi sur les services en français* de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui permet d'obtenir des services en français, mais aussi de favoriser la préservation et l'essor de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province. La communauté acadienne en Nouvelle-Écosse s'est beaucoup développée pendant les dernières années. Au niveau provincial, notons la création du CSAP, seul conseil scolaire en Nouvelle-Écosse à connaître une augmentation du nombre d'élèves, la création d'associations dévouées à l'avancement de la communauté acadienne, telle que la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Réseau Santé de la Nouvelle-

Écosse, le Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse et j'en passe. Le fusionnement entre l'Université Sainte-Anne et le Collège de l'Acadie, avec des campus dans cinq régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse, la création de l'Office des affaires acadiennes par le gouvernement provincial, et cætera.

Au niveau local, la région d'Argyle a vu la construction du Centre communautaire de Par-en-Bas, du Village historique acadien à Pubnico-Ouest, du Musée de Wedgeport, notre expansion propre du Musée des Acadiens de Pubnico et autres. Ces développements sont grâce, en partie, à une meilleure représentation politique des Acadiens à la Législature depuis les derniers 30 ans. Au niveau de la circonscription d'Argyle même, je vous donne une statistique importante. Entre 1957 et 1984, seul un Acadien a représenté la circonscription jumelée de Yarmouth, mais depuis 1984, Argyle a toujours été représenté par un Acadien.

En ce qui concerne la composition et les procédures de la Commission, la SHAPO recommande le suivant : que les consultations aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur des possibilités de changements aux circonscriptions électorales, notamment les régions acadiennes traditionnelles de Chéticamp, d'Isle Madame, de Clare et d'Argyle. Que toutes les sessions de consultations se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tous les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais, et qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent à la Commission afin d'assurer une représentation adéquate de notre communauté.

En terminant, Messieurs et Mesdames, la SHAPO remercie les membres du Comité pour votre attention et nous souhaitons que nos points de vue seront mis en valeur lors de la création de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Our next speaker will be Cyrille LeBlanc.

MR. CYRILLE LEBLANC: Bonjour. Je vais tâcher d'essayer de résumer ma présentation. Je commence en m'introduisant : je ne représente aucun groupe, je fais la présentation aujourd'hui en mon nom personnel. Je vais premièrement appuyer la présentation du Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas. Les points qu'ils ont avancés ce sont des points très importants. L'importance du vote, le vote dans notre démocratie est fondamental à notre système gouvernemental. Il a évolué depuis son introduction en Nouvelle-Écosse il y a plus de 250 ans. Les Acadiens, ainsi que d'autres regroupements, ont maintenant le droit de vote. Comme vous savez, au début, on n'avait pas le droit de vote. Mais même de nos jours, je ne crois pas que chacun des votes, partout en Nouvelle-Écosse, sont absolument égaux en soit. Il faut prendre en considération des facteurs importants, notamment la distribution de la population sur un territoire et aussi la composition démographique. À mon avis, un regroupement démographique peut posséder un avantage ou un désavantage démesuré comparativement aux autres regroupements dans un même territoire, tel que la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Je parle ici, aussi là, de relations. J'aimerais que votre Commission prévienne des dangers possibles si, par exemple, je sais qu'il y a des gens qui mentionnent que Argyle a un

pouvoir démesuré comparé à Yarmouth, parce que Yarmouth a le double de la population, mais je ne crois pas qu'on devrait considérer nous joindre à Yarmouth, parce que là on serait beaucoup désavantagé par comparaison avec Yarmouth.

Aussi, je mentionne des problèmes qu'on a avec Yarmouth dans certains cas. J'étais, par exemple, actif dans l'Association touristique du comté de Yarmouth et je représentais, comme, ma communauté de Wedgeport et puis je trouvais que j'avais beaucoup de difficulté, les Acadiens avaient beaucoup de difficultés, de faire valoir nos points, sur cette association-là. Il y a même un moment donné, et après ça j'en avais eu assez, que l'Association touristique du comté de Yarmouth, avec l'argent du comté de Yarmouth, voulait produire un dépliant qui ferait la promotion du parc Kejimikujik dans un an et plus et les observations des baleines à Digby et moi je proposais que les sites acadiens et les sites dans Argyle devraient avoir une place importante dans ce dépliant là et puis ils ont tous votés contre moi et après ça, j'en avais eu assez.

J'étais aussi dirigeant du journal français et l'imprimerie l'Escarbot pendant 15 ans et j'étais aussi actif pendant 10 ans comme pigiste, puis là, un moment donné, il y a un gérant de banque, notre bureau était à Yarmouth, un nouveau gérant de banque est arrivé et il m'a harcelé parce que je représentais, bien sûr, la langue française à cause que sa fille était obligée d'apprendre le français et là, il me dit à un moment donné, je ne crois pas que je va vouloir votre « business » ici, vos affaires. Je ne crois pas que je vous veux ici et là, j'ai été obligé de changer notre commerce, notre « business » de banque et j'ai réussi à aller à une autre banque où le gérant était marié à une Acadienne du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Aussi, une autre chose qu'on devrait essayer d'éviter, c'est qu'il y en a qui mentionnent que peut-être Clare et Argyle devraient être jumelées, être ensemble, pour former un siège, qui équivaldrait, au terme de population, à peu près le même nombre de population avec Yarmouth. Yarmouth, qui est le district de Yarmouth, et la ville de Yarmouth. Mais si ça arrive, j'espère que ça n'arrive pas, parce que la minorité anglophone dans Argyle va violemment s'opposer et ça va créer beaucoup de problèmes à une telle suggestion, parce que là, à ce moment-là, ils vont se trouver beaucoup en minorité, comparé aux Acadiens. Actuellement, ils sont en minorité en Argyle, au point de vue de nombre, mais ils ne sont certainement pas en minorité au point de vue de pourcentage et là, je mentionne des exemples où il y avait beaucoup de grabuge de la part des anglophones d'Argyle lorsqu'on avait une école où les anglophones et les francophones étaient dans la même école. Il y avait le CSAP et le Tri-County qui avaient la même école, à Sainte-Anne-du-Ruisseau, et malgré que 90 - 95 p. 100 de l'enseignement est des mots qui étaient prononcés dans ces écoles-là, il y en avait qui trouvaient que c'était déjà beaucoup trop. Mon fils jouait sur une équipe de l'école et puis ses communications, même si c'était le CSAP, ses communications comme membre de l'équipe étaient en anglais seulement. Les joueurs des équipes de l'école demandaient aussi, les Acadiens, de parler anglais entre eux s'il y avait un anglophone proche. Alors là, ça montre des conflits, et si, par exemple, que vous ne délimitez pas, ou ne vous êtes pas clair dans les critères, je crains que ça va mal marcher ici dans notre région.

Il y a eu question tantôt, à propos de la langue maternelle. J'avais écrit un reportage et pis je vais le lire. M. d'Entremont avait une question à ce sujet-là. Pour la première fois de son histoire, la population de langue maternelle française en Argyle est moins nombreuse que celle de la langue maternelle anglaise. En effet, comparativement à 2001, le nombre de personnes de langue maternelle française est passé de 4 670 à 4 005. Après ça, c'est la première fois de notre histoire depuis ce qu'Argyle est Argyle, qu'on est minoritaire au niveau de langue maternelle.

En ce qui concerne ceux de langue maternelle anglaise, le nombre était de 3 835 en 2001 et 4 444 en 2006. La très grande majorité de la population d'Argyle est de descendance française, mais plusieurs ont perdu la langue française. En 2001, j'avais fait une recherche; 78 p. 100 de la population d'Argyle était de descendance acadienne – 78 p. 100.

La langue maternelle est la première langue apprise, bien comme vous savez. Il est à noter que dans le district municipal et la ville de Yarmouth, le nombre de personnes qui ont déclaré le français comme langue maternelle a augmenté. Alors, Argyle, ça diminué, mais dans le district de Yarmouth, ça augmenté. Ça c'est au niveau de langue maternelle. Ceux qui parlent le français, représentent environ 65 p. 100 de la population totale d'Argyle. On est en train de perdre la langue maternelle, mais il y en a encore qui apprennent le français, puis là, le total en Argyle, c'est comme 65 p. 100 pour un total de 78 p.100 de descendance française. Le comté de Yarmouth est une des plus importantes régions francophones en Nouvelle-Écosse.

De nos jours, un autre point que veux soulever et que j'aimerais que votre Commission prenne note, de nos jours, un nombre alarmant d'enfants, dans notre région, en Argyle, se parlent toujours en anglais entre eux. Ça, c'est même des francophones, purs et simples. Ils apprennent cependant le français à l'école aussi bien, et même mieux, que dans le passé. Mais, je me demande ce qui va arriver dans les cas de leurs enfants. Pourront-ils parler français ou le voudront-ils? Il y a deux raisons pourquoi est-ce qu'on est en train de perdre le nombre d'Acadiens de langue maternelle, c'est que beaucoup des mariages sont maintenant exogames. C'est un anglophone et un Acadien et puis la langue apprise dans la maison, la première langue, est l'anglais. Ou, dans certains cas, il y en avait 95, dans certains quand c'était l'anglais et le français. Alors, là, aussi tôt qu'il y a un anglophone dans la maison, c'est l'anglais qui est la première langue apprise, et là, je crois que ça va augmenter considérablement.

Notre avenir, comme francophones en Argyle, est à risque si on en juge par le paragraphe ci-dessus par rapport à la langue maternelle. Le fédéral sait, lorsqu'il décide sur combien d'argent, sur ses politiques, il décide au niveau de la langue maternelle. On a essayé à plusieurs reprises de dire, bien, vous devriez considérer leur parler en français, mais ça, ils ne veulent pas entendre parler de ça. C'est la langue maternelle qui est de prime abord. Il est important de mettre tous les avantages de notre bord pour notre survivance et notre épanouissement. C'est pourquoi je vous demande de prendre en considération le facteur acadien francophone dans vos critères de délimitation des frontières électorales. Merci de m'avoir écouté.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Our next speaker will be Aldric d'Entremont, Warden of Argyle, and cyclist extraordinaire. Just for the record, he's an inspiration to me because I have had the pleasure to have ridden a bike with him a few times, and one of my goals in life is to teach a spinning class at 75. Hanging around with a gentleman as distinguished as him gives me that motivation and encouragement. So I thank him for that.

MR. ALDRIC D'ENTREMONT: Thank you. I haven't done any biking since this morning. The weather is very favourable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, it's like Florida here.

MR. ALDRIC D'ENTREMONT: M. le Président, membres du Comité, permettez-moi, au nom de la Municipalité d'Argyle, de vous remercier pour l'opportunité de partager nos points de vue envers les termes de référence de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales.

Please accept my sincere thank you for allowing me time to provide input on the terms of reference of this all-party Select Committee.

Nous voulons donc souligner avec ardeur l'importance de la représentation et la voix acadienne à la Législature. Plus spécifiquement, nous voulons assurer la représentation de la voix acadienne de la communauté et la Municipalité d'Argyle, qui connaît une histoire extraordinaire et qui représente une des régions acadiennes des plus grandes dans la province. Nous recommandons que les termes de référence considèrent la préservation des circonscriptions établies en Clare, Richmond et Argyle, comme était le cas en 2002. Une représentation purement établie sous forme de représentation égale de population serait désastreux à l'épanouissement de la langue et de la culture acadienne et, à mon avis, nuirait fortement à une Législature diversifiée.

Cependant, afin que la Commission puisse défendre les intérêts acadiens de la province, je suggère respectueusement que les termes de référence insistent aussi à la sélection d'un Acadien francophone pour la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. Grâce à nos représentants, la communauté acadienne s'améliore. Le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial connaît une augmentation du nombre d'élèves, le seul en Nouvelle-Écosse. Les écoles francophones représentent un outil qui attirera une population d'immigrés ici, permettant des possibilités de recrutement dans les pays et les provinces francophones.

The establishment of the CSAP school board is a critical asset to our Acadian community and is experiencing an increase in enrolment. This francophone school board represents a significant competitive advantage for the entire province. A French option for schooling has great potential to attract immigrants looking for French education to our province. This school board exists largely because of our Acadian representation in the Legislature, who understood the need in our communities and in the province as a whole.

Les Acadiens en Argyle ont récemment complété la construction d'un centre communautaire dans la région. Nous sommes aussi fiers de notre Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse et le développement continu de l'Université Sainte-Anne. La région d'Argyle sera hôte en 2012 de la finale des Jeux de l'Acadie, la première fois qu'une région rurale de la Nouvelle-Écosse sera hôte pour cet événement. Nous voyons cette finale comme une opportunité de renforcer une fierté acadienne et de solidifier un futur francophone dans la région. Nos efforts et nos succès sont grâce, en grande partie, à notre représentation législative. Nous aimerions souligner la participation du Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas, une organisation dévouée au développement de la communauté acadienne de la région.

Thank you for your attention and we hope that our input is influential in establishing terms of reference that ensure the Acadian minority regions are protected in the upcoming boundary review. Merci beaucoup.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Our next speaker will be Mayor Mooney, Town of Yarmouth, who is always a gracious host whenever I come here.

MAYOR PHIL MOONEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to welcome all the members of the Select Committee and I'd like to thank you for taking the time to listen to the opinions of the people of Yarmouth and Yarmouth County. On behalf of the Town of Yarmouth, I invite you to please stick around for a while and do some Christmas shopping in the area. I bet your loved ones would be thrilled to get a Christmas present from the town that inspired a popular holiday song "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas," and with the first day of lobster season, please bring some fresh lobster to the folks back home.

As I understand it your committee is in Yarmouth to hear our opinion on two things. One, who should be on the Electoral Boundaries Commission; and number two, what should the commission look at. Before looking at electoral boundaries I believe it is essential to closely examine the role of elected representatives and who they represent. As an elected servant myself, I find the majority of phone calls I get are about issues that I have no authority over, issues that are the responsibility of another level of government. I know Zach Churchill loves it when I give out his personal phone number, and I'm thinking of getting Zach's cell phone printed on my business cards.

Our view here in Yarmouth is that there is a difference between an MLA serving a rural area and an MLA in the regional municipality of Halifax. Many of the day-to-day issues for a citizen of the HRM are municipal issues, things like street repairs, snow removal, and building bylaws. In rural areas, such as ours, many of the same issues are instead a provincial responsibility.

There are also significant geographical differences between rural and urban areas. On the Halifax peninsula you can start in Mr. Preyra's riding of Halifax Citadel - except for Sable Island - walk less than 20 minutes and you can pass through three or four provincial ridings. On the other hand, in Mr. Samson's, or Mr. d'Entremont's, or Mr.

Gaudet's ridings you can walk 20 minutes and not even get out of the other end of the driveway. I believe the Electoral Boundaries Commission must find creative ways to measure effective representation and not just rely on population figures.

Any consideration of electoral boundaries must take into account several things: geographic considerations - how far away is the area from essential government services; access and transportation links - how easy is it for the people to get to the services that they need; cultural and sociable factors - what makes an area unique and what do certain areas and populations have in common; for example, is it a fishing or farming community, is there a higher population of retired people or senior citizens; and population trends - I would argue an area with declining population requires more representation, not less.

The outmigration from rural communities has taken place among young people and, if they are staying in Nova Scotia, chances are they are moving to Halifax. Younger people tend to have great mobility, and young people are better connected and are better able to use social media and emerging communication channels to access government services. I'm not saying seniors are not computer savvy - I know many older people who can give Bill Gates a good run for his money on a computer. I would wager the growing population of younger people in metro Halifax relies less on services of a provincial representative than the older population that remains in rural Nova Scotia.

To be blunt, we don't need any more MLAs in metro Halifax. Furthermore, decreasing the number of seats in rural Nova Scotia would amount to provincial downloading and the extra burden will likely fall on municipal units. This should not happen unless the provincial government is prepared to empower the municipal units, both financially and through legislation, to assume this added responsibility. Therefore I suggest the Electoral Boundaries Commission also explore just how the provincial government might compensate those areas impacted by any redistribution of seats.

My father served as an MLA back in the days of the old dual riding of Yarmouth and Argyle. We have been through electoral boundary reviews a few times since - this is an important exercise to review from time to time.

In conclusion, we should maintain the current level of representation for rural Nova Scotia; therefore the boundaries commission should be heavily weighted with representatives from rural Nova Scotia. The bottom line is don't take anything from rural Nova Scotia and do not take anything away from Yarmouth County. We have lost enough already.

Again, I would like to thank the committee for making Yarmouth one of its stops on the provincial tour. Please enjoy yourself while you are here. Stay as long as you like and please tell your friends and family to come and visit us soon, and just put a little plug in to the Premier - we're still working on that ferry file. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just before I go to the questions here, I look forward to seeing how you progress with the issue on the ferry, because our position is very clear in providing support if a model can be put forward. We are committed to that.

MR. MOONEY: Mr. Chairman, I know that the Nova Scotia International Ferry Partnership, under the leadership of Neil LeBlanc and Keith Condon, has had fruitful discussions with the Premier's Office and the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. I'm glad that we're both back at the table, at all levels, working to find a solution to this problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, excellent. We are committed.

I'll go to Ms. Raymond and then Mr. Ramey.

MS. RAYMOND: I'll steer clear of the ferry question, having been a very ardent patron over the years.

In any case, I'm interested in your comments on the relationship with municipal representation. I should just say that the area of the Halifax Regional Municipality that I represent includes both urban and what could only be described as rural areas. They share the same sort of municipal representation, as well as provincial, which to me is interesting because, as you say, so many of the issues, those most intimate concerns that come to people, end up being represented by people who - the most intimate level of representation have maybe 16,000 people or whatever.

