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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

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Tuesday, July 26, 2022 — 6:00 p.m.

Chair: Kate White

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Members:

Kate White, Chair
Brad Cathers, Vice-Chair
Hon. John Streicker

Clerk:

Allison Lloyd, Clerk of Committees

Speakers:

Eric Morris
Gord Curran
Jenn Roberts
Doug Martens
Juanita Kremer
Jean-Paul Pinard

EVIDENCE**Teslin, Yukon****Tuesday, July 26, 2022 — 6:00 p.m.**

Chair (Ms. White): I will now call to order this hearing of the Yukon Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on Electoral Reform. I would like to begin by respectfully acknowledging that we are meeting on the traditional territory of the Teslin Tlingit Council.

Allow me to introduce the members of the Committee. My name is Kate White; I'm Chair of the Committee and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Takhini-Kopper King. Brad Cathers is Vice-Chair of the Committee and the Member for Lake Laberge and is joining us today by videoconference as a precaution due to potential COVID-19 symptoms; and finally, the Hon. John Streicker is the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

This Committee was established by the Yukon Legislative Assembly on May 26, 2021. The Committee's purpose is to examine electoral reform and report to the Assembly its findings and recommendations.

In our study of potential changes to the voting system, the Committee first sought to identify what options may be available. The Committee hired Dr. Keith Archer to prepare a report on electoral systems. Dr. Archer's full 76-page report and an executive summary are available on the Committee's webpage at yukonassembly.ca/SCER — and in the room today, we do have the executive summary from Dr. Keith Archer. The information from Dr. Archer's report has been summarized on the website HowYukonVotes.ca. Summaries of some of the potential voting systems are included in a brochure that was sent to all Yukoners, and copies of that pamphlet are also available here today.

To deepen its understanding of the topic, the Committee heard from subject matter experts, including Dr. Archer and academics from across Canada and the world, through 14 videoconference hearings held between January and April this year. Transcripts and recordings of the hearings are available on the Committee's webpage.

It is important to the Committee to know what Yukoners think about electoral reform. From February 15 to April 10, 2022, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics administered a public survey for the Committee. The Committee would like to thank the 6,129 Yukoners who completed that survey — that's 17.1 percent of all Yukoners 16 and older who did complete that survey. A report on the results of the survey is available on the Committee's webpage.

We have not yet decided on our recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. The Committee is collecting opinions and ideas from Yukoners on electoral reform. The time allotted for this hearing tonight will be devoted to hearing from Yukoners. We will not be answering questions or presenting information on electoral reform today.

If you would like to present your opinion to the Committee, please ensure that you have registered at the registration table in the back. Please note that this hearing is being recorded and

transcribed; everything you say will be on the public record and posted on the Committee's website.

If you are participating by Zoom, you can send a chat message to the Clerk to be added to the list of presenters, and if you need technical help with Zoom, please call 867-334-2448. So, if you need technical support with Zoom, please call 867-334-2448.

Individual presentations to the Committee will be limited to five minutes. If there is time remaining at the end of the presentations, presenters may be invited to speak for longer.

I would like to welcome everyone in the audience and ask that you please respect the rules for this hearing. Visitors are not allowed to disrupt or interfere in the proceedings. Please mute any electronic devices and refrain from making noise, including comments, during the presentations.

When you are called to speak, please come up to the microphone over there, because that is how we will record it, and thank you for joining us today.

Chief, would you like to make some comments today?

Mr. Morris: (inaudible)

Chair: Can I ask you to go to the microphone?

Mr. Morris: First off, I just wanted to welcome all of you to our traditional territory. I can honestly say that I'm not really familiar with some of the work that you're doing. From my perspective, I'm just wondering, in terms of looking at some of the challenges that rural communities face in elections and if the party that forms the government in the central level — if we have an MLA, or a Member of the Legislative Assembly, who is not representative of that particular party, sometimes, I think, we are faced with a bit of a challenge.