Could you tell me something about the population of Yarmouth and the number of councillors there? I think there is an interaction between the adequacy of representation.

MR. MOONEY: We are about 7,300 people in the Town of Yarmouth, and we have one mayor and six councillors. In the municipality, they have a little more population than us. They are the same - they have seven elected councillors and they pick a warden out of that. In the municipality - Aldric, you have? (Interruption) Nine, and they pick the warden out of that.

MS. RAYMOND: Okay. I certainly do understand your point about the adequacy of representation being extremely important, and I think we have to look at the matrix of both, so thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. Ramey.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Mooney - it's always good to see you.

MR. MOONEY: Nice seeing you, Gary.

MR. RAMEY: I'm already plotting with Mr. Preyra a way to do some shopping here before we leave. We're going to work that out somehow. I'm not sure how.

You hit on a couple of things there when you were speaking that I was very interested in. One, of course, was that you don't want any more MLAs, and I certainly heard that. You talked about the shift from rural to urban areas, particularly with young people. That is spot-on for every province in Canada, and I think it's a trend right across North America.

It does mean, in some cases, in Halifax now - I think Clayton Park might be one of them or Bedford-Birch Cove or Clayton Park - you're getting up to 27,000 people with one representative. We have some other constituencies with about 6,500 or 7,000 people. I know you were saying no more MLAs, and particularly no more urban MLAs, perhaps, although it does seem that the population in some of the constituencies is exponentially going up in the city, so a member may have an awful lot of constituents. My colleague here, Mr. Boudreau, from Guysborough, has a constituency the size of Prince Edward Island in terms of geography, but not that many people in it, so what do you see as - and I'm not trying to put you on the spot - but do you have a figure in your head for how many people an MLA should represent?

MR. MOONEY: I don't have figure, Gary, but I think you can do a job by - we have one of the largest regions in Nova Scotia, and I know, Jim, and I talked to my sister from Sonora today, down in Guysborough County - support staff. I know our last three MLAs before Mr. Churchill, the hours that they had. You know, it worked out well when Richard was a Cabinet Minister and he had an executive assistant, somebody else on the ground. I think instead of more MLAs, maybe we might have to expand - and I know there have been problems over the last several years with expense and expense accounts in office, in constituency money, but I think there might have to be more people on the ground, a better support staff, or a better system for the MLA to represent the area.

MR. RAMEY: May I have a supplementary?

I guess the second thing then I would ask, and I think I know the answer to this too, just to make sure I'm perfectly clear on it - you are in support of protected ridings?

MR. MOONEY: Yes.

MR. RAMEY: For instance, Richmond, Clare, and Argyle?

MR. MOONEY: Yes. I married an Acadian. I know they're proud of their culture.

MR. RAMEY: Of course.

MR. MOONEY: And Chris has done a wonderful job down in Argyle, and Wayne at the other side, on Clare - and they are two distinctive people, even though they speak the same language, you can tell the difference from side to side.

AN HON. MEMBER: They're like red and blue.

MR. MOONEY: Yes, red and blue, that's right.

MR. RAMEY: But they're sitting together over there . . .

MR. MOONEY: They're sitting together (Interruption) Yes. But there should be distinctive regions and I wholeheartedly agree with the presentations before me.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, Mr. Mooney, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to add a point. The example that was given here of the 27,000 and the population - one of the difficulties that the committee is going to have going forward is how do you balance out the taxpayers' overall interest where we're hearing from taxpayers that we want to reduce costs, be more efficient, and at the same time having fair and equal representation? When I see 27,000 versus 7,000, in some circles, depending on where you're sitting, there seems to be inequity. So I just throw that out there, not necessarily looking for an answer. But that's one of the things that, as we move forward, that we're going to have to struggle with - what is the right balance?

The last point I want to make is that Nova Scotia, I believe, has the toughest management of expenses in North America now. So it's a very transparent, accurate system and we're very proud, collectively, as a group, within the House, that that's the method that is there - since you raised that point.

Thank you very much for coming.

MR. MOONEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and remember to spend some of that money in town. Thank you, have a safe trip home.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll try.

Suzanne Saulnier.

MS. SUZANNE SAULNIER: Bonjour. Je m'appelle Suzanne Saulnier et je suis la directrice générale du Centre provincial de ressources préscolaires. Je tiens à remercier les membres du Comité législatif de m'avoir donné l'occasion de présenter les recommandations du CPRPS. Quant à la composition et aux termes de référence d'une Commission sur les frontières électorales, il est primordial que la communauté acadienne soit consultée afin de bien comprendre les enjeux autour des changements possibles aux termes de référence.

Établie en 1768 et incorporée en 1879, la Municipalité de Clare est la seule municipalité de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse qui dirige ses affaires et offre ses services dans les deux langues officielles, le français et l'anglais. Avec une population d'environ 9 000, Clare est située au bout du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Clare occupe la moitié de l'ouest du comté de Digby. La municipalité est surtout habitée par des Acadiens et dirige ses affaires en français et en anglais. Même si plus de 75 p. 100 des

résidents de Clare sont capables de communiquer dans les deux langues officielles, la langue la plus courante est l'acadien. La langue et la culture acadiennes jouent un rôle important dans la vie des résidents de la Municipalité de Clare.

Située à La Butte, dans la circonscription de Clare, est le Centre provincial de ressources préscolaires. Le CPRPS a comme mission d'offrir des ressources en développement de la petite enfance, qui sont axées sur les besoins des communautés acadiennes et francophones. Il appuie le développement et facilite la concertation entre les professionnels, les organisations et tous les partenaires qui visent l'épanouissement personnel, culturel et linguistique de la petite enfance en Nouvelle-Écosse. Parmi les valeurs du CPRPS, on retrouve la reconnaissance de la période de la petite enfance comme étant une étape critique dans le développement global de la personne et de la communauté. Le respect de la diversité et de la spécificité des communautés acadiennes et francophones, le développement, le soutien et la croissance des services éducatifs en petite enfance, en français, le sentiment d'appartenance et de fierté à la communauté francophone et acadienne et l'épanouissement et le rayonnement de la culture acadienne et de la langue française.

Le message du CPRPS aujourd'hui, au Comité législatif, sur l'établissement d'une Commission sur les frontières électorales est très simple. Le système politique actuel, avec une députation pour la circonscription de Clare, fonctionne très bien. Le CPRPS croit que ce système assure une représentation de la minorité de langue officielle à l'Assemblée législative. La Municipalité de Clare bénéficie d'avoir un représentant à la Législature. Nous croyons fortement que cette représentation est primordiale, afin d'assurer à l'ensemble du peuple acadien de cette province, un avenir prometteur quant au développement et l'épanouissement des communautés acadiennes. Nous ne voulons pas perdre cette représentation.

En ce qui concerne la composition et les procédures de la Commission, le CPRPS recommande le suivant : que l'un des facteurs primaires à être considéré par les termes de référence, soit que la minorité acadienne est de première importance en Nouvelle-Écosse et respecte le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles, dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires et leurs traditions. Que le facteur primaire de la proportion des langues officielles soit considéré à être ajouté aux termes de référence, que les consultations aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur des possibilités de changements aux circonscriptions électorales, notamment dans les régions acadiennes traditionnelles de Chéticamp, l'Isle Madame, Clare et Argyle. Que toutes les sessions de consultation se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tous les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais. Qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent au Comité ou à la Commission qui sera chargée de recommander des révisions, ou non, aux délimitations des circonscriptions électorales actuelles et que la Commission considère, comme facteur primaire, la *Loi sur les services en français* de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui permet d'obtenir des services en français, mais aussi de favoriser la préservation et l'essor de la collectivité acadienne de la province.

Je profite de l'occasion de rappeler au Comité que les Acadiens sont un peuple fondateur de la Nouvelle-Écosse et ont toujours participé activement au développement et l'épanouissement de la Nouvelle-Écosse. De plus, on ne peut pas négliger un fait fondamental: les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse font partie d'une minorité de langue officielle du Canada et ont des droits protégés par la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés.

Encore une fois, je vous remercie de m'avoir accordé ce temps, de présenter ce mémoire en français, surtout au niveau des tout-petits de la Nouvelle-Écosse, de la petite enfance, en respectant votre mandat de consulter les communautés acadiennes. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's why we're here.

Any questions?

Our next speaker will be Ghislaine D'Eon.

MS. GHISLAINE D'EON: Bonjour et merci M. le Président et les membres. Je m'appelle Ghislaine d'Eon et je suis directrice générale de l'Équipe d'alphabetisation en Nouvelle-Écosse. Donc, permettez-moi, au nom du Conseil d'administration de l'Équipe d'alphabetisation en Nouvelle-Écosse, de vous remercier pour cette occasion de vous présenter, en français, nos points de vue en ce qui concerne les termes de référence de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales en Nouvelle-Écosse.

L'Équipe d'alphabetisation en Nouvelle-Écosse a comme mission de soutenir la population acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse dans le développement de la langue française, sous tous ses aspects. On estime qu'en Nouvelle-Écosse, proche de 60 p. 100 des Acadiens ont des taux d'alphabetisme, dans leur langue maternelle, qui se situent dans les niveaux un et deux, ce qui ne permet pas facilement à ces gens de répondre aux exigences d'une société et d'une économie de savoir comme la nôtre. Ils ont du mal à comprendre ce qu'ils lisent, donc, c'est aussi au nom de cette population que je suis présente aujourd'hui.

L'Équipe d'alphabetisation Nouvelle-Écosse, aimerait faire la recommandation que la Commission reprenne les termes de référence établis par un tel comité en 2001-2002. Ces termes considèrent la géographie, l'histoire, les intérêts et la représentation des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Aussi, nous demandons que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne et respecte son désir de promouvoir la représentation de cette minorité à la Législature. L'Équipe d'alphabetisation en Nouvelle-Écosse est membre provincial de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Nous sommes continuellement engagés à la promotion de l'épanouissement et du développement global de la communauté acadienne et francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Pour ces raisons, les points suivants nous sont de grande importance : que les consultations aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes, pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur des possibilités de changements en circonscriptions

électorales, notamment les régions acadiennes immédiates de Chéticamp, Isle Madame, Clare et Argyle. Ceci a une grande importance pour la population acadienne ayant un bon niveau d'alphabétisme. Ceux-ci ont déjà un manque de confiance et donc, si ces consultations ne sont pas dans leurs régions, ils risquent de ne pas se présenter. Que toutes les sessions de consultation se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tous les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais. Que l'un des facteurs primaires à être considéré par les termes de référence soit que la minorité acadienne est de première importance en Nouvelle-Écosse et respecte le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires et leurs traditions. Que le facteur primaire de la proportion des langues officielles soit considéré à être ajouté aux termes de référence. Qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent au Comité ou Commission qui sera chargée de recommander des révisions, ou non, aux délimitations des circonscriptions électorales actuelles. Que l'on considère comme facteur primaire, la *Loi sur les services en français* de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui permet d'obtenir des services en français, mais aussi de favoriser la préservation et l'essor de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province.

Je désire, au nom de l'Équipe d'alphabétisation de la Nouvelle-Écosse, sincèrement vous remercier, les membres du comité, de votre attention, et nous espérons que les points partagés seront pris en considération lors de la création de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker will be. Maurice LeBlanc.

PÈRE MAURICE LEBLANC: Bonjour à tous. Je me nomme Maurice LeBlanc et je représente le Conseil des arts de Par-en-Bas. Je suis natif de Pubnico-Ouest. Dans mon sang coule le sang LeBlanc et le sang d'Entremont, un sang purement acadien.

D'abord, le Conseil des arts de Par-en-Bas désire remercier le Comité législatif de lui permettre cette occasion de présenter ses points de vue en ce qui touche les termes de référence de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales 2011, en Nouvelle-Écosse, et ceci, en français.

De façon bénévole et sans but lucratif, le Conseil des arts de Par-en-Bas a pour objet d'œuvrer au développement et à l'appréciation des arts de la communauté acadienne et francophone de la région d'Argyle et des environs. Argyle est l'une des plus grandes et importantes régions acadiennes en Nouvelle-Écosse, du point de vue de sa population et de son histoire.

En ce qui touche les termes de référence, le Conseil des arts recommande que la Commission reprenne ceux établis par un Comité semblable en 2001-2002, c'est-à-dire de considérer la géographie, l'histoire, les intérêts et la représentation des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Quant à la variance acceptée de 25 p. 100, de plus haut ou de plus bas, du nombre moyen d'électeurs dans une circonscription, le Conseil des arts de Par-en-Bas reconnaît l'importance de ce chiffre, mais demande que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne et respecte son désir de promouvoir la représentation de cette minorité à la Législature. Ceci fut le cas en 2002, en Nouvelle-Écosse et il existe d'autres précédents au Canada, tel que le cas de la Cour suprême du Canada en Saskatchewan, où madame la juge McLachlin a constaté que la parité absolue d'électeurs, bien qu'importante, est impossible et que la représentation des groupes minoritaires peut devoir être prise en considération afin de garantir que nos Assemblées législatives représentent réellement la diversité de notre mosaïque sociale.

L'on pourrait demander pourquoi le Conseil des arts demande que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne. Voici, selon nous, quelques raisons. D'abord, celle-ci est un peuple fondateur de cette province. Il joue toujours un rôle primordial dans le développement et l'épanouissement de la Nouvelle-Écosse. On doit reconnaître le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles, dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires et leurs traditions.

Les Acadiens font partie d'une minorité de langue officielle au Canada. Il faut tenir compte de la *Loi sur les services en français* de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui permet d'obtenir des services en français, mais aussi de favoriser la préservation de l'essor de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province.

La communauté acadienne, en Nouvelle-Écosse, s'est beaucoup développée pendant les dernières années. J'ai ici un long paragraphe, que je vais sauter, puisque ce que je dis ici a déjà été dit par Norbert LeBlanc, qui représente le Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas, par Elaine Surette, qui représente la Société historique acadienne de Pubnico et, en partie, par Aldric d'Entremont, qui est le préfet de la Municipalité d'Argyle.

Je passe donc au paragraphe suivant, qui commence comme ceci : la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse, via certaines initiatives, notamment l'intégration du développement rural au ministère du Développement économique, reconnaît les besoins des régions rurales. Nos régions acadiennes sont en régions rurales. Enlever son pouvoir politique va alors contre son développement. Une représentation adéquate permet un meilleur exercice démocratique. Par contre, si la Commission se voit obligée d'augmenter la représentation urbaine, en raison de sa population croissante, surtout de la Municipalité régionale d'Argyle, nous ne serions pas contre l'idée d'augmenter le nombre de circonscriptions en Nouvelle-Écosse, pour en ajouter à cette région urbaine, mais seulement si le nombre de circonscriptions rurales dites acadiennes, n'est pas diminué. Au Canada, c'est ce qui est proposé actuellement, c'est-à-dire d'augmenter le nombre de circonscriptions en Ontario et en Colombie-Britannique, entre autres, au lieu de diminuer le nombre de circonscriptions en Nouvelle-Écosse, par exemple.

En ce qui concerne la composition et les procédures de la Commission, le Conseil des arts recommande le suivant : que les consultations aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes, pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur les

possibilités de changements aux circonscriptions électorales, notamment les régions acadiennes traditionnelles de Chéticamp, Isle Madame, Clare et Argyle. Que toutes les sessions de consultation se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tout les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais. Qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent à la Commission afin d'assurer une représentation adéquate de notre communauté.

En terminant, le Conseil des arts remercie les membres du Comité pour son attention et nous souhaitons que nos points de vue seront mis en valeur lors de la création de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker will be Jean d'Entremont.

MS. JEAN D'ENTREMONT: Bonjour. Mon nom est Jean d'Entremont. Je fais cette présentation ici pour l'Association des acadiennes de la région d'Argyle au nom de Barbara d'Eon, la présidente. D'abord, l'Association des acadiennes de la région d'Argyle désire remercier le Comité législatif de lui permettre cette occasion de présenter ses points de vue en ce qui touche les termes de référence de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales en Nouvelle-Écosse, et ceci, en français.

L'Association des acadiennes de la région d'Argyle est un organisme qui s'engage à promouvoir l'épanouissement et la réalisation des femmes de la région d'Argyle. Elle agit à titre de porte-parole pour les femmes acadiennes et francophones de la région d'Argyle et, entre autres, revendique les droits de ces derniers.

Notre association désire appuyer la présentation du Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas devant ce comité. Comme le CAPEB, nous demandons que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne et respecte son désir de promouvoir la représentation de cette minorité à la Législature afin que des circonscriptions comme Argyle soient maintenues. Nous demandons également que la Commission ait une représentation de la communauté acadienne, qu'elle fasse une consultation en Argyle et que les consultations se déroulent avec traduction simultanée.

Nous souhaitons que votre Comité reconnaisse qu'une représentation juste du caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles permet un meilleur exercice démocratique. Merci et bonne journée.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker will be Paul Comeau.

MR. PAUL COMEAU: Bonjour tout le monde. Mon nom est Paul Comeau de Grosses Coques. Je suis propriétaire du restaurant Chez Christophe. Si jamais vous passez par chez nous, on vous invite d'arrêter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do they have good seafood there?

MR. COMEAU: Excellent seafood.

Lorsqu'il me reste du temps, je suis également président de l'Association civique de Clare, qui, entre autres, protège, dans la mesure du possible, les intérêts des contribuables. Donc, en réponse à une question qui a été posée plus tôt, avant qu'elle me soit posée, je peux vous dire qu'on n'est pas d'accord avec les commentaires de M. Lacey lorsqu'il parlait de diminuer le nombre de sièges en Nouvelle-Écosse de 52 à 33. Donc, on a mis cette question de côté, de notre part, au moins.