So, I just think, in terms of looking at how elections happen and some of the challenges that occur when an election is over and where the chips fall at the end of it all and looking at — I think one of the things that has always been a plus for us here in Teslin is that we work with whomever is in place, because that's — we always have a collaborative approach to looking at how we work with other governments.

As part of that, it's just really a bit of a challenge when the person who is representing our area is not in government and having that ability to have some influence over some of the things that we see that need to be done in our area.

Also, just when it comes to the politics of it all, that's what I think of. I don't know if there's any research done on that, but I just think that one of the things that's really key for the Yukon is looking at how the rural communities are represented in the government and what are the priorities that the government in place has for things that are related — economic development, things like climate change — related to infrastructure development, all of that.

One of the things that I have seen for a number of years is that the people who live in the rural communities gravitate toward Whitehorse, because Whitehorse essentially has everything to offer — the better choice for food, cheaper food prices, in some cases, also cheaper fuel. They also gravitate toward the city, and essentially, that in some ways impacts our community, right? So, by being able to be in a position to have

development occurs in rural communities I think is really critical.

How our electoral system impacts that, I can't say for certain, but I know that — I think that's one of the things, in terms of consideration in looking at how we vote for our people who form government, that is important. When I think about what's being proposed, I can't say for sure if other regions — you probably can share with me later on — if other regions have gone through this exercise of looking at electoral reform for their areas, in terms of what they are doing.

The other thing is just understanding, probably first off, the question of why we are looking at this in the first place. What's the purpose of it?

For as long as I can remember, we have had this process in place where we have always elected our officials to government representing our area — like, our area is together with Ross River and Teslin — just an understanding of why we're doing it in terms of looking at why we're going through the exercise of having that.

The other part to it is just being able to have an understanding if other areas have gone through a similar process: Has anything ever substantially changed, if they have gone through an exercise such as this? The change from a process they were currently in to another and looking at what the results are that were decided on.

As I say, electoral reform — I know that we're a population of 500 people here in Teslin. We don't sometimes believe that we have that significant impact on the directions of where we see our governments going sometimes, whoever is in government. We're just a small population of people, right?

I guess probably all of that in consideration — I just think it's more of a — I don't know what your objective is, in terms of concluding your work and how you plan to come up with a decision as to what direction you're going to be heading. I have no idea in that relation. I always think about our schools and working with our high schools, because those kids who are in high school are going to be the ones who will be leading us in the future, right? It would be interesting to have an exercise with them, in regard to looking at what they see might be a way forward in regard to — let's say, if we're looking at wanting to reform how we elect our government officials, what kind of understanding do they have? Where do they think we could be going? What are the options that they could probably hear about? And if they had an ability to make a choice as to what that might look like, what would that process look like, in terms of determining that and looking at what the outcome would be? I think that would be a true tell of where our young people are at in how they see government and how they see government working for them.

I would just make those comments.

Chair: Thank you. Before you walk away from the microphone, Chief Morris, can we ask you questions?

Mr. Morris: You sure can, yes.

Chair: Mr. Cathers, do you want to start?

Mr. Cathers: Apologies if the audio is not perfect. I appreciate your thoughts, and I would just ask — I think it's fair to say that you're indicating that, if there were changes

made to the system, that you wouldn't want the voice of rural communities being mute in that process; is that correct?

Mr. Morris: Probably to a degree, yes, because at this point, that's always something that's important to us. If you look at our current situation now, our MLA is with another party; he's not within the government, so that creates a bit of an impact sometimes on what we're able to do. So, it's how do we get around that, right? It's how do we get around those kinds of workings?

Probably one of the things that I think about, in regard to how government operates and how it works — it's about the officials we elect to the Legislature, in terms of looking at — it doesn't matter where their party is at; there should be some willingness to work together to look at how they can support what the rural communities want in the Yukon. I think that — sometimes, I feel we're overlooked. And because of the great demand within Whitehorse — you look at the development that has occurred within Whitehorse over the years and you look at how well it has progressed — lots of affordable housing being developed, and social housing is really at a premium there — they're really working well to develop that.

Look at rural communities, and you look at the challenges we have here with housing and all of that. We, as a First Nation, really work hard to provide housing to our citizens and to our community members — looking at that as a bit of a challenge. I think it's all related to the working relationship that the current system has with regard to the parties that represent us in the government, in the Legislature.

Chair: Brad, any follow-ups?

Mr. Cathers: No, thank you for your thoughts on that.

Chair: Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you very much, Chief Morris. I have a few directions I want to head, but the first one is to follow up on the question of the rural — currently, we have 11 MLAs who are from Whitehorse, and we have eight who represent our rural communities. You know that the ridings are split here and there. So, you just said, in response to MLA Cathers, that you wouldn't want to see that reduced. Do you think that's the right blend of Whitehorse and rural, in your mind? Eight for around the territory and 11 for Whitehorse? Or do you think it should be different?

Mr. Morris: I think probably it's a bit of a — probably more related to looking at how you want to deal with some of the challenges that rural communities face, right, in regard to things like programs that are offered, opportunities that are created. So, whether we have eight or 11, I think we're neither here nor there on that. One of the things that's important is looking at the willingness of the sitting government to have a good, strong focus on how rural communities are developing or looking at some of the things that they would like to continue to do — it doesn't matter which party is in place — and looking at how they are going to look at sustaining that over their four-year term or whatever it might be. What are the commitments that the previous government — let's say if there's a different government in place — will have in regard to what the previous standing government had in place? How do they commit

themselves to being able to follow through with some of those things that need to be done?

It's just about that. Sometimes, when you look at where we go with electoral process, we kind of have an idea of who we would like to have in government, but sometimes it doesn't work out that way, right? So, you kind of live with you have, and you work with what you have. Part of it is that in part in the Yukon, you can say: "Well, maybe next time." Well, there shouldn't be, like, a next time. What should be in place is a way of looking at: How is the new government that's being formed going to continue to work with Teslin, for example? And look at how we — we have a 10-year community plan in place. The value of that 10-year community plan is about \$300 million. So, how is the sitting government going to help us implement that plan on the same terms and working relationship that we had with the previous representative, right?

It's kind of like that. I think about that, and I look at, not so much to do with electoral reform, but more to do with the relationship that's key to what we do here in Teslin. We live in one of the most beautiful parts of the Yukon Territory; we live on a really beautiful lake; there are beautiful mountains; we have a history that is really significant; we're in the process of building a new bridge. All of that makes up who we are here in Teslin, but when you think about the Yukon, people think about Whitehorse first, right? They don't think of Teslin —

But that's kind of where we see ourselves. We're striving to be better, striving to do well, and I think we're making great strides in all of that, right? So, I think about what we have to offer to the rest of the Yukon, to the rest of the territory. We think about rural Yukon, us little guys who are out here working our asses off to make a go of things that we get, be it little or small, and we make the most of it. We work together; we have to work together. But sometimes, that same sentiment is not always that way with the sitting government.

They tend to be in opposition over various things, which is not helpful to our growth. We live in a territory of 40,000 people, and we should have the ability to work together cooperatively and do it in a way that lends to prosperity and wellness and healthy living, having kids who are aspiring in anything they desire to do in regard to sport, science —

Chair: I agree with all of that, but I'm just going to bring that comment to a close — only I am supposed to follow my own rules, which I am not.

Mr. Morris: Okay.

Chair: Mr. Streicker, any follow-up?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes. Chief Morris, you talked about the importance of governments, or elected officials, working together and the importance of trying to make sure that there's representation from communities like Teslin. One of the things that different types of electoral systems can do is they can, in balancing — sometimes trying to make sure that there's a proportional representation of seats, based on what the vote is across the territory — you can sometimes add seats, or the other way you can do it is you can adjust the balance.

So, in your thinking, is it really important — I'm checking what you think about the importance of making sure that there is a local representative for Teslin, or a local representative for

Old Crow, rather than someone who might be from outside the community that's representing, because some of the systems make trade-offs — so just what you think about that whoever is representing you is from the community itself.