Je vais éviter de répéter toutes les bonnes argumentations qui ont été présentées ici cet après-midi et je vais me limiter à juste faire une couple de commentaires et je m'excuse de ne pas avoir de présentation écrite, donc, peut-être qu'en ayant quelques commentaires oraux, je pourrai le faire un peu plus vite.

J'étais particulièrement intéressé de parler de la composition, mais avant de parler de la composition de la Commission éventuelle, je voudrais quand même faire quelques commentaires sur les termes de référence. C'est sans aucun doute que c'est d'une très grande importance d'avoir une représentation effective, efficace, à la Législature de la Nouvelle-Écosse et c'est parfois difficile comment on peut traduire tous ces termes-là : efficace, effective, garantie, protection. Si vous me permettez justement de mettre un visage, peut-être, à qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ça, une représentation efficace et effective.

Je peux vous dire que je vais aller un peu plus loin en arrière que tous les exemples qui ont été donnés cet après-midi, parce qu'il y a eu quand même des grandes victoires pour la communauté acadienne, surtout dans les plus récentes années. Mais, lorsqu'on va un peu en arrière, même avant toutes les protections garanties par la Charte des droits, je me réfère à un Acadien, parce que c'est ça être vraiment un – si on n'est à la table législative, si on n'est pas à la table du Cabinet, on prend une chance de peut-être être bien représenté, par du monde sympathique, ou, on va avoir des meilleures garanties d'être représentés par un des nôtres.

Je rends hommage à un personnage acadien qui, au début des années 1940, c'est efforcé de faire valoir le besoin des enseignants de la Nouvelle-Écosse. C'est l'honorable Willie Comeau qui, vraiment, s'était rendu compte que les enseignants qui avaient été formés en anglais seulement, que c'est important qu'ils reçoivent l'instruction et c'est à ce moment-là que l'Université Sainte-Anne a offert des cours en français pour les enseignants de la province. Donc, c'était quand même une démarche très importante. Trente ans après, et encore, j'ajoute des visages, qu'est-ce que c'est vraiment cette représentation efficace? Trente ans après, son fils, Benoît Comeau, a été instrumental, de vraiment sauver l'Université Sainte-Anne et de voir à son développement, donc, c'était 30 ans après.

Aussi, il y a eu toutes sortes d'autres victoires, à la fin des années 1970, début des années 1980, le député de Clare, un autre Acadien, l'honorable Guy LeBlanc, a été

instrumental à apporter des changements majeurs à, disons, la définition des écoles acadiennes et, plus tard, de l'école française en Nouvelle-Écosse et son rôle en tant que ministre de l'Éducation. Sans ces personnages-là à la table, ça aurait peut-être été beaucoup plus difficile : on serait peut-être encore en train de se poser des questions tant qu'à sa valeur.

Je souligne également la contribution des députés, encore un député qui est décédé il y a quelques années passées, de Richmond, le député Gaston LeBlanc. Aussi, d'anciens députés qui ont apporté leurs grandes contributions : Allister Surette, Neil LeBlanc, qui je pense est dans la salle présentement, les députés présents : Chris d'Entremont, Wayne Gaudet. Ce sont tous des députés acadiens qui ont démontré au peuple qu'est-ce que c'était d'avoir une véritable représentation efficace et effective à la Législature. Aussi, le point a déjà été fait cet après-midi que la circonscription d'Argyle a toujours été représentée par un Acadien depuis l'abolition des comtés doubles de Yarmouth et d'Inverness.

Il me fait plaisir de même, me rappeler à moi-même, que j'ai siégé sur cette Commission qui avait vu à la disparition de ces comtés doubles en 1978, donc, je suis très content que tout le monde a pris avantage d'élire des Acadiens dans la circonscription d'Argyle.

Donc, un dernier point avant de terminer, la Municipalité de Clare vient d'élaborer une planification stratégique de développement qui reconnaît vraiment la langue et la culture comme le fondement de ce qui définit la communauté de Clare, et c'est vraiment une démarche qui a été appuyée par la collectivité acadienne de la municipalité. Donc, les frontières de la Municipalité de Clare sont exactement les mêmes que les frontières de la circonscription provinciale. Donc, je crois qu'il y a un parallèle à faire là qui est absolument important et n'importe quelle démarche qui viendrait diviser ou noyer les efforts de la municipalité à ce moment ici serait très, très « détrimentale », disons, à la communauté acadienne de Clare.

Donc, tant qu'à la nomination des commissaires pour faire le travail qui doit suivre, permettez-moi de vous faire la suggestion d'être certain de nommer quelqu'un qui est d'abord, sensible aux besoins de la communauté acadienne de toute la Nouvelle-Écosse et aussi, peut-être, ça serait très utile d'avoir quelqu'un qui a des connaissances sur les décisions qui ont été prises par les cours en ce qui concerne les minorités. Donc, sans faire une annonce publicitaire pour les jeunes avocats acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, et je ne suggère aucunement que ça soit un avocat qui soit là. Il y a quand même toutes sortes d'expertise dans notre communauté, de jeunes professionnels qui sont très « connaisseurs » de tous les développements qui se sont passés dans la communauté minoritaire, donc, on a toutes sortes de gens à aller chercher, choisir et regarder.

Donc, c'est à peu près ça mes commentaires que je voulais vous faire et il me ferait plaisir de répondre à des questions à n'importe quel point que j'aurais pu faire.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for coming. Our next speaker will be Real Boudreau.

MR. REAL BOUDREAU: M. le Président, Mesdames, Messieurs du Comité, tel que le président l'a annoncé, mon nom c'est Réal Boudreau. Je suis le président de la Chambre de commerce d'Argyle Chamber of Commerce. Je vous remercie, évidemment, de l'occasion que vous me faites, de me présenter devant vous au nom de la Chambre de commerce. La Chambre de commerce a été fondée il y a environ cinq ans et c'était principalement afin de répondre aux besoins des gens d'affaires de la région d'Argyle.

Plusieurs des gens de la région d'Argyle sont membres de la Chambre de commerce, ici à Yarmouth, cependant, il y a certains dossiers, certaines questions qui touchent spécifiquement les gens d'affaires de la région d'Argyle et c'est pour ça qu'on a décidé de former cette Chambre de commerce-là, sous, bien sûr, la direction du Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas.

Nous travaillons de paire avec les infrastructures qui existent actuellement. Il y a eu une présentation par la Municipalité d'Argyle. Nous travaillons de paire avec elle. Nous travaillons de paire, aussi, avec notre représentation provinciale, soit notre MAL. Il y a eu plusieurs présentations, par plusieurs membres de l'infrastructure communautaire de la région d'Argyle. Vous avez entendu de la Commission des arts, de la Société historique acadienne de Pubnico-Ouest, et cætera.

Comme vous voyez, mon thème principal, c'est que la région d'Argyle, bien que petite, tel que le dit Stewart MacLean sur Vinyl Cafe. Bien que petite, nous sommes petits parce que nous ne sommes pas grands, mais nous sommes vibrants. Nous sommes quand même très vibrants et très actifs. Notre Chambre de commerce comporte environ 50 membres, 50 membres plus, et on me dit, n'ayant pas énormément d'expérience dans les Chambres de commerce, on me dit que c'est quand même un bon chiffre pour une petite communauté d'au-delà de 6 000 personnes ayant 50 membres. Nous sommes tous des bénévoles, qui siègent là-dessus et c'est donc pour ça qu'on n'a pas eu l'occasion de vous présenter un bref par écrit, cependant, mes commentaires vous seront confirmés par écrit par après. Tout cela étant dit, je ne veux pas répéter ce que le Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas a dit, mais tout simplement, je veux porter appui à ce que le Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas a présenté et qui a été répété par, entre autres, la Société historique acadienne de Pubnico et le Comité des arts d'Argyle. Au point de vue de la composition, nous insistons, non pas seulement nous vous suggérons, mais nous insistons qu'il y ait une représentation, non pas seulement adéquate, mais juste et équitable de la communauté linguistique de la Nouvelle-Écosse. C'est la seule façon, tel que Paul Comeau vient de vous le dire, que nous pouvons assurer que notre communauté fondatrice continuera de survivre et de s'épanouir.

Au point de vue des termes de référence eux-mêmes, il a été noté, et très éloquemment, que nous avons fait des gains. Mais, les gains que nous avons ne sont pas seulement les seules choses auxquelles nous avons besoin. Nous avons des défis qui s'en viennent et les termes de référence de cette Commission-là, la Commission qui s'en viendra, à laquelle vous allez faire des recommandations, ou sur la laquelle vous allez faire des recommandations à la Chambre législative, vous devez tenir compte des défis que la communauté acadienne va avoir dans les années à venir. Donc, tout cela étant dit, tel que

je voulais faire le point, nous appuyons le mémoire du Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas dans toutes ces paroles. Sur ce, je vous en remercie encore et bonnes délibérations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Our next speaker will be Jean Melanson.

MR. JEAN MELANSON: You can call me anything as long as you agree with what I have to say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well with your charming personality who could not.

MR. MELANSON: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président, membres du Comité, c'est un plaisir pour moi d'adresser la parole. Vous avez une grosse responsabilité d'établir les termes de référence pour la prochaine Commission. J'aimerais souligner que je suis préfet de la Municipalité de Clare, mon nom c'est Jean Melanson.

Novembre le 18, 1991, j'ai fait une présentation à la Commission du jour à propos des circonscriptions, des frontières, et cætera, et mars le 22, 2002. Ça ne me tente pas d'en faire une autre l'an prochain, mais, ça regarde peut-être comme si j'ai besoin d'en faire une autre. Il y a eu beaucoup de points soulevés de ces deux brefs-là, semblables à beaucoup des commentaires qui ont été faits ici cet après-midi et que je supporte entièrement. Certainement, mon ami Paul Comeau, un ancien préfet de la municipalité, au point de vue de la composition de la Commission, c'est entièrement nécessaire que les Acadiens soient bien représentés sur la Commission.

Moi, j'ai juste une demande. À tous les 10 ans, on retourne à la table pour défendre ou pour expliquer le raisonnement en arrière d'avoir des circonscriptions électorales protégées. Tant qu'à moi, ça ne devrait pas être tous les 10 ans, ça devrait exister pour toujours. Au moins pour la Municipalité de Clare, ça devrait exister, tandis que la Municipalité de Clare fonctionne entièrement en français, son gouvernement local et municipal et on a toujours élu un Acadien de la région à la Législature à Halifax tandis que ces conditions existent, on ne devrait pas faire de changements dans la circonscription de Clare.

Les variances, les nombres, c'est vrai que ça diminue, mais, à travers la province, les Acadiens ont besoin d'une parole, d'une voix dans la Législature et les deux autres régions qui sont protégées permettent au moins trois voix, hors de 52, pour parler pour les Acadiens.

On a entendu, plus tôt dans les sessions ici, combien valable que c'était depuis les circonscriptions protégées, le progrès qui a été fait, comme le CSAP, le CDÉNÉ, le Conseil de développement, l'Office des affaires acadiennes et bien d'autres, comme Norbert LeBlanc a mentionné, et sans des représentants dans la Législature, on ne serait pas où est-ce qu'on est aujourd'hui. Ça aide à préserver notre langue et notre culture. C'est nécessaire d'avoir une voix dans la Législature.

Ça me rappelle, j'étais en Louisiane, il y a à peu près un mois, ou quatre, cinq semaines passées, à une rencontre d'Acadiens. L'État de la Louisiane commence à réaliser le faux pas qu'ils ont fait dans le passé. La Louisiane, on connaît le Mardi Gras, on connaît New Orleans pour la joie de vivre et cætera. Ça, c'est un aspect acadien, français. Ils réalisent maintenant qu'il n'y a presque plus de français en Louisiane. Des vieux comme moi et un peu plus vieux, qu'ils parlent encore et ils vont perdre cette valeur-là, éventuellement il n'y aura pas d'Acadiens, il n'y aura plus de français parlé en Louisiane. Ils essayent de faire revivre le français, mais c'est difficile. Puis j'espère pas que ça nous arrive à nous autres. Puis tandis qu'on a des voix, je pense, dans la Législature à Halifax, ça va nous aider, parce que c'est une bonne valeur, c'est une grosse valeur pour la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Le tourisme, on est en train de développer la côte acadienne et Yarmouth. Clare et Argyle, ensemble, avec la Municipalité de Yarmouth et la ville de Yarmouth, travaillent pour promouvoir, « promoter », faire le marketing de l'aspect acadien de notre coin. Dans Clare, on a eu un peu plus de succès cette année que les années dans le passé. Si on perd notre identité acadienne en Nouvelle-Écosse, les touristes du Québec vont arrêter au Nouveau-Brunswick, ils ne vont pas se rendre dans notre région. C'est une valeur à notre province et c'est bon de parler des nombres, les nombres, ça varie et si on regarde dans différentes provinces, l'âge légal pour conduire une voiture varie d'une province à une autre. Il n'y a pas de nombre fixe, et même pour boire de la boisson, et cætera, et puis c'est vrai que ce n'est peut-être pas un grand nombre, mais tant qu'à moi, ça a une grosse valeur pour la province et on a besoin d'être protégé et, moi j'aimerais voir d'être exclus de faire une recommandation à la Législature que les régions protégées maintenant demeurent et que ça ne soit pas une partie de marche de la Commission. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll go to the next speaker, Pauline d'Entremont. Just in case any of you are wondering, there are two more speakers on the list after Ms. d'Entremont, so it won't be that much longer, if you're waiting.

MS. PAULINE D'ENTREMONT: Bonjour. Mon nom est Pauline d'Entremont et au nom du Réveil de Pombcoup et la présidente, Joyce d'Entremont, je vous fais cette présentation ici aujourd'hui et aussi, comme Jean Melanson, c'est la troisième fois que je me présente dans les années passées à cette Commission, c'est déjà commencer du commencement.

Nous, le Réveil de Pombcoup, organisme culturel de Pubnico-Ouest avec 80 membres, voulons nous prononcer sur le devant de la délimitation des circonscriptions électorales en Nouvelle-Écosse. Depuis plus de 30 ans, nous avons été impliqués dans toutes les activités culturelles du sud-ouest de la région d'Argyle. Pour que cela puisse se réaliser, nous avons été appuyés souvent par les députés d'Argyle, qui ont été des francophones, pour la plus grande majorité du temps et qui ont servi aussi bien les francophones que les anglophones.

Comme regroupement minoritaire dans cette partie de l'Acadie, nous croyons fermement que nous ne pouvons pleinement nous épanouir comme société qu'avec l'appui du gouvernement et qu'avec des députés qui connaissent bien les services et besoins de notre

culture française. Nous voulons que la circonscription électorale soit favorable à notre minorité acadienne d'Argyle et la façon d'agir sera de laisser comme cela fut jugé en 2002. Veuillez agréer, chers membres du Comité, l'assurance de mes sentiments distingués, Pauline d'Entremont au nom de Joyce d'Entremont, la présidente.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Our next speaker will be Ghislain Boudreau.

MS. GHISLAIN BOUDREAU: Bonjour M. le Président et chers membres du Comité. Mon nom est Ghislain Boudreau. Je suis directeur général de l'Association Radio-Clare. C'est la radio communautaire du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse, que ça fait déjà passé 21 ans qu'on est en ondes. J'aimerais, en premier temps, remercier les membres du Comité législatif de permettre cette occasion de présenter ces points de vue en ce qui concerne les termes de référence de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales de 2011 en Nouvelle-Écosse, et ceci, en français.

Radio CIFA a comme mission d'offrir de l'information et du divertissement aux Acadiens et Acadiennes francophones et francophiles du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse et le monde entier, par l'entremise de la programmation, tout en appuyant la communauté afin de promouvoir et de développer la langue et la culture acadiennes. En ce qui touche les termes de référence, CIFA recommande que la Commission reprenne ceux établis par un Comité semblable en 2001-2002 – c'est-à-dire de considérer la géographie, l'histoire, les intérêts et la représentation des Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Quant à la variance normalement acceptée de 25 p. 100, de plus haut ou de plus bas, du nombre moyen d'électeurs dans une circonscription, CIFA reconnaît l'importance de ce chiffre mais demande que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne et respecte son désir de promouvoir la représentation de cette minorité à la Législature.

Ceci fut le cas en 2002, en Nouvelle-Écosse, et il existe d'autre précédents au Canada, tel que le cas de la Cour suprême du Canada en Saskatchewan, où madame la juge McLachlin a constaté que la parité absolue d'électeurs, bien qu'importante, est impossible, et que la représentation des groupes minoritaires peut devoir être prise en considération afin de garantir que nos Assemblées législatives représentent réellement la diversité de nos communautés. Pourquoi CIFA demande que la Commission reconnaisse les circonstances extraordinaires de la communauté acadienne? Voici, selon nous, quelques raisons. Premièrement, celle-ci est un peuple fondateur de cette province et joue toujours un rôle primordial dans le développement et l'épanouissement de la Nouvelle-Écosse. On doit reconnaître le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires et leurs traditions.

Les Acadiens font partie d'une minorité de langue officielle du Canada. Il faut tenir compte de la *Loi sur les services en français* de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui permet d'obtenir des services en français, mais aussi, de favoriser la préservation et l'essor de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province. La communauté acadienne en Nouvelle-Écosse s'est beaucoup développée pendant les dernières années. Au niveau provincial, notons la création du CSAP, le seul conseil scolaire en Nouvelle-Écosse à connaître une

augmentation du nombre d'élèves, la création d'associations dévouées à l'avancement de la communauté acadienne, telles que la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, l'Association des radios communautaires du Canada atlantique avec quatre radios communautaires francophones en Nouvelle-Écosse, le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse, le Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse et j'en passe. Aussi, le fusionnement entre l'Université Sainte-Anne et le Collège de l'Acadie avec des campus dans cinq régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Nos régions acadiennes traditionnelles sont en régions rurales. Enlever son pouvoir politique va contre son développement. Une représentation adéquate permet un meilleur exercice démocratique. Par contre, si la Commission se voit obligée d'augmenter la représentation urbaine en raison de sa population croissante, surtout dans la Municipalité régionale d'Halifax, nous ne serions pas contre l'idée d'augmenter le nombre de circonscriptions en Nouvelle-Écosse, pour en ajouter à cette région urbaine, mais seulement si le nombre de circonscriptions rurales, dites acadiennes, n'est pas diminué. Au Canada, c'est ce qui est proposé actuellement, c'est-à-dire, augmenter le nombre de circonscriptions en Ontario et en Colombie-Britannique, entre autres, au lieu, de diminuer le nombre de circonscriptions en Nouvelle-Écosse.

En ce qui concerne la composition et les procédures de la Commission, l'Association Radio CIFA recommande les suivants : que les consultations aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes, pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur des possibilités de changements aux circonscriptions électorales, notamment, les régions acadiennes traditionnelles de Chéticamp, Isle Madame, Clare et Argyle. Que toutes les sessions de consultations se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tous les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais. Qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent à la Commission, afin d'assurer une représentation adéquate de notre communauté. En terminant, l'Association Radio CIFA remercie les membres du Comité pour votre attention et nous souhaitons que nos points de vue seront mis en valeur lors de la création de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Kenneth Deveau, is there anyone else before Mr. Deveau speaks that would like to speak today? Once. Twice, Mr. Deveau will be the last speaker.

MEMBER IN AUDIENCE: If I haven't given my name beforehand can I still go up?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We certainly would afford you the opportunity. We're over the schedule now so one more not's going to make a difference and it would be a pleasure to hear from you.

MR. KENNETH DEVEAU: M. le Président, Mesdames, Messieurs et amis, Wayne, Chris. Je ne suis pas certain si c'est à mon avantage de parler dernier, j'aime avoir le dernier mot, mais étant donné qu'il y a tellement de personnes qui ont parlé, j'ai peur que

l'épuisement travaille contre moi. Avant de me fier à mon texte que je vous ai soumis, j'aimerais peut-être ajouter une question, un commentaire qui a été fait où on proposerait de multiplier le nombre de sièges fédéraux de 10. Donc de 10, c'est de multiplier par trois pour faire 33. Je ne suis pas certain que la Nouvelle-Écosse veut être la province au Canada qui championne un tel calcul. J'ose croire qu'on ne sortira pas gagnants dans une telle approche.

Donc, maintenant, je me fie à mon texte. Donc, le présent texte a pour but de présenter la position de l'Université Sainte-Anne sur la composition et le mandat de la Commission indépendante sur la délimitation des circonscriptions électorales ainsi que les termes de référence qui seront utilisés pour les changements possibles. L'Université Sainte-Anne est la seule institution d'enseignement postsecondaire de langue française en Nouvelle-Écosse. Elle offre des baccalauréats en sciences de l'éducation, en administration des affaires, en arts et lettres, et en sciences. L'université offre aussi des programmes de deuxième cycle en éducation. Des programmes collégiaux et d'immersion française langue seconde, sont aussi offerts. Fort de ces cinq campus, l'Université Sainte-Anne est une véritable institution provinciale. Elle joue un rôle de chef de file au sein de l'Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse, au niveau de la recherche et du développement, autant qu'au niveau de l'enseignement. C'est en tant que représentant de cette institution que je me permets de vous écrire ces mots et de vous adresser la parole aujourd'hui, plutôt.

Notre réflexion se veut d'envergure provinciale. La toute première personne à vous adresser la parole était Marie-Germaine d'Entremont, directrice de notre campus de Tusket. Elle vous a plutôt adressé la parole au nom de ce campus-là et de la perspective de la Municipalité ou de la circonscription d'Argyle. Mes propos seront plutôt, ou se veulent, en tout cas, plutôt, d'envergure provinciale.

La vitalité d'une communauté minoritaire est tributaire de nombreux facteurs que l'on peut regrouper en trois catégories : se relier aux nombres (donc, les pourcentages, la concentration, la démographie), les ressources institutionnelles de la communauté et son pouvoir politico-juridique, ou politique et juridique, et, c'est ce dont on parle aujourd'hui, le dernier, soit le pouvoir politico-juridique.

On ne peut pas analyser ces facteurs indépendamment, toutefois. Plutôt, il faut tenir compte des interactions complexes entre ces divers facteurs qui « régulent » la capacité d'une communauté de se maintenir comme une identité distincte, productive et prolifique. Constituant moins que quatre pour cent de la population totale de la province, les Acadiens et les francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse ont un poids démographique minime. Toutefois, ils ont réussi à se doter d'une complétude institutionnelle impressionnante. Ces divers réseaux, organismes et établissements de langue française, font de l'Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse une collectivité vitale qui apporte une contribution à l'épanouissement de la province, qui est démesurée par rapport à ses nombres. La *Loi sur les services en français* de 2004, qui engage la province à favoriser l'essor de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province, se conjugue à la *Loi sur les langues officielles* du Canada et à la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, pour assurer le statut légitime de cette communauté dans la société néo-écossaise.

Paradoxalement, le pouvoir politique de la communauté acadienne est faible et fragile, en raison de la distribution de la population. En fait, les francophones sont majoritaires uniquement dans la circonscription de Clare, et là, quand je dis francophone, je me fie au nombre de personnes qui ont indiqué le français, langue unique ou langue multiple, comme la première langue officielle parlée et toujours connue. Donc, en Clare, il représente à peu près 70 p. 100 de l'électorat. Dans Argyle, les francophones comptent tout près de 50 p. 100 de la population, donc la moitié de l'électorat. Dans toutes les autres circonscriptions provinciales, ils sont minoritaires, y inclus la circonscription de Richmond et, en fait, ils sont généralement ultra-minoritaire, et ça serait le cas des députés d'Halifax qu'on a parmi nous, ici aujourd'hui.

Il fut établi lors du processus de révision des frontières électorales de 2001, que la représentation de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse soit un facteur primaire à considérer par la Commission et que la volonté de promouvoir l'essor de ce peuple constituait une circonstance extraordinaire. Il nous semble à l'heure actuelle, soit 10 ans plus tard, qu'il est encore plus important de protéger les acquis politiques de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province, quand on considère, d'une part, les défis démographiques auxquels elle est confrontée, et là je parle, entre autres, de l'exode des francophones des régions rurales pour la région d'Halifax.

D'autre part, les engagements que la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse a pris à l'égard de l'essor de cette communauté dans la *Loi sur les services en français*. En fait, nous sommes de l'avis que toute modification aux frontières électorales provinciales devrait tenter de consolider davantage les acquis de la collectivité acadienne sur le plan de la représentativité. Affaiblir le pouvoir politique de la communauté acadienne aurait pour effet d'affaiblir la vitalité de la communauté et à notre avis, de mettre en péril la durabilité de cette communauté en tant que collectivité distincte et productive. En conséquence, l'Université Sainte-Anne propose au comité législatif d'établir clairement, dans le mandat de la commission, de consulter les membres et les représentants de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province, dans leurs régions et dans leur langue.

De plus, il est primordial que la Commission ait les ressources et les moyens de bien comprendre la nature des besoins de la collectivité acadienne et francophone, que seule une bonne représentation de la communauté elle-même au sein de la commission peut lui fournir.

Finalement, il nous semble primordial que l'importance d'assurer la représentativité de la communauté de langues officielles minoritaires dans la Législature, figure dans les termes de référence de la Commission. En somme, nous donnons notre appui, sans équivoque, aux cinq recommandations que la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse vous a exprimées. Soit que les consultations de la commission aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes, pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur des possibilités de changements dans les circonscriptions électorales, notamment les régions acadiennes immédiates de Chéticamp, Isle Madame, Clare et Argyle. Que toutes les sessions de consultation se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tous les citoyens et citoyennes de s'exprimer en français et en anglais. Que l'un des facteurs primaires à être considéré par les termes de référence soit que la minorité

acadienne est de première importance en Nouvelle-Écosse et respecte le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires et leurs traditions. Quatrièmement, que le facteur primaire de la proportion de la langue officielle soit considéré à être ajouté aux termes de référence et qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone siègent au Comité ou à la Commission qui sera chargée de recommander des révisions aux délimitations des circonscriptions électorales actuelles.

En terminant, j'aimerais vous remercier de reconnaître mon droit légitime de m'exprimer et de me faire comprendre, surtout, en français, ma langue maternelle. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Thank you for coming. There are no questions.

We do have one more person who expressed an interest from the audience, so Mr. Gaudet, if you'd come forward please.

MR. PAUL GAUDET: Merci M. le Président. Mon nom c'est Paul Gaudet de Saulnierville, personne à la retraite. Membres du Comité, je serai très bref. J'ai seulement un point que j'aimerais faire valoir auprès de votre Comité, c'est concernant un principe pour faire référence à vos termes de référence comme Comité. Je considère qu'il s'agit, que vous pourriez prendre en considération, la représentation disproportionnelle, plutôt qu'avoir une représentation égale proportionnelle à la population, d'admettre le concept d'une représentation non proportionnelle, pour deux raisons. Pour la première raison, ça serait pour préserver une partie distincte de la Nouvelle-Écosse, que la population acadienne et en la protégeant et en encourageant son développement. C'est une richesse pour toute la Nouvelle-Écosse.

La deuxième raison, ça serait pour représenter la population rurale de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui, selon moi, mérite une attention spéciale hors de proportion, parce que le problème est hors de proportion. Donc, c'est un besoin qui se fait ressentir à travers le Canada et il faudra peut-être être imaginatif, innovateur pour avoir des moyens d'adresser cette situation. Donc, simplement, je vous encouragerais de considérer, au point de départ, dans vos termes de référence, une représentation non proportionnelle, et ça, ça serait admis par toute la population générale de la Nouvelle-Écosse, au point de départ. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you also have a word you wanted to say, sir? What is your name, sir? Come to the table first.

MR. NEIL LEBLANC: Bonjour. Mon nom c'est Neil LeBlanc. Je n'avais aucune intention de faire une représentation aujourd'hui, parce que je suis un ancien membre de la Législature et je pensais que je voulais entendre plutôt ce que les autres mondes allaient dire. Je veux simplement dire quelques choses. J'ai eu l'honneur, deux fois, d'être assis où est-ce que vous autres vous êtes aujourd'hui, et c'est nous autres qui avons fait les termes de référence et choisi les membres de la Commission. À ce moment-là, je veux simplement dire qu'on avait les mêmes défis que vous autres vous avez. Il y a des sièges qu'il faut créer d'autres part et il faut surtout prendre les sièges hors des régions rurales, parce que c'est là que la population diminue et les régions urbaines sont en train de grandir.

Je vous demande, à ce moment-là, j'allais dire, nous autres, comme Comité, nous avons fait, nous avons assuré au moins que les droits des minorités ont été représentés. Je vous encourage, dans vos termes de référence, de considérer que les minorités ont besoin de votre support, parce que pour nous autres, pour vivre en français dans notre région, quand on est entouré d'anglophones, l'assimilation nous « face » tous les jours – ça n'arrête jamais. Le travail qui a été fait pour augmenter le français dans notre province est grâce aux hommes et femmes qui ont eu le droit de servir dans l'Assemblée, mais il faut avoir des minorités là pour parler pour les minorités qui sont au travers de la province.

On n'est jamais certain qu'un Acadien avait été élu dans Argyle ou dans Clare ou Richmond ou Chéticamp, mais ces sièges qui ont été établis dans le passé ont été là pour assurer au moins qu'il y avait une bonne chance d'avoir une représentation aux Acadiens et je pense que pour moi, avoir l'honneur de servir comme député provincial et même au Cabinet, une des choses que je me souviens bien, c'est d'avoir le choix, d'avoir l'honneur d'être assis où est-ce que vous autres vous êtes et de faire les termes de référence au moins que les minorités avaient au moins leurs voix entendues. Je vous encourage de faire la même chose et le représentant de la Commission, pour moi, au moins qu'un Acadien est établi là, moi je serais content, mais ce sont les termes de référence qui sont le plus important et je vous encourage, au moins, de donner considération aux hommes et femmes qui sont venus aujourd'hui faire des présentations. Un grand merci, M. le Président et je vous souhaite bienvenue dans le comté de Yarmouth et allez dépenser beaucoup d'argent à tous les restaurants ce soir. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. LeBlanc. Mr. d'Entremont.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup. C'est simplement pour dire un grand merci à toutes les associations qui sont venues, non pas du grand nombre qui sont ici, mais qui ont utilisé notre système d'interprétation. Je sais quand on a eu, vraiment, la discussion, au commencement, si on avait besoin d'un système, parce que, comme vous le savez, elle est tellement chère, d'avoir quelqu'un avec nous qui peut faire l'interprétation, mais, ça prouve quelque chose qu'on a des régions qui sont vraiment grandes et importantes, et merci beaucoup pour utiliser notre système et d'être ici ce soir. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. d'Entremont. I want to just say thank you to Richard Landry, who's doing the translation in there. We did ask to slow down, but I think we sped up because of the number of people who are here. He did a phenomenal job. I'm sure he probably needs to have a good stiff drink and a meal and to enjoy himself.

Thank you very much. That ends our hearings at this time. We resume at 7:00 p.m. tonight.

I just got an announcement that the Halifax meetings will be Thursday and they'll be held in the Committee Office on Thursday rather than the Red Room. So we'll change them around, and that's to my good friend, Michel Samson, who put a request in yesterday. So I just want to make it a matter of record that we worked on that very diligently. Thank you. That's an inside joke, but I'll leave it at that.

[The committee adjourned at 5:24 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

**Tuesday, November 29, 2011
7:00 P.M.**

YARMOUTH, NOVA SCOTIA

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)

Mr. Gary Ramey

Ms. Michele Raymond

Mr. Leonard Preyra

Mr. Jim Boudreau

Hon. Michel Samson

Mr. Andrew Younger

Hon. Christopher d'Entremont

Mr. Keith Bain

[Hon. Michel Samson was replaced by Mr Wayne Gaudet]

[Mr. Andrew Younger was replaced by Mr. Zach Churchill]

Witnesses

Mr. Noé Bourque, Conseil jeunesse provincial

Ms. Ashley White, Conseil jeunesse provincial

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

YARMOUTH, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE
ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION
CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We will now call this committee to order. I thank you for coming this evening. I understand that there are a couple of speakers, and I welcome anyone else who may want to put their name on the list to put their name on the list.

I'll just go over some key points from this afternoon. My name is Ross Landry, and I'm the Chair of this committee. This session is to be recorded. It's a matter of public record, so anything said, if you don't want it repeated, then don't say it, because it will be on the record.

I will make some introductions and I'll start to my right.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

And as I stated, I am Ross Landry and I am the Justice Minister. I thank you for coming tonight.

The two speakers that we have on the agenda here tonight are Noé Bourque - all right, come on up - and Ashley White, or Ashley LeBlanc, as was clearly pointed out at one of our sessions there, from the Acadian community when the gentleman had met someone called "White," he gave me the history that, in fact, the actual name historically goes back to their French roots and that it was LeBlanc and they changed it to anglicize it, so if there's truth to that substance there's a little history note.

AN HON. MEMBER: At least we learned something.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was reported in Truro so it must be true. Go ahead, welcome and thank you for being here.

MR. NOÉ BOURQUE: Bonjour. Merci, M. le Président et membres du comité. Je m'appelle Noé Bourque.

MS. ASHLEY WHITE: Je m'appelle Ashley White.

MR. BOURQUE: On est représentants du CJP, un Conseil jeunesse provincial et du Conseil jeunesse de Par-en-Bas. On aimerait souligner que le CJP appui les

recommandations soumises par les membres du CAPEB pendant les discours qui ont pris place cet après-midi.

On a pris ce temps, entre ces deux sessions, pour réfléchir, puis on a obtenu une conclusion. On a conclu que, clairement, les gens de ces communautés, pensent que nos circonscriptions électorales fonctionnent efficacement, si bien, en effet, qu'on questionne l'efficacité de cette tournée ici au comté de Yarmouth.

Nos circonscriptions travaillent. Puis quand ce que t'a quelque chose qui travaille, c'est mieux de rien changer.

Notre population est en décroissance. Notre taux de français parlé est menacé à chaque jour, puis, on ne peut pas essayer de changer ce qui travaille déjà, à cause du risque qu'il y a que ça va faire ces deux points ici pire.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Ms. Raymond

MS. RAYMOND: Merci et bienvenue au processus. Ça m'intéresse beaucoup, car je comprends que vous êtes encore des étudiants – peut-être que vous n'avez pas encore votés? Est-ce possible? Mais c'est très bien à savoir que vous croyez que ça fonctionne, que ce processus fonctionne. J'aimerais peut-être entendre un peu de plus, qu'est-ce que vous entend, des parents, des aînés et de tout ceci, qui votent encore. Ça veut dire quoi, que ça marche?

MR. BOURQUE: Bien, de mon point de vue, une représentation des régions acadiennes, I guess ce n'est pas le meilleur, obviously, mais, it's as good as it can get.