Mr. Morris: I think, in some cases, like in the past when we've had other people who kind of drop in and there's a vacancy in one of the parties, they've done that. Often, that individual sometimes is known to the community, so they're familiar with what our community is about and have done work with us, so that relationship has been established, and to a degree, it's there. It's just an ability to be able to look at that as an opportunity, I guess, to be able to offer that choice up for the parties when sometimes there are vacancies that need to be filled.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes.

Mr. Morris: That works. I don't think we have too much difficulty with that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you.

Chair: I'm going to get in. So, you talked earlier about the importance of including youth in the conversation. One of the thoughts that has been batted around is lowering the territorial voting age to 16. Any thoughts on if we were to lower the age?

Mr. Morris: I probably have some challenges with that, because kids are kids, right? And being 16, you're just getting your driver's licence and just experiencing new things that you're doing. You're probably in grade 11 or something like that, so they really haven't gone out into the world to experience some of the challenges around employment and why you would need a government that supports youth and training and certain areas around whatever it might be and looking at — I think definitely youth need to enjoy other youth, give them the responsibility of having to — I guess, probably having a right to vote is probably a great thing, but I think youth should be just left to do what they do. Let them live a little bit, and then, when they get the right to vote, then they get the right to vote. It should stay that way, I think.

Chair: Okay. So then, following up on that, you had mentioned earlier that one of the things we should be doing is reaching out to youth to find out what they think about the electoral system. So, how would we do that without taking away —

Mr. Morris: I guess probably — what's the saying? You want the truth, you ask the drunk or you ask the kid. Right? So, if you want the truth about how your system is working, go talk to the youth and get a sense of where they see things are at, and that gives you a good perspective of some of the challenges that are there. If you believe in what they're doing and you believe what their perspective is, then you think there needs to be a drastic change that needs to be in place — well then, so be it, right?

I think it's kind of like that. We did that with kids in school. In early years, I was an education support worker in our school here in Teslin. We have a clan system in our government here, the Teslin Tlingit Council, and I worked together with Duane Aucoin; he's one of our members. We were doing an exercise. We wanted to incorporate something similar into the school one

year there, so what we did is we made up our own clan system in the school and incorporated that into some of the things we were doing in the school, and it worked. We had a rabbit clan — I can't remember all the clans, but we had about five clans there.

So, you kind of get these kids understanding how the system of clans works and why it's in place and how you can speak and represent each other. You go through that exercise so they are familiar with it, right? I don't know — just a thought that I had in terms of trying to respond to how you incorporate the thoughts of youth and what they think about the various systems that we have in place that are related to the electoral system, economic system, climate change — our youth are very active in climate change activities. They do have their voice; their voice is recognized. I look at our government — we have a youth council in place; we have youth council representation on the various committees and boards that we have within our government, so they have a key role in that.

From that perspective, they do have some involvement to some degree. I'm not sure what it looks like in your Legislature; I'm not sure if it's at all there. I think it would be interesting to look at how we might be able to incorporate that into what you do, and from there, it will look at educating them with what an electoral system is for, why it's in place, how it's done, and how it's followed through. I think it would be worthwhile for the Legislature to probably consider something like that, even like an elders council, so to speak: people who are considered to be seniors who had some role in government in the past who could offer — the work that you guys do as legislators.

Chair: Thank you. It sounds like a key part of that is education, which I do appreciate. Mr. Streicker, any follow-up questions?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: No, thanks.

Chair: Mr. Cathers?

Mr. Cathers: No, I don't have any follow-up questions, but thank you for sharing your thoughts, Chief Morris.

Mr. Morris: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much, Chief Morris. We have two other people present in the room, so I'll look out to either of you — do either of you wish to share with us today?

All right, Mr. Curran.

Mr. Curran: What Eric said. Actually, we make a good team, I guess —

Chair: You make a great team.

Mr. Curran: — because we articulate on the same issues, but I'm just going to talk a bit more about some of the same things that Eric talked about.

I think the rural-urban is something we really have to look at, and I know, John, you mentioned about the 11-8 ridings. My concern is that some of those ridings might be considered rural, but they're really close to Whitehorse, and the draw of Whitehorse — I mean, 77 percent of the population lives in Whitehorse, including Marsh Lake, so the draw on the political — it's just natural for anyone in power to go with the majority; that's the way it goes.