MS. RAYMOND: Vous n'entendez pas de grands maux de vos aînés et tout ça, non? Okay. Merci beaucoup.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want to thank you for coming, for having the courage, and I also want to thank you for participating this afternoon and taking the time to listen to the adults of the community, the elders, and to show them support. I think, looking at some of the body language in some of the discussion, I think they're honoured to have you here and to be a part and that's a good part in the journey to being young adults and contributing to society. You're making a good statement here and we thank you for sharing.

MR. BOURQUE: Thank you for listening.

MS. WHITE: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there anyone else in the audience that would like to take a minute to come up? We had over 19 people this afternoon and we had two leftovers from this afternoon who presented this evening. I do welcome you otherwise we will take a 10 minute recess to see if some new speakers will come forward. So we will adjourn for 10 minutes, thank you.

[7:09 p.m. The committee recessed]

[7:26 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now call the committee back to order. Is there anyone interested in coming forward who's in the audience and may not have had the chance to speak earlier? Going once, going twice, sold.

We had approximately 20 people here today and it was excellent to be in Yarmouth. I see no need to prolong this evening if no one is going to come forward. We will call it an evening and adjourn the official portion of this committee here in Yarmouth. We have an in-camera issue that I need to address with the committee, so we will do that with the microphones turned off.

I thank you for coming in. If you had been here this afternoon - you had to squeeze to find a seat. It was packed and it was excellent. Thank you very much. We are now adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 7:27 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Thursday, December 1, 2011

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

3:00 P.M.

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)

Mr. Gary Ramey

Ms. Michele Raymond

Mr. Leonard Preyra

Mr. Jim Boudreau

Hon. Michel Samson

Mr. Andrew Younger

Hon. Christopher d'Entremont

Mr. Keith Bain

[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Mr. Sidney Prest]

WITNESSES

Mr. Shalom Mandaville, Chairman, Soil & Water Conservation Society of Metro
Halifax

Mr. Jean Léger, Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse

Ms. Solange Beauregard, Le Regroupement des aînées et aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse

Ms. Céleste Godin, Agente de communications Conseil Jeunesse provincial

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

Ms. Moira MacLeod
Report Writer

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2011

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

3:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN
Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: I now call this meeting to order. We have a quorum.

The first presenter will be Mr. Mandaville. I will ask you when you come to speak to say your name directly into the mike, speak directly into the mike.

Before we start, I'm going to do some introductions here, so just give me one moment. I'm going to ask the people to my right to introduce themselves and then we'll go to the left, just so that everybody knows who's who in the zoo here. So I'll just give you one moment.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Remember that everything said in here is recorded, so if you don't want it to be recorded, don't say it. Thank you.

MR. SHALOM MANDAVILLE: Honourable Mr. Landry, can you give me a time limit so I can properly organize myself?

MR. CHAIRMAN: How much time are you asking for?

MR. MANDAVILLE: A very few minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then you've got them, go ahead. You frame your thoughts, we'll give you time.

MR. MANDAVILLE: My name is Shalom Mandaville; I'm the chairman of a North American-based group, in both the U.S.A. and Canada, of about 400 members. All of them are scientists, professors and professionals, out of which approximately one-third live across Nova Scotia.

As you can see, the honourable Andrew Younger referred to me many times by my first name, as he knew me quite well when he was a councillor.

Our presentation is quite brief. I'm just representing those other members who live across Nova Scotia. There were two questions asked in the ad and I'm going to address them and then give an explanation if somebody has a question.

The first thing is we'd like the province to appoint two academics, with no political affiliations whatsoever, and this is the way it should go: one from one of the four metro universities - I'm also adding Kings College as a university because it's called the University of Kings College, I think; one from outside of HRM - maybe Cape Breton, CBU, St. F.X., or something like that; and one from outside of Nova Scotia, with no ties to Nova Scotia.

The second thing about the terms of reference - and there are only two which we want. One is to go back to the public and see what the public wants, so obviously we don't have any specific recommendation whether to cut it down or increase, like HRM and the town of Sydney did. The second thing which I ask your patience on this, we would also like, if you can expand the terms of reference, which also will take longer, and maybe it will even need a plebiscite, and to look at - let me see, what one of our professor members told me - to have a Party-list proportional representation. I think everybody knows what proportional representation is but within that, I understand that there's an open-list system and a closed-list system. We would like to have an open list.

The one in British Columbia and Ontario, as you know, the plebiscites failed for proportional representation because the general public was very confused. This way, I think it will represent us more and I've heard internationally there are other countries which have this system and one can also check *Wikipedia* for that.

I'm very proud to be a doctor in Nova Scotia. I came here in 1966, on September 19th, as an immigrant from the Netherlands and before that from India. We have probably the best democracy in the world. Many times, we don't appreciate our own backgrounds. I understood from some politicians, I've known many in the past, that proportional - not proportional, what is that called? Representative government started in Nova Scotia, in Canada anyway, so why not start this proportional representation here as well?

Lastly, I would like to apologize for my clothes. I don't wear suits or jackets anymore because I spend a lot of time on lakes collecting bottom sediments and I finished 1,400 lakes - and I keep calling him councillor so I ask him to forgive me. The honourable Andrew Younger knows my work or some of my work from those days at HRM and he always respected me.

Finally, I gave you a letter which I received from the Honourable Dr. John Hamm, MD, which admitted that there were no experts in the Department of Environment in the field of limnology. I'm a limnologist, a specialist in freshwaters; BIO and Dalhousie are all in marine. I just wanted to provide that. It has nothing to do with today's presentation, it's just

to show that there are some politicians who are very, very honest and the Honourable John Hamm, MD, is one of them. That's all I have to say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Are there any questions? Thank you for coming in and taking the time, and it's nice to see you.

MR. MANDAVILLE: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Our next presenter is Jean Leger.

MR. JEAN LÉGER: Bonjour, Mesdames et Messieurs, les députés et ministres, distingués invités. Mon nom est Jean Léger et je suis directeur général de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse et je suis accompagné aujourd'hui de notre président, M. Ronald Robichaud.

Je tiens d'abord à vous remercier de permettre à la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, ou, la FANE, à présenter dans le cadre des consultations de ce Comité législatif en vue de déterminer la composition et le mandat d'une Commission indépendante de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales.

La mission principale de la FANE est de neutraliser l'assimilation, dans la mesure de ses moyens, des francophones de la province et de valoriser les deux langues officielles de notre pays, tout en travaillant pour le développement et l'épanouissement de notre communauté.

Ses principaux objectifs sont de promouvoir les intérêts communs de la population acadienne et francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse, la concertation entre les associations, institutions, sociétés et organismes francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse, agir à la fois comme groupe d'intérêt et à titre d'organisme de développement communautaire, agir comme porte-parole officiel de la population acadienne et francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse et travailler à la survie linguistique, culturelle, économique, sociale, politique du développement du peuple acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse et, d'ailleurs, pour en savoir davantage sur la communauté acadienne et francophone, je vous invite à consulter le livre que je vous ai offert aujourd'hui, qui présente, bien entendu, la communauté « Une Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse moderne ».

Depuis ses débuts en 1968, la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse a contribué à la naissance et à l'avancement de plusieurs dossiers, entre autres, dans les domaines de l'éducation, de l'économie, de la politique des domaines socio-culturels, jeunesse, femmes, aînés, alphabétisation, immigration, communications et j'en passe. C'est aussi la FANE qui a été au centre des négociations en vue de l'adoption de la *Loi sur les services en français* de la Nouvelle-Écosse en 2004 et des consultations et négociations menant aux règlements issus de cette loi.

Mesdames et Messieurs, les députés et ministres, voici l'essentiel de notre message. Les Acadiens francophones habitent le territoire actuel depuis plusieurs siècles, et ce, même

avant la création de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Avant le Traité d'Utrecht de 1713, le peuple acadien était prospère et concentré sur le territoire de l'Acadie, devenu par la suite la Nouvelle-Écosse. À la suite de la signature de ce traité entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne, les Acadiens ont été tolérés pour encore quelques années sur les territoires qu'ils avaient développés par leurs durs labeurs. Malheureusement, comme nous savons tous, les nombreuses déportations de 1755 à 1763 ont changé radicalement et négativement le visage de la société acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Leur nombre a été considérablement réduit dans les Maritimes et en Nouvelle-Écosse et leur population, évidemment, dispersée contre leur gré.

Lorsque les Acadiens ont été tolérés de revenir s'établir dans la province après la Déportation, on les a sciemment éparpillés afin d'en diminuer la menace, craignant une trop grande concentration de ces Acadiens catholiques. De nos jours, l'éparpillement des communautés est évident. Cependant, grâce à leur ténacité, elles sont devenues des communautés vibrantes et rayonnantes et contribuent énormément, non seulement à la culture de la Nouvelle-Écosse, mais aussi, à son éducation, son économie et son développement social. Il ne faudrait pas qu'en 2012, les Acadiens soient pénalisés encore une fois par le pouvoir à Halifax, en raison de cet éparpillement, causé entre autres par la Déportation.

De nos jours, on retrouve des communautés acadiennes traditionnelles comme Chéticamp, Richmond, Clare ou la Baie Sainte-Marie, et Argyle, Par-en-Bas, ainsi que la région de Pomquet. Par ailleurs, l'Acadie moderne de la Nouvelle-Écosse compte dorénavant sur d'autres régions, comme Halifax, Rive-Sud, Truro, Vallée de l'Annapolis et Sydney. Bref, où il y a une école francophone, il y a maintenant une communauté. Souvent, l'obtention de ces écoles a été arrachée de peine et de misère au pouvoir provincial à Province House et rendu possible seulement grâce à des arguments citant la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés et de jugements de la Cour suprême du Canada. Une représentation effective est donc essentielle et doit être considérée dans les termes de référence de la prochaine Commission pour l'ensemble de ces communautés et des Acadiens francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

En tout et partout dans la province, selon le recensement de Statistique Canada de 2006, on trouve près de 35 000 personnes de langue maternelle française, mais 95 000 parlent en français. D'autre part, on estime à près de 10 p. 100 le nombre de personnes d'origine acadienne, sur la population totale de la province, soit environ, 90 000 personnes. Cependant, en termes d'homogénéité linguistique et culturelle, ce sont les régions de Chéticamp, Richmond, Clare et Argyle qui sont les plus importantes. Le dynamisme économique, culturel et linguistique de ces communautés est essentiel à l'identité et à l'épanouissement de toute l'Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse. En ce qui concerne ces trois dernières, soit Richmond, Clare et Argyle, il est important pour leur pérennité qu'elles conservent les délimitations électorales actuellement en place.

Selon la FANE, une représentation effective est donc essentielle et doit être considérée dans les termes de référence de la prochaine Commission pour l'ensemble de ces communautés et des Acadiens francophones. Je vous rappellerai qu'en juin 1991, dans

l'arrêt Carter, la Cour suprême du Canada a statué sur la Section 3 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, en parlant, entre autres ici, de représentation effective. Je cite ici ce jugement : « La définition des circonscriptions électorales provinciales est assujettie à la Charte et ne relève pas d'une convention constitutionnelle relative à la constitution d'une province qui échapperait au contrôle judiciaire. Bien que la compétence législative de modifier la constitution d'une province ne puisse être retirée à la province sans modification de la Constitution et, en ce sens, échappe à un examen fondé sur la Charte, l'exercice par la province de son pouvoir législatif est assujetti à la Charte. La province est habilitée, par convention, à délimiter ses circonscriptions électorales, mais cette convention est assujettie à l'article 3 de la Charte. Il faut donner au droit de vote garanti par la Charte un sens large, fondé sur l'objet visé, qui tient compte du contexte historique et social. Il faut rechercher la philosophie générale qui sous-tend l'évolution historique du droit de vote tout en gardant à l'esprit certaines considérations pratiques, comme la géographie sociale et physique. Qui plus est, notre Cour doit être guidée par l'idéal de la "société libre et démocratique" qui fonde la Charte. Le droit de vote garanti à l'article 3 de la Charte n'a pas pour objet l'égalité du pouvoir électoral comme telle, mais le droit à une "représentation effective". Par conséquent, le droit de vote comporte de nombreux éléments, dont l'un est l'équité. L'article 3 ne garantit pas l'égalité du pouvoir électoral. » Fin de citation du jugement de la Cour suprême.

Qui plus est, la FANE rappelle aux décideurs présents ici aujourd'hui que la langue et la culture de la minorité acadienne et francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse, occupe une place privilégiée dans le tissu de la société canadienne en tant que l'une des collectivités fondatrices du Canada, et que le français est l'une des deux langues officielles, dont les droits sont inscrits dans la Constitution.

La FANE, à titre de porte-parole des Acadiens et francophones de cette province, ne tolèrera pas et prendra tous les moyens à sa disposition pour conserver le statu quo quant à la délimitation des circonscriptions électorales actuelles des communautés acadiennes d'Argyle, Clare et Richmond, qui sont à nos yeux, des institutions et des acquis extrêmement importants. Nous estimons que ces circonscriptions sont, en raison de leur histoire et de leur importance, des institutions provinciales reconnues et extrêmement importantes à protéger pour les communautés acadiennes et nous nous référons ici à un jugement de la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario, qui donnait raison à la communauté, lorsqu'une commission de restructuration provinciale des soins de santé voulait fermer une de leur institutions, soit le seul hôpital francophone, l'Hôpital Montfort.

En conclusion, la FANE demande au Comité législatif, ici présent aujourd'hui, de considérer les recommandations suivantes pour les orientations et la composition de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. Première recommandation : que les consultations aient lieu dans toutes les régions acadiennes, au nombre de 10, pour donner la chance aux citoyens concernés de s'exprimer sur des possibilités de changements aux circonscriptions électorales, notamment, les régions acadiennes immédiates de Chéticamp, Richmond, Clare et Argyle. Que toutes les sessions de consultation se déroulent avec traduction simultanée, permettant à tout les citoyens et citoyennes de la province de s'exprimer en français ou en anglais. Que la Commission

reprenne les critères primaires des termes de référence utilisés par la précédente Commission et que l'on ajoute celui de la minorité acadienne, à l'effet qu'elle est une communauté d'intérêts distincte et que son histoire et sa contribution à la province est de première importance en Nouvelle-Écosse et que la Commission respecte le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles dans le respect de leur diversité, leur histoire, leurs traditions et leur patrimoine.

Aussi, que l'un des facteurs primaires à être considéré par la Commission soit la proportion des langues officielles du Canada dans les circonscriptions de Richmond, Clare et Argyle. Qu'au moins deux personnes de la communauté acadienne et francophone, ayant d'excellentes connaissances de la communauté, siègent à la Commission qui sera chargée de recommander des révisions, ou non, aux délimitations des circonscriptions électorales actuelles et que ces personnes aient de bonnes connaissances des cas de jurisprudence touchant les communautés de langues officielles en situation minoritaire, surtout en ce qui concerne les cas touchant la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés.

Considérer d'ajouter des circonscriptions électorales, comme le fait et comme l'envisage de le faire le gouvernement fédéral, plutôt que d'en enlever. Une représentation adéquate permet un meilleur exercice démocratique et, de nos jours, ne nuirait pas aux régions rurales, déjà en difficulté et faisant face à de grands défis de toutes sortes. Nous osons espérer que le gouvernement ne veuille pas nuire aux régions rurales et que la Commission trouvera des moyens innovateurs pour assurer une représentation effective sans enlever rien aux minorités. Considérer comme élément primaire, des termes de référence, la *Loi sur les services en français* de la province, adoptée après la plus récente Commission et qui permet maintenant aux Acadiens et francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse d'obtenir des services en français, mais surtout dans le contexte ici de favoriser la préservation et l'essor de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province. Une loi qui va dans le sens de l'article 16, alinéa 3 de la Charte sur l'égalité du statut et d'usage du français et de l'anglais au Canada.

Que la Commission tienne compte, dans ses termes de référence, des cas de jurisprudence visant une représentation effective, à savoir les jugements de la Cour suprême suivants : l'arrêt Carter et le jugement Raïche contre le Canada, en ce qui concernait les changements proposés à la circonscription fédérale d'Acadie-Bathurst au Nouveau-Brunswick.

Comme dernière recommandation, que la Commission fasse une étude d'impact exhaustive sur le développement et l'épanouissement de la communauté minoritaire de langues officielles, s'il effectue des changements aux circonscriptions de Richmond, Clare et Argyle. D'ailleurs, cette demande d'impact avait été citée dans un jugement à la Cour suprême : le jugement Raïche contre le gouvernement du Canada, où le juge dans ce jugement exprime important que la Commission identifie les impacts sur la communauté touchée. Je vous remercie de votre attention.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Merci beaucoup, Jean, pour ta présentation. J'ai posé des questions à Yvon Samson quand on se trouvait à Port Hawkesbury et puis je vais te poser la même question. Je sais que ça fait des années que vous êtes impliqué avec la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse et que vous avez eu occasion de travailler

directement avec le gouvernement de la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Je me demande si, dans ton avis, si le succès que nous avons vu pour la communauté acadienne, si que ça aurait passé aussi bien que ça soit passé, si nous n'avions aucun représentant au gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse de la communauté acadienne?

MR. LÉGER: Vraiment pas et je peux vous donner des exemples concrets, M. Samson. Lorsque nous avons, la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, avec nos membres, négocié en 2004, la *Loi sur les services en français*, avec le gouvernement conservateur de John Hamm, d'avoir des Acadiens dans la Législature nous a permis, justement, de faire en sorte que les parties étaient très bien au courant de la situation et de l'importance de cette loi et, à cette époque là, nous avons évidemment travaillé très étroitement avec les députés, qui sont d'ailleurs encore des députés maintenant. Mais je crois que le fait qu'on a eu une adoption unanime, de la part de l'Assemblée législative, et justement, je crois que c'est en raison dû à la présence d'Acadiens à la Législature, à Province House.

MR. SAMSON: Une autre question, c'est que, comme vous savez, il y a eu une présentation qui a été faite par la Canadian Taxpayers Federation, et selon eux, ils disent que ce n'est plus nécessaire d'avoir des circonscriptions protégées parce que la communauté acadienne est en bonne forme. Elle a des écoles, l'université, services de langue en français et que le travail est fini, pour la communauté acadienne. Ça a tout été accompli. Pourquoi avoir des députés spécifiquement des régions acadiennes quand tout le travail est fini? J'ai posé cette question à Jacqueline Samson du Centre La Picasse et je vous la pose à vous aujourd'hui. Est-ce que vous pourriez expliquer un peu? Quelle est la situation aujourd'hui et quels sont les défis qui font encore face à la communauté acadienne et, plus important, est-ce que vous êtes d'accord avec la Canadian Taxpayers Federation, que le travail de la communauté acadienne est terminé?

MR. LÉGER: Certainement pas, M. Samson. Il y a de nombreux enjeux encore pour les communautés acadiennes et francophones. Un enjeu très important, que j'ai mentionné, c'est celui, évidemment, de l'assimilation. On trouve encore des communautés qui s'assimilent, et donc, on a besoin de travailler, encore davantage, pour contrer cette assimilation. Également, en termes de services, je crois qu'il y a encore beaucoup d'efforts à faire pour offrir des services en français à nos communautés, pour ne nommer que ces deux enjeux-là. Peut-être que le président de la FANE aurait d'autres enjeux à discuter, mais, un qui me vient en tête aussi, c'est la littératie au niveau de l'analphabétisme des francophones, comparativement aux anglophones, on dit que c'est à peu près 20 points d'écart entre les anglophones et les francophones. Alors, vous voyez, c'est un exemple très frappant, de la situation des Acadiens dans cette province qui ont encore besoin, je dirais, de se battre pour leur survie et également pour leur pérennité.

MR. SAMSON: Merci, et juste un dernier commentaire. Quand je me suis trouvé, il y a juste quelques jours, je suis allé visiter une amie, qui se trouvait ici à l'hôpital, à Victoria General. Puis, là, il y avait une famille de Tracadie-Sheila qui avait leur père qui avait eu une opération dans l'hôpital, et puis ils parlaient que comment bon que c'était à voir, qu'il y avait maintenant des services disponibles et que les infirmières s'identifiaient comme

pouvant parler français à la famille et à leur père, mais, les difficultés, encore, que le père avait, à parler avec les médecins et quand les médecins voulaient décrire les problèmes qu'il avait, ou les maux ou les douleurs, comment difficile que c'était pour lui, parce qu'il ne parlait pas anglais et je pense que c'est encore un défi qui est là pour nous, mais il y a certainement beaucoup d'avances qui ont été faites en même temps.

Juste un dernier point, c'est je veux certainement prendre l'occasion pour féliciter le président de ce Comité pour avoir accepté d'avoir la traduction simultanée pendant ces réunions. Comme vous le savez, nous avons eu plusieurs présentations à Yarmouth, Truro, Port Hawkesbury, ou les Acadiens et Acadiennes ont pu s'exprimer dans leur langue maternelle, puis certainement, je félicite le président, M. Landry, du Comité du gouvernement d'avoir eu accepté ça et j'espère que la Commission qui sera nommée va offrir les mêmes services à la communauté acadienne. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for coming. The next speaker - sorry, Mr. d'Entremont, I apologize.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Merci beaucoup, M. le Président. Je pense que c'est à cause que M. Samson t'a donné des remerciements, en français, que ça n'arrive pas souvent, que t'étais un peu bouleversé.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what threw me off about you being a questioner - I didn't know where that was coming from. (Laughter)

MR. D'ENTREMONT: M. Léger, ça c'est la grande question que, vraiment M. Samson t'a déjà posée. C'est l'affaire de l'assimilation qui arrive à tous les jours dans nos communautés et qu'on va avoir besoin même plus maintenant, à travailler sur cette chose-là. Peux-tu me donner des commentaires sur les régions comme Argyle, que je vois à tous les jours, que tous les enfants parlent en anglais? Comment est-ce qu'on peut continuer à les pousser à parler en français?

MR. LEGER: Bien, je pense qu'il y a un rôle de l'école, il y a un rôle de l'école qui joue un rôle d'éducation, quand même, sur le plan scolaire et qui le fait très bien. D'ailleurs, le CSAP, qui a reçu des éloges au niveau de la qualité de son enseignement récemment, mais je crois qu'il y a du travail à faire dans l'école pour renforcer l'identité et la culture acadienne et, également, il y a un besoin, je crois, pour la communauté de faire des efforts, c'est-à-dire, les organismes culturels, les organismes jeunesse, que tout le monde participe, justement, à ce que les Acadiens soient fiers de parler leur langue. En ce moment, on reconnaît certains défis, mais on pense qu'on va y arriver.

C'est un peu le même cas du côté d'Halifax. Pour expliquer, c'est que, la culture anglo-saxonne américaine est très, très forte et a beaucoup d'impact sur les Acadiens et les francophones, alors on a besoin de se battre, doublement plus fort, pour résister à cette pression-là. Alors nous, sans appui, sans appui d'un gouvernement qui écoute et qui est à l'écoute, des Acadiens et des francophones, ça devient d'autant plus difficile.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: C'est cela le point que j'essaie de faire : qu'on a encore besoin de tous les outils qu'on a, pour combattre cette chose-là. Que ça devient pire en pire à tous les ans, que je trouve, avec l'assimilation dans nos régions.

Une dernière question, M. le Président, si je peux. Vous avez identifié 10 régions dans votre présentation. Peux-tu les donner? Parce que je pense que ce n'est pas tous les membres qui comprennent qu'il y a 10 régions où on a besoin de faire ces représentations-là dedans.

MR. LEGER: OK, alors, si je commence au Cap-Breton, les communautés acadiennes sont Sydney, Richmond, Chéticamp et si on vient où ce qu'on appelle sur la terre ferme, il y a Pomquet, il y a Truro, il y a Halifax, il y a la Rive-Sud, il y a la Vallée de l'Annapolis, il y a Clare et Argyle. Alors, il y en a 10 au total. J'espère que j'en ai pas oublié. Donc, où il y a des écoles du CSAP, il y a une communauté francophone, acadienne.

Comme minorité, je crois que ça serait apprécié s'il y avait d'autres minorités qui pourraient également obtenir des sièges spécifiques, si c'était leur envie ou leur volonté. Je crois que dans le contexte actuel, c'est mieux d'ajouter des sièges pour ces minorités-là, que d'en enlever à des minorités. Je crois que les minorités ont quelque chose d'important à contribuer à la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse. D'ailleurs, l'auteur John Ralston Saul, disait qu'au 21^e siècle, les minorités allaient être les communautés qui allaient engendrer beaucoup d'innovation dans les sociétés, et nous, c'est certainement que la communauté acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, comme minorité, nous voulons contribuer à notre province. Alors, je dirais d'ajouter des circonscriptions, et aussi, de dialoguer avec ces minorités, pour voir de quelle façon, justement, le pouvoir législatif peut mieux répondre à leurs besoins.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for sharing that. Are there any other questions?

Our next presenters - thank you for coming in, nice to see you again. Madame Beauregard.

MS. SOLANGE BEAUREGARD: Bonjour. Mon nom est Solange Beauregard et je suis directrice du Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Le Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse, communément appelé RANE, désire tout d'abord remercier le Comité législatif de lui permettre d'exprimer ses points de vue au sujet des enjeux que la Commission doit considérer en ce qui touche les termes de référence de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales de la Nouvelle-Écosse et ceci, en français.

Comme information, le RANE a pour mission de favoriser et de valoriser la contribution des personnes âgées de la communauté acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Plus de 17 000 Acadiens et francophones sont âgés de plus de 50 ans et sont présents dans plusieurs circonscriptions.

Nos aînés acadiens proviennent du peuple fondateur de cette province et jouent toujours un rôle primordial dans le développement et l'épanouissement de la Nouvelle-Écosse. D'ailleurs, les traces de ces derniers sont encore perceptibles sur nos terres, dans les pratiques agricoles de la province. On parle toujours le français, couramment, dans cinq

des communautés, que M. Léger aussi a mentionné, Argyle, Clare, Pomquet, Isle Madame et Chéticamp.

En 2004, la Nouvelle-Écosse s'est dotée d'un projet de loi garantissant aux Acadiens et aux francophones de la province, des services en français. Elle s'est engagée ainsi à contribuer à la préservation et à l'essor de sa communauté acadienne et francophone. Nous avons vu des avancées par la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse via certaines initiatives, notamment, plus d'accès aux services juridiques, aux services en santé, et ce, en français.

Tout récemment, lors d'une étude des besoins de nos aînés de l'Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse, nos aînés nous mentionnaient l'importance d'obtenir des services en français. Le rapport entre la qualité et la langue des services, comme en santé, par exemple, offerts aux aînés, est très important. L'ensemble des besoins des aînés acadiens et francophones, identifiés dans cette étude, je parle toujours de l'étude des besoins des aînés, lorsque, comblés dans leur langue, les communautés optimisent la contribution sociale de ces derniers, au lieu de les isoler.

Comme enjeu, le paysage linguistique demeure majoritairement anglophone et plusieurs Acadiens et francophones ont une peur de perdre leurs acquis. Le manque de représentants acadiens peut créer des situations difficiles, comme de perdre la continuité de l'offre des services en français et du développement de nouveaux services. Pour conserver la vitalité et le mieux-être de nos aînés, il est important de considérer qu'ils puissent se faire représenter par des Acadiens. Dans une circonscription majoritairement anglophone, il est peu probable que cela demeure.

Le RANE demande à la Commission de tenir compte de la géographie, de l'histoire et de la représentation de nos régions acadiennes dans la délimitation des circonscriptions. Le caractère spécifique des circonscriptions acadiennes actuelles, dans le respect de leur diversité, leurs histoires et leurs traditions, doit être reconnu. Par exemple, pour n'en nommer qu'un, si Argyle devait être fusionné avec des circonscriptions avoisinantes, le poids démographique des Acadiens s'en trouverait diminué. Afin de préserver leurs acquis par les cartes de 2002, nous demandons à maintenir cette position, ou même, à permettre d'avoir plus de circonscriptions acadiennes. Nous demandons que la concentration d'Acadiens, dans plusieurs de nos régions, soit prise en considération, afin de garantir que nos Assemblées législatives représentent réellement la diversité de notre population.

Les Acadiens et francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse font partie d'une minorité de langues officielles au Canada, et se doit d'être protégée. Il faut tenir compte de la *Loi sur les services en français* de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui permet pour nous d'obtenir des services en français, mais aussi de favoriser la préservation et l'essor de la collectivité acadienne et francophone de la province.

Aussi, comme dernier point, le RANE, le Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse, appuie la demande de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, dans le dépôt de ses considérations.

Je tiens à vous remercier pour votre attention et nous souhaitons que nos points de vue soient mis en valeur lors de la création de la Commission de délimitation des circonscriptions électorales. Merci.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: Merci, Madame Beaugard, pour votre présentation. Je me demande si, juste pour que les membres du comité puissent mieux comprendre, s'ils ne connaissent pas le Regroupement des aînés et aînées de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Qu'est-ce que sont les activités de votre groupe? Par exemple, qu'est-ce que vous faites comme organisation avec les aînés dans les communautés acadiennes à travers de la province?

MS. BEAUREGARD: Bien, le Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse est le porte-parole pour nos aînés francophones des régions acadiennes et francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Aussi, il défend les droits des aînés et aussi, travaille au développement et avoir plus de services en français. Tantôt, vous avez nommé dans les hôpitaux. On le fait aussi pour les aînés. Que ça soit aussi au niveau des logements.

On a beaucoup de travail à faire pour que nos aînés francophones puissent avoir leur place. Beaucoup ont de la difficulté à se trouver un endroit en français, donc, partir de leur région qui est francophone puis s'en aller dans un lieu anglophone est difficile pour eux. Donc, on essaie de donner plus d'information aussi à nos aînés francophones sur leurs droits, donc on est vraiment un organisme pour aider les aînés à être mieux dans leur quotidien et aussi dans leur développement. Si on a des aînés qui sont sécurisés, d'une certaine façon, je pourrais dire, bien, la vitalité et le mieux-être en est la conséquence, si je peux me le permettre.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for coming in. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? Oh, there is. Please come forward and give us your name.

MS. CÉLESTE GODIN: Bonjour. Moi, je m'appelle Céleste Godin. Je travaille au Conseil jeunesse provincial de la Nouvelle-Écosse, situé juste de l'autre côté du havre, à Dartmouth. Puis, avant de vous apporter un peu le point de vue des jeunes francophones en Nouvelle-Écosse sur toutes ces questions, je veux un peu réagir à ce que M. Samson a apporté tout à l'heure de la Canadian Taxpayers Federation qui croit que tout est réglé pour les francophones en Nouvelle-Écosse. Ça me rend triste, mais je dois vous dire que ce n'est juste pas vrai.

Ce n'est pas parce qu'on a des associations communautaires que tout le travail est fini, ce n'est pas parce qu'on a une école francophone, que les jeunes qui vont à cette école là sont fiers de parler français et osent s'affirmer dans leur langue. Donc, ce n'est pas en bâtissant une institution qu'on résout tout de suite tous les problèmes. Particulièrement, au Conseil jeunesse provincial, on a fait des interventions identitaires avec des jeunes de la région de Richmond et des jeunes de la région d'Argyle, parce que nos jeunes ont identifié que c'est des régions où l'assimilation est très forte.

Alors donc, le Conseil jeunesse provincial s'est rendu dans ces régions-là pour parler aux jeunes de pourquoi ils ne sont pas fiers de leur propre culture, pourquoi ils ont peur de parler leur langue maternelle, même dans une communauté francophone, même dans une école française. Puis, les réponses sont vastes, je ne vais pas prendre les prochaines quatre heures de votre temps pour vous expliquer tout ça, et de plus, je ne voudrais pas laisser tous ces messieurs en larmes aujourd'hui, mais c'est les jeunes qui ont des troubles avec leur identité. Ce n'est pas les seules régions qui vivent ça, mais l'assimilation est très forte et puis ça prend beaucoup de choses, à beaucoup de niveaux, pour commencer à rediriger le bateau pour pas qu'il ne coule.

Pour revenir un petit peu plus à ce qu'on discute aujourd'hui avec les circonscriptions électorales, nos jeunes – des fois c'est difficile pour eux de s'impliquer, de se voir dans le monde politique. Parfois, ils sont détachés de ce qui se passe, ou ça vient même à ne peut-être même pas croire dans le processus même de la démocratie qu'on vit ici au Canada, et c'est difficile pour eux. Ce qui change ça, c'est pour des jeunes de voir des membres de leur propre communauté, prendre en charge ce qui se passe dans leur province, en voyant un député venir de sa propre communauté, être impliqué au niveau de la communauté provinciale, ça donne de l'espoir aux jeunes, que la communauté provinciale sait qu'ils existent, puis qu'ils se sentent moins perdus dans leur identité dans leur province. Donc, c'est ça. En aillant des jeunes, des personnes qui sont issues de leur propre communauté qui peuvent s'impliquer.

On demande aux jeunes de ne même pas voter jusqu'à l'âge de 18 ans. Ce qu'ils peuvent faire avant ça, c'est de voir, de se voir eux dans les rôles de ces députés. Les jeunes de la région d'Argyle, par exemple, vous avez rencontré Noé Bourque, je crois l'autre soir à Yarmouth. Ça, c'est un jeune que, dans 20 ans, il va prendre la place à M. d'Entremont et il va faire un excellent travail, mais c'est en voyant que la circonscription d'Argyle peut appuyer M. d'Entremont que Noé voit que, dans le processus électoral de sa province, que sa communauté est prise en compte. Donc, c'est très important.

Pour les jeunes qui ne viennent pas de ces régions-là, parce que le Conseil jeunesse provincial touche aux jeunes de toutes les régions acadiennes que M. Léger a nommé toute à l'heure, et même dans les deux écoles francophones de Dartmouth et Halifax ici, ces jeunes-là, en voyant des députés qui viennent peut-être pas de leur propre région, mais qui viennent de leur peuple, qui voient que la communauté d'Argyle peut se prendre en main, donc moi je suis peut-être moins perdue dans la province, ça les appuie aussi. J'ai mentionné tout à l'heure, mais l'assimilation en Nouvelle-Écosse est terrifiante. Ce n'est pas juste une question de perdre sa langue, mais c'est de perdre tout le processus de pensées qui va avec ça. C'est de perdre sa culture, c'est de se croire beaucoup plus américain qu'on devrait, peut-être, à ce point ici, dans ce pays ici, dans cette province, dans nos communautés.

Donc, face à ce taux d'assimilation-là, il y a plusieurs choses que le gouvernement peut faire, notamment en appuyant les programmes communautaires et les associations et les écoles en place, mais de plus, en donnant un pouvoir politique à ces communautés-là,

en reconnaissant qu'ils existent et en protégeant les acquis qu'ils ont en protégeant ces circonscriptions-là, nommées tout à l'heure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Stay there, please. Mr. d'Entremont.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Je veux vous remercier, Mademoiselle Godin. C'est bon de voir des jeunes à présenter ici. Vous avez bien dit qu'à 18 ans, avant qu'on peut faire un vote, mais il y a beaucoup de choses qu'on peut faire en avance et de te voir ici, et de voir Noé et puis Ashley qui ont eu la chance, la semaine passée, pas la semaine passée, mais mardi, à Yarmouth. C'était vraiment important d'écouter, parce que ce n'est pas seulement pour les aînés, ce n'est pas seulement pour les âges comme moi ou pour les jeunes, c'est pour tout le monde, c'est pour une identité, vraiment bien. C'est bon d'écouter que peut-être Noé va prendre ma place, j'espère qu'il prend ma place. Parce que ça prend un autre Acadien qui est engagé avec sa communauté de prendre ma place.

J'espère de ça, qu'on aura en Argyle, dans 20 ans ou dans 15 ans, que ça soit, pour qu'il prenne ma place. Parce que c'est ça que ça nous dit des fois, que peut-être la circonscription ne va pas être là, pour les Acadiens, pour la région. Donc, je te remercie beaucoup pour prendre l'opportunité aujourd'hui d'être ici.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: Merci M. le Président et je veux aussi vous féliciter pour votre présentation, comme mon ami M. d'Entremont a indiqué, c'est toujours bon d'entendre des jeunes. À un moment donné, je m'appelais jeune moi-même, mais ça fait 13 ans maintenant que je suis élu, alors je ne suis pas sûr si que je peux encore utiliser le terme jeune, jeune en esprit, je peux t'assurer.

Je connais très bien le Conseil jeunesse provincial, j'étais membre du Conseil jeunesse provincial à Richmond, ça fait plusieurs années de ça. Mais quel message, pour vous, comme jeunes, si que c'est décidé que la carte électorale va changer et qu'il va avoir des coupures en circonscriptions acadiennes d'Argyle, Clare ou Richmond? Selon vous, quel message est-ce que ça envoie aux jeunes Acadiens et acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse si ça, ça arrive?

MS. GODIN: Ça, c'est une bonne question. Je veux juste préciser qu'au Conseil jeunesse provincial, notre conseil d'administration est formé uniquement de jeunes. Donc, les patrons de mon patron – en fait, Noé c'est notre conseil d'administration. Donc, c'est le « fun » de savoir qu'on est géré par les jeunes. Pour répondre à ta question, M. Samson, je crois qu'avec un changement des circonscriptions électorales dans ces régions-là, les jeunes vont être encore plus désaffectés de la politique. Ils vont encore moins voir là où est-ce que leur voix peut être entendue et je crois que ça va être – ça va ajouter à l'assimilation, pour sûr, parce qu'on ne peut plus se prendre en main comme communauté de façon politique dans notre province, je crois que ça va ajouter à ça et je crois que ça va ajouter à la désaffectation des jeunes. Peut-être qu'ils vont aller ailleurs ou qu'ils ne vont juste pas s'impliquer, ou que les taux de vote vont continuer à baisser, ou qu'ils vont

s'assimiler, mais, en tout cas, ça ne va certainement pas améliorer les choses, qui vont déjà, des fois, assez difficilement dans la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse pour ces jeunes-là.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Are there no other questions? Thanks for being that addition; it was nice to have you here.

Are there any other potential presentations? Okay, we will take a 10-minute recess.

[3:49 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[4:04 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I call the meeting back to order. Given the fact that there are no witnesses here at this time or people to come forward to give their views, we will adjourn until 7:00 p.m. tonight. Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 4:05 p.m.]

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Thursday, December 1, 2011

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

7:00 P.M.

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**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTABLISHING AN
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Hon. Ross Landry (Chairman)

Mr. Gary Ramey

Ms. Michele Raymond

Mr. Leonard Preyra

Mr. Jim Boudreau

Hon. Michel Samson

Mr. Andrew Younger

Hon. Christopher d'Entremont

Mr. Keith Bain

[Ms. Michele Raymond was replaced by Mr. Maurice Smith]

[Mr. Andrew Younger was replaced by Ms. Kelly Regan]

WITNESS

Mr. David Hendsbee

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille
Select Committee Clerk

Ms. Moira MacLeod
Report Writer

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

7:00 P.M.

CHAIRMAN

Hon. Ross Landry

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will now call this committee to order. Welcome, this evening. We have one representative speaking tonight so far, Mr. David Hendsbee. I'd ask Mr. Hendsbee to come to the main chair there, please, sir. I don't really have to tell you, but I will, you have to speak directly into the microphone and say your name.

We're going to do some introductions here. I want to point out, as you're well aware, that this is not in camera. This is a public meeting and anything said will be recorded. Anything not wished to be said, we don't say. It's as simple as that. You know your way in and out of the building so we're okay that way.

MR. DAVID HENSBEE: I'm glad to see I wasn't locked out either.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome and thank you for coming. I'll get some introductions and I'll start to my left. We'll start with Ms. Regan.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The floor is yours, sir, welcome.

MR. HENSBEE: My name is David Hendsbee, my address is 1 Chamberlain Drive, Westphal-Lake Major, Halifax Regional Municipality here in Nova Scotia My occupation is I am the municipal councillor for District 3, Preston-Lawrencetown-Chezzetcook. In a past life I was also a member of the Legislature for the constituency of Preston, from 1999 to 2003.

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to address you all. Once again it is that time for the review, 10 years since the last time that the province reviewed its boundaries. I'd like to point out that those past reports and past recommendations are just that, in the past. Now we have an opportunity to start anew and to really strategically assess governance in our province to well into the future.

The elections list has been started whereby one source can be built upon even further and Elections Nova Scotia, with its access to the federal data bank, primarily from income tax filings, various provincial sources, be it the health card or motor vehicle registrations, from liquor ID control cards, and other data from other program registries can compile and maintain one general list for all elections – federal, provincial, municipal and school boards. Also, Elections Nova Scotia should control all the election-day workers, from the returning officers to the poll clerks and even enumerators if they are needed, because I believe voter registration should become a mandatory function, no more politically appointed or selected workers in any of the polls, regardless of what level of government it is. Let's take the partisanship out of this past practice of patronage.

With respect to voter parity and redistribution, I believe the province should adopt the municipal district boundaries within the HRM territory. Let it become 16 MLAs instead of the 18 plus the three-part portions of the 23 who now serve the region. Congruency will help simplify the electoral process for those within the HRM area, one boundary, one list, et cetera. This would also help the electorate to better understand and to know exactly who their MLA and councillor are without trying to determine which constituency or district they reside in. This is a practice similar to Ontario MPPs or similar to our MLAs and the MPs from Ontario who have the same federal and provincial boundaries in their elections and I think we can follow that kind of example here in the HRM context with the province.

Also, I think the province should take the next step to electronic balloting and give the people the option of how they want to vote. This will also bring about greater voter participation too, and that has been experienced at the municipal level.

If you intend to redistribute the seats of the current 52 of the House of Assembly, then you'll probably have a greater concentration of those within HRM. Therefore, the Nova Scotia Government should probably take the step, like in New Brunswick, and reduce the amount of MLAs too. A 10 per cent cut would only yield five seats but 47 are still too many representatives for our provincial population base. I would suggest that 43 seats, in total, would be a better target to set and then it could be said that to form a majority government you would have to be in a catch-22 situation, sorry for the pun, but I thought you might enjoy that.

A reduction in the number of MLAs would require a serious but a necessary re-evaluation of the special seats with Acadian and African Nova Scotian constituencies. Please note, I say constituencies and not communities because all parts of the regions of Nova Scotia have diversity in them now. Selected areas and designated seats are something of the past so we should not repeat that practice. Great gains have been made by many individuals in other parts of the province without the provision of division. Those are my remarks for you tonight. If you have any comments or questions, I would be free to entertain any.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. d'Entremont.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Thank you very much, David, for popping in this evening to say a few words. I'm just wondering how - because you have a little more intimate knowledge in this as well, being the previous MLA for Preston - how can we represent minority groups like Acadians and like the African Nova Scotians if we're not necessarily attaching ourselves to any specific constituency?

MR. HENDSBEE: I think we can do that now through the departments that we have. We have the Office of Acadian Affairs. We also have the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs. We also have other departments with other agencies within them. I think that becomes more of a departmental function. Electorally, we see the successes of other candidates outside the selected seats for the Acadian and the constituency of Preston seats. Leonard Preyra is a good example for the South End of Halifax. We've seen Howard Epstein - you could say he represents part of the Jewish community. We have also seen Percy Paris elected in the Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank area. So I think that having specially designated seats, in my opinion, is something of the past.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Smith.

MR. MAURICE SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You really went too fast for me. I missed what you were saying about the federal riding. Were you saying that there should be only the number of - I missed that?

MR. HENDSBEE: I said in Ontario they have an example where the federal and provincial boundaries are the same. I was trying to use that example as perhaps we can use that in a provincial/municipal context here in Nova Scotia. So where in Ontario they have the exact same number of seats for the MPPs and MPs, we should probably look at the same here in regard to redistribution of the seats of the MLAs within the HRM territory only. But beyond HRM, I think you need another boundary configuration. Perhaps you may have to join a couple of districts or a couple of counties together to keep the number base's population parity close to the same.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Thank you for coming in, Mr. Hendsbee. I just have a couple of quick ones here. We had a presentation from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation where the suggestion was made that we take the federal seats in the province, 11 seats, and split them into three parts. Three times 11 gives you 33, and you're suggesting 43. Are you saying 33 would definitely be too low?

MR. HENDSBEE: I think that might be excessively low, yes. I think that if you look at the population base you should look at some kind of reasonable amounts between the federal, provincial, and municipal constituencies. Right now, I thought the recent URB decision to cut the municipal council of Halifax from 23 to 16 was a little drastic. I thought 18 would have been a more palatable number, a workable number, plus it also would have it almost on par with the current amount of MLAs, with the redistribution of some of those outer seats - like Chester-St. Margaret's, Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley, and

Guysborough-Sheet Harbour. The question is, should we go beyond those municipal boundaries as we did there in those three areas?

MR. RAMEY: May I have a supplementary?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you may.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The second question I have is, we currently have seats with very substantial numbers of voters. We might have 6,000 or 7,000 in one, and I think in some of the seats - I don't know if it would be in Ms. Regan's or in Ms. Whalen's, but I think we're up to well in the 20s - 22,000 maybe?

MS. KELLY REGAN: We both have over 19,000.

MR. RAMEY: Okay, so over 19,000. So we've got this huge fluctuation in size. Do you have any comments on that?

MR. HENDSBEE: Well, that's a challenge that you're going to be trusting your commission into doing. I may perhaps want to suggest, why not empower the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board to do that? They've done a recent exercise at the municipal level, so why can they not do it at the provincial level as well? That way you can also be seen as taking the partisanship out of appointing an electoral commission to do it. You can have them as a sanctioned body already doing electoral boundary reviews. They're familiar with the need for voter parity and some equity and equality there. I know in the past they looked at the Saskatchewan model of having a 25 per cent plus or minus variance to a mean average, but I think the tighter you can get to that, to be less than a 10 per cent variance, should be a better parity for representation.

MS. REGAN: Councillor Hendsbee, you talked about how you think we should have mandatory enumeration. I actually agree with that, simply because I think that part of the reason participation has gone down is because the lists that are maintained are not all that accurate. I think that doing mandatory enumeration would eliminate some of that. I'm sure there are dead people and people who've moved away who are still on lists, for example. Is there a particular reason why you suggest that we should have mandatory enumeration?

MR. HENDSBEE: I said mandatory registration, not mandatory enumeration.

MS. REGAN: Oh, okay.

MR. HENDSBEE: I believe that it should be incumbent upon the voter to register. I don't think we need to go out and seek them. I think that they as a citizen should have the bound and rightful duty to vote, and I also think we should encourage the voters. I think they should be given a tax credit once they come in to vote. Once they get a ballot, once they mark the ballot or vote electronically, they should also be issued or be put on a list for a tax credit that they can apply against their provincial tax income receipts. That way also maintains your database, because for them to use the tax credit they have to file their

income taxes. That's how the federal list was initially compiled, and therefore continually perpetuates itself. Those who vote get a tax credit, they use the tax credit, they file, and that gets on a registry to vote.

MS. REGAN: But you do have to tick off something when you file your taxes to say that your information can go to Elections Canada, correct?

MR. HENDSBEE: I personally believe that electoral registration should be a mandatory function. I don't think there should be - it should not be voluntary, it should be a mandatory function.

I won't go as far as they do in other places, like Australia, where voting is mandatory and you fine people, or you could be fined for not voting. I'd rather see an incentive to encourage people to vote, via a tax credit.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Boudreau.

MR. JIM BOUDREAU: Just a quick question, Councillor Hendsbee, with regard to your 43 seats. I'm just wondering - what rationale do you have behind that number? I know Mr. Ramey went in that direction but I'm curious just to find out where that 43 came from.

MR. HENDSBEE: Well the population of HRM represents roughly 40 per cent of the province and if the municipality is going to be having 16 seats, that represents 40 per cent. I thought if you doubled that, it would be, of course, 32 plus a few more, that would be 80 per cent. It would be about another 40 and I figure from 43 it will give you some latitude in regards to drawing the lines. So I think 40 seats would give you parity with the HRM boundaries but I think you should have at least some latitude for the diversity in the regions, to some degree, so I thought that 43 would be a closer number. That way they are closer to parity with the municipal seats, i.e. the MLA seats within the HRM territory.

MR. BOUDREAU: Okay, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Preyra.

MR. LEONARD PREYRA: Just a comment and a question. Thank you very much for coming here and we certainly would benefit from your experience, both as an MLA and a councillor for the district that you spoke of.

The comment really relates to the Terms of Reference of this committee and the Boundaries Commission. It's essentially a Boundaries Commission and not an electoral reform commission. It's not really looking at reforming the Elections Act, it's more revising the boundaries in light of census information and population shifts, so it has quite a narrow term of reference that is defined by law.

I can say that Mr. Doiron is here from Elections Nova Scotia and I'm sure he's taking notes and he would be very happy to entertain suggestions for improving the voter registration system.

The voter registration system as it is - if I may comment on it, Mr. Chairman - is a live one now. It is constantly being updated and, in fact, doesn't require a lot of action on the part of the voter, except on election day when you can register, but it's already there and I think electronic voting is already provided for, as a pilot, in the upcoming election, so you may see what you're looking for anyway.

In terms of boundaries, I know you're not promoting the idea of a protected seat. You talk about a protected seat but really the seat that you represented and the area you represent, in fact, is not really a protected seat, it's just an affirmative, gerrymandered seat that is designed in a way to produce a certain outcome. The fact that it hasn't produced that outcome suggests that it's not protected.

Would you support that we gerrymander certain boundaries, to allow for, let's say African Nova Scotian or Acadian, to make it more likely that we'll get that result but not necessarily narrow it down to the point where the number of voters in the seat is so out of proportion from the variance? Would you accept the idea of playing around with electoral boundaries to try and get a more representative Legislature?

MR. HENDSBEE: No, and I think that's a unique question, coming from you personally, sir. You represent a diverse community from the South End of Halifax and I think the South End of Halifax, through its own diverse population, chose the candidate they thought to best represent. But it's not just the person's character but it's also going to be the political platforms those Parties represent so I don't think that a person's colour or their origin should matter. I think it should come down to the content and their character.

MR. PREYRA: Well I think it would be fair to say that one of the consistent themes we've had in this last week of this committee is that there are certain groups - African Nova Scotian and Acadian in particular, and Aboriginal peoples - who would be in a unique situation and because they constitute a distinct population or culture, heritage, people, whatever term you want to use, are very concerned about the preservation of that identity and they feel, among other things, that the best way to protect that identity is to have members in the Legislature who not just represent them but understand them and speak the language and have lived the culture and share the tradition. What do you feel about that?

MR. HENDSBEE: I think that if you want to try to enable a model such as that, you might have to change your electoral process and go by representation by population. You know, rep by pop - not in a district boundary, but perhaps at large. You would have to totally change your electoral reform and get rid of the boundaries and have rep by pop. I think a lot of the political Parties across the country have been asking for something like that in all levels of Legislatures, in the Parliament - have a different type of vote instead of a "first past the post" process.

It might be necessary - if you want to have a first past the post, you may need preferential balloting. If you don't achieve 50 per cent plus one of the vote, then you should look at the last person - get the electorate to decide who is their first-choice candidate and their second- or third-choice candidate and then use a preferential balloting process to determine who should be the ultimate winner with 50 per cent plus one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Samson.

HON. MICHEL SAMSON: Mr. Hendsbee, if I understand correctly, you're suggesting that the Preston seat as it currently exists should not continue?

MR. HENDSBEE: As it currently exists, no. The population base is far smaller than the neighbouring seats beside it. I think that Cole Harbour and Preston could co-exist as one seat if they wished to, with regard to how the boundaries get redistributed, or the Eastern Shore or Dartmouth East. I could say the same thing about Richmond, Clare, and Argyle.

Should they have their distinct, small, populated base status, or should they be looked at being merged collectively as one seat? Across the province we have that - as an example, in Guysborough County where the African Nova Scotian communities within Guysborough represent one municipal seat. They're not connected geographically together, but they are within the same electoral boundary of Guysborough. Would Clare, Argyle, and Richmond accept that, being considered a tri-Acadian seat? Or would you want to have the people in those constituencies vote on, I want a person from the Richmond-Strait area, I want somebody from Clare-Argyle or the Shelburne or Digby region to represent them - not based on ethnicity or the origins but more the geography?

MR. SAMSON: You indicated in response to a question from Mr. d'Entremont that it wasn't necessary to have minority representation in the Legislature because we had the Offices of Acadian Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs, and African Nova Scotian Affairs. You've been a member of government before. You do realize that government decisions aren't made by those offices, right?

MR. HENDSBEE: Sure.

MR. SAMSON: Okay. Decisions as to creating schools, such as the new school in Chezzetcook, are not made by the Office of Acadian Affairs or any other office. They're made by government. Decisions on funding for programs are made by the government, not by these offices. Do you not have any concerns that removing representation from within government and within the Legislature would be seen as having a negative impact on these specific communities?

MR. HENDSBEE: I believe an elected officer being appointed to be the minister would have to have that oversight, regardless of the background. We've had non-lawyers be Attorney General. I think of Mr. Gillis being one of the best examples from Antigonish, an example of a non-lawyer representing that profession, that issue, whatever. I would think that the constituencies where those communities reside, they would have to depend

on the availability and the resourcefulness and the determination of their elected official. So whoever the elected official is for the Chezzetcook region would have to bring those concerns of the Acadian communities in Chezzetcook to that department to bear.

MR. SAMSON: I've heard a number of people talk about the fact that Preston is not working, and I completely disagree with that. At the end of the day the riding was created to enable and to empower the African Nova Scotian community that was located there, to try to create winning conditions to elect someone from that community. But it's never a guarantee.

My predecessor in Richmond County was not Acadian but because of the strong Acadian presence in his riding, he certainly had to pay very close attention to the Acadian community, as I'm sure you had to pay close attention to the African Nova Scotian community when you were the MLA for Preston because of the strength in their numbers.

In my own experience, in my five elections in Richmond, all of the other candidates who have squared off against me were not Acadians, so had I not won, there would not be an Acadian in Richmond County. The creation of these seats was never meant to be a guarantee and there's nothing to say that someone who's not Acadian could not get elected in Argyle or get elected in Clare. It never was meant to come with a guarantee but in Preston it certainly gives that community the choice of who they want to represent them but also the ability to hold that representative accountable because of the strength in their numbers in that specific riding. So I'm just curious, are you still involved with the Progressive Conservative Association in Preston and does your presentation reflect the views of the Progressive Conservative Association in Preston?

MR. HENDSBEE: No, this is my own personal opinion.

MR. SAMSON: Okay, so this is not an issue that was discussed?

MR. HENDSBEE: No. The local constituency association in Preston has no knowledge of my presentation.

MR. SAMSON: Okay, thank you.

MR. HENDSBEE: I should also say in regard to your comments - how about the other half of your population base? You, being a male, also have to represent the females in your constituency as well. So, we can get into a gender debate as well. So to the men in the House, they also have to do the work that the female constituents also require.

MR. SAMSON: I guess if I could just add on that, you would realize that minority language rights are protected in the Canadian Charter and that there are actually charter guarantees that are offered to the minority language communities. I think that's a bit of a different case than what you present there but, anyway, we'll agree to disagree on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not so sure how I want to frame my question because there are a number of things that I've heard here tonight and I just want to get your opinion because of your diversity of experience and get some clarity on the point that was just made by Mr. Samson.

I want to try to frame it in the sense that, in the area that I represent, I represent a large Black community, a significant number of people of that colour, and I never really thought of it in the sense of saying that I would have to be distinct or supported directly by the community. I just felt that if I'm representing the community, I represent everyone, but I'm also having trouble understanding - we had a tremendous presentation by the Acadian community. They've championed their points of view and articulated it in a way that is second to none that I've seen in some time in committees and things that I've been involved in.

We have to be able to form direction on where we need to go for the next decade and so when we look at geography - and I'm coming to a question here - framing geography. There has been a lot of discussion about 25 per cent, should that change? When I think of the point that Mr. Samson just made about him winning his seat, I couldn't help but reflect by saying, yes, well, if he's the best candidate and the people believe in him, he's the one who should represent that community. So do you think, in your experience or knowledge, that whether someone is Acadian or not that they would be discriminated against, or whether they're African Nova Scotian, or whether they're First Nations, that they would have equal opportunity, provided that the platform you raised and that they themselves have the strength and convictions to put their views out there appropriately to be accepted by the community?

So I've bundled a whole bunch of things that I'm trying to grasp, of what I've observed over the last week, that in much of the Acadian perspective, they added that in the cases of the diversity is to add seats to the overall process and I think I've captured a lot of what was said here. The other part was the cultural significance of the uniqueness of the Acadian community. I did try to approach the issue with a couple of the speakers, not overly, just in a few cases, of saying about the uniqueness of the First Nations and about the African Nova Scotians.

One of the things that we're going to be toiling with is that dynamic, and then the multiculturalism of the city and how we balance out that same uniqueness because each of those three groups that I've just mentioned, and a wide group - and you did allude to Mr. Preyra's background and the community that he represents - so you, as a city councillor, as an observer, and having some rural exposure in being a previous government person, and I hope I've captured fairly some of the key points that were mentioned in the last week of how we go ahead with that, because it's different today in what we're being asked to do than in the previous 10 years, for the seats.

I think it's a unique set of circumstances, especially when I think the overall population is asking us to be leaner and meaner. That's one of the key points that I think I grasp from what you were talking about here tonight and what the URB had said to you about your

seats. I've said an awful lot but I hope I've captured a multitude of issues here. I'd just like to get your personal view and feelings in regard to those issues.

MR. HENDSBEE: I have a great admiration and respect for the diversities of the communities that I have represented - Preston, Lawrencetown, Chezzetcook. I have the African Nova Scotia community, Acadian community and the traditional communities, plus the new citizens who come into the area.

Being an elected representative, I try to do my very best to represent what I believe is a greater interest for the whole district, or the whole constituency, at any one time. With regard to trying to have those - I won't say guarantees - but an opportunity to have representation in the House, I think perhaps the political Parties may want to look at re-evaluating its processes for nominations, perhaps. If they want to encourage broader representation, perhaps it's that process that should be reformed and not the boundaries themselves.

Everybody has a right to run as an independent, but we all know that the political functions at the provincial and federal levels are dominated by the Party system. I think if there's a desire and a want and a need to have representation for the diverse communities, then I think it should be incumbent upon the Parties to encourage that, not necessarily by a boundary, but it should be by the doctrines of the Parties.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any more questions? Thank you for coming in and giving a different perspective and your personal view and I understand that's what it is; you're not representing council, you're not representing any political Party. That question was asked.

MR. HENDSBEE: I've had a long history of making comments and representations to the electoral boundaries process in this province for the last number of times it has gone through it. I'm sure I will do it more times in the future, as long as God gives me life to live.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's hope he does. Thank you for coming in. Do we have any other persons who would like to come forward to speak? I will now take a 10-minute recess. Thank you.

[7:32 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[7:33 p.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right now what we have set up is Thursday and Friday of next week, Thursday 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. We're probably going to need more time so we'd look at the Monday if that's where we're at. I'm hoping that we can get some kind of a structured framework and get a copy of what was done before and then look at what's different now and what we heard.

MR. SAMSON: I'm just curious, just to keep the presentations fresh as to what we heard, why would we not do this Monday and Tuesday in order to try to get this done. Not

knowing how long this is going to take us, I think we're moving further towards our deadline to have these discussions. I would certainly suggest that Monday or Tuesday.

MS. LANGILLE: It has to do with the translation of all the French documents.

MR. SAMSON: Okay and that's fair enough. I think we've heard the presentations and I think at least to start off the preliminary discussions, I don't necessarily feel that it's necessary to have those directly in front of us. We've heard the presentations and have a general sense of that, therefore, I don't see that as a reason to hold up having these discussions starting on Monday and going into Tuesday and then seeing what more we need after that.

MR. PREYRA: I don't know what the problem was, but there was a problem with Monday and Tuesday, wasn't there?

MR. CHAIRMAN: On Mondays my schedule can be accommodated, but Tuesday is probably too difficult. The big issue that was discussed earlier today had to do with the translation and the other documents. I can see where we can do a lot of work without those documents, and I don't disagree. Mr. Boudreau.

MR. BOUDREAU: I understand what Mr. Samson is saying. What he is saying is - I don't know, my preference would be to have the documents to go through them again, personally. That's just me. I'd like to have the opportunity to review them again. I know I've taken notes and so on, but there are things that would be nice to refer back to. But again, that's me.

MR. PREYRA: I know there are no rules around this, but there are quite a few members who came and went on this committee, so we don't all - I know Mr. Samson has been there, and Mr. d'Entremont and Mr. Ramey. There may be something said for everyone seeing all of that, but I agree with you. I'm quite happy to move on Monday and Tuesday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. d'Entremont first and then back to Mr. Samson.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I'm just looking at what time on Monday, if we were to do it on Monday, because quite honestly, I can't be here until probably three o'clock. So it'd be tough, that's all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a long day Monday. I know my first meeting is at seven o'clock in the morning in New Glasgow. Mr. Samson.

MR. SAMSON: Look, Monday night we're all going to be here. We can certainly meet. I guess at this point, Mr. Chairman, it's going to be up to you to come back and tell us where we're going with this and what needs to be achieved. So I think Monday, if we can at least meet, whether it's for a half an hour or an hour, whereas we can at least say, here's what we need to determine, are there any points we can agree upon to start off with? Then if there are points that create further discussion, we can move forward.

I certainly think on Monday night at least setting a framework, because this is not a process that most of us have been involved with. I was involved with it 10 years ago, so it's a bit new for everybody else, in that sense.

The other big question that has yet to be answered - I've raised it a few times - is we're still waiting for some indication from government as to how many people we'd like to see on the commission and how we're going to go about naming the commission. Is government going to do that on its own? Is there going to be participation from the other political Parties, as far as nominating people? That still hasn't been answered, and that's going to take some time. We want to be wrapped up by December 12th. If that's the case, and people need to be - I'm trying to determine if we actually need to have the commission named as part of our final report, and if that's the case, we need to have people in place by December 12th. So we have 11 days left to find people. As I've mentioned before, there are not many out there who have the specialization or the knowledge or the experience in redrawing electoral maps. It's something that's quite complicated, so I guess the quicker we can get an indication from government as to how this is going to work . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The issue on the table here, there's two things. We can either have just a subcommittee meeting on Monday, or actually, I hear your point - which is better, to have just a subcommittee or have a whole meeting on Monday night? Mr. Preyra.

MR. PREYRA: Well, I think given Mr. Samson's comments, and I agree with him, it may work if we do have just a steering committee meeting and have a sense of the issues and the agenda, and maybe then adjourn until Thursday, go to our caucuses and come back. That might give us a couple of days.

MR. SAMSON: You're getting late with Thursday. That's my only concern, that time is going by. Our own personal commitments are going to get busier and busier as each day goes by. That's why I certainly suggest that the more we can get done early in the week, the better. If we can meet on Monday and set a time frame - I think you might have said that Tuesday might be an issue.

Again, I don't think it's going to take that long. Look, let me be frank. You guys are the majority government, so we can all sit here and hold hands and say that this is going to be done by consensus and that, but . . .

MR. PREYRA: Oh no, we want to do the right thing. We want to let the process flow, too.

MR. SAMSON: I don't doubt that you want to do the right thing, but at the end of the day you have the majority. In this case you need to give us a sense of where you're going and how you want this to look, rather than us sitting here trying to guess. So there is some added responsibility on the government side to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want to come back to your points there Michel in a minute. Sorry to interrupt, I want to get Gary, then Chris and then I'll come back to you because there's a point I want to make in regard to - before we lose all the key points you're saying there. So Gary.

MR. RAMEY: My point was simply that somebody's going to have to write the report and I know who it is. My point is that person has to write the report, so if they have to have the report in at a certain time, it has to be completed and all signed and delivered, then they need to have the information they need in order to write the report. It's not fair to have the person get the information a day before it's got to be finished, or something, so that's why I guess I'd agree with Mr. Samson that we have to move fairly quickly, in fairness to the writer as well.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: I think the added issue on top of it is - how long is the House of Assembly going to be sitting? Right now that seems to be the thing that is in the way but my guess is we're going to get maybe until Tuesday, I don't know if we're getting past it. So let's see where all that cards fall but, ultimately, I think maybe a few minutes on Monday would be fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before I get back to Mr. Samson I think there is a consensus that we should meet Monday to start with. That's the first thing, so if we could set two hours for Monday that would be a start. In the meantime one of the things that I'm also hearing is to get a position of where our caucuses sit on the overall perspective. I can say it's pretty safe that we came into this room with a pretty open mind, so as direction, going from one direction or the other, how do we take from where we were 10 years ago and what's different today in the environment. We know, hearing some of the presentations, that there are some significant issues and we know that there is a majority out there who would like to see us reduce the seats rather than increase the seats, but we need to have discussion around those issues. We need to know where each Party sits in that regard. Would everybody be comfortable if we met on Monday, for sure, for two hours?

MR. BOUDREAU: What time? (Interruption)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Six o'clock, 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., is that what you're saying?

MR. SAMSON: Or 7:00 p.m., it doesn't make a difference. The House is going to sit till 10:00 p.m., so 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. if that is easier for you.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: We're not going to be late.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're not going to be late Monday?

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Don't think so, depends if they call it at two or not.

MR. PREYRA: Even if we're not late we can set the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well let's set it at 6:00 p.m., we can always bump up or play with an hour, one way or the other, but 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Even though I have to drive to New Glasgow at 5:30 in the morning and then come back, and then have the day in the House, the way Question Period is going, it probably won't be too hard of an afternoon.

Are you open to meeting on Tuesday as well then, if we meet in the afternoon? I suspect the House is going in at noon that Question Period will be over by two o'clock.

So if we look at 2:00 to 4:00 on that day, does that sound reasonable or do you have a different suggestion, anyone?

MR. PREYRA: I think Tuesday's too soon given what - you know Monday will be a pretty broad-ranging meeting with too many things on the agenda that will have to be caucused.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Wednesday is a busy day for all of us I'm pretty sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So Wednesday will be out. So Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday? They met for nine and half hours last time, 10 years ago, that already puts us at roughly around the same time.

MR. PREYRA: I think Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday might be better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now the next question is, and Michel I'm sorry I didn't get back to you there, Mr. Samson. I went around the table there the last time you were speaking.

MR. SAMSON: I guess just for you guys to know the Terms of Reference consists of a page and half - is what the terms of reference were. They're very broad and it's not something that I think we're going to take hours and hours to settle on. The question is what's different from what was there last year, which I think was probably similar to what was there 10 years before that? The redrawing of boundaries is something that there is a science to it and there are certain elements that you put in there, so I don't see it taking the amount of time that's being feared here. I think as you indicated Mr. Chairman, we are members of Parties and those Parties will give instructions. I think at this point, again, in light of the fact that it is a majority government, it's incumbent on yourself as Chair to give us an indication of what the instructions are from your Party and from your colleagues as far as what you wish to see as we move forward. If there are issues with that, we can discuss, and if there are extra recommendations that we want to make, we can make those as well. But I would again suggest that it's a bit incumbent on the government to - I don't know if I can say show your hand - but at least give us an indication of what it is that the government wants to see moving forward on these recommendations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm not so sure about the government, but I know I'm going to make some recommendations about what I heard here this week and what I've seen, but I'll reserve that for the time being. I think the discussion that we had prior to the start of this year, some of the information, is that we want a fair, equitable process that takes in geography and acknowledges diversity, but whether the diversity means a particular isolation of a group or a matter that the environment has changed today - I'm not sure of those questions. We need to have some conversation in regard to that.

Mr. Preyra, you wanted to make a comment.

MR. PREYRA: I just think Monday, Wednesday, Thursday sounds . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday.

MR. PREYRA: Well, I was thinking Monday, Wednesday, Thursday.

MR. D'ENTREMONT: Wednesday doesn't work for anyone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, it doesn't work for anyone that day. We're just jammed up that day for everything.

MR. PREYRA: Monday, Thursday, Friday then, I think.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You don't want to do it on Tuesday?

MR. PREYRA: I don't think Tuesday. I think Tuesday is too soon, especially since the meeting on Monday will be late.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't want to argue with you, I just want to ask . . .

MR. PREYRA: I don't know how the other caucuses function, but we will probably want to have a full discussion in the caucus of this issue, and there are a number of pretty significant issues.

MR. SAMSON: I'm not suggesting that Tuesday would be a final decision. I'm saying give yourselves Monday night, Tuesday to work out any other issues, and then you can look at whether it's Thursday or Friday to hopefully be able to make some final decisions after you've had the chance to caucus.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll tell you what. We'll keep our times the way they are, because then we've blocked some times, we've got some structure. We'll talk to the caucuses and we can cancel or move things around at the last minute. How do you feel about that? Okay.

MR. SAMSON: Yes, and I would just add, Mr. Chairman, that I would encourage the members to look at Pages 4 and 5 of what our clerk gave us for what the recommendations were last time. From your comments, Mr. Chairman, I think there's concern about setting numbers and everything else.

I should point out to you that the recommendations last time were not very specific at all on that but just provided broad considerations to keep in place. For example, last time, 10 years ago, there was nothing in there that said that the four protected ridings should be maintained. Instead, it simply said that there was to be consideration for minority representation, particular representation of the Acadian and Black peoples of Nova Scotia - nothing more. The only specific number was it actually did say a 52-member Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to have a meeting privately together as a group. Do we have a consensus that we'll set that structure up for now and we'll change it? At least that way we've got a structure. Ms. Langille.

MS. LANGILLE: I just want to make sure that I have the dates and times right. So we're doing Monday, 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.; Tuesday, 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.; nothing on Wednesday; Thursday, 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.; and Friday, 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Is that correct? And these will all be in camera meetings?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, in camera.

MS. LANGILLE: And they will be here? (Interruption) Yes, they will.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you very much.

We'll now adjourn this meeting.

[The committee adjourned at 7:49 p.m.]