So, that rural perspective is really important and having some balance. Some good tension — and I say "good tension"

because I find that sometimes, with our legislative set-up, it unfortunately is adversarial. It doesn't lend itself really well to working together; it really doesn't.

Certainly, to what Chief Morris was talking about around, you know, when somebody is out of sync with the government — it's not just that we're seeing it in Teslin to some extent, but I think other jurisdictions are seeing it — it's hard to get your voice at the table. There's a certain amount of power that's diminished by not being in a jurisdiction with the party in power. I don't think it's just us; I think every other jurisdiction would say that when they're being out of sync.

So, it's too bad that we couldn't try to find a way to balance that out, to mitigate that. I did look at the — I have not fully briefed on everything, but I did have a chance to take a look at the website, the pamphlet on the website, and I know some of the other single transferable votes, proportional presentation system — John, I think you were referring to that — I looked at that. That would probably accomplish some of that goal, but it's a bit too complicated. I think there are too many candidates. When I looked at it, it seemed a little bit too complicated. It sort of accomplished some of the goal I was looking for.

The same with the mixed member proportional, mixed electoral system. One issue I have with that is it seems like we'll end up with 30 MLAs. No disrespect to our current politicians, but we don't need more legislators. That seems to be a lot for a small jurisdiction.

But yes, the rural is a big thing — having some balance, having a system where you're able to force parties to work together or some way to mitigate some of the partisan politics. I mean, we're in a small, small jurisdiction. I see the need for some partisanship, but it's almost — we've borrowed almost too much from down south, and people get hardened positions on party positions. I understand you have to follow through on your election promises, but sometimes it becomes a barrier, and sometimes egos get in the way, too. So, if we could find a way to mitigate it.

Unfortunately, like I said, the system I — when I looked at the systems, I couldn't see one — I mean, I see the systems that sort of accomplish it, but I just think it would be almost too complicated for such a small jurisdiction. The alternative vote system seems to accomplish something, but you're kind of doing the same thing; it's just another version of what we have.

So, but for sure, what Eric was saying around the rural and making sure there's some balance there. We understand that most of the population lives in Whitehorse, and there's a tendency of that's where the efficiencies are and that's where you go and that's the way our whole system is set up in Canada, but we still need that strong rural voice in a way to sway things, because to a large extent, we feel like we're overwhelmed and forgotten about many times. And some of it is it's just easier to work with a larger population that's centred in Whitehorse and they're there. You know, it's easier when you're in Whitehorse and you're dealing with what's in front of you versus a far off, rural area.

I think that's all I really have to add. But yes, you would have to refer back to Eric. He sounded a lot more articulate than I did, particularly, but I agree with a lot of what he said.

Unfortunately, I'm not coming in saying we should go this way in the electoral system that's presented. I mean, whatever you come up with is going to be imperfect, but I don't see anything that's going to accomplish that goal by splitting up.

Chair: Mr. Curran, thank you for that. I'm going to start the questions.

Mr. Curran: Sure.

Chair: I appreciate you saying that 30 MLAs is too many MLAs, but one way you can change the number — so, right now, there are 11 urban and eight rural. So, for example, in between 2016 and 2022, there was an Electoral Boundaries Commission that came back and said we should create one extra seat, and it will be a rural riding, right? We heard today, when we were at dinner, that someone said, "Why is Teslin matched up with Ross River and Faro? Why aren't we with the Southern Lakes? So, why aren't the Tlingit together?"

We've been asked before why the Kaska aren't together. Why aren't we following those lines as well? Do you think that there is room to add additional seats, or additional members, to try to address some of those issues?

Mr. Curran: Yes, I think if it's to address some of those issues, for sure. This riding — we feel like we're thrown together. We're just kind of like the parts of everything that was left over, and really, we co-drafted a letter — TTC and ourselves — saying that. There's no geographical or cultural or any context.

So, if you can add MLAs to address some of that, that would be fine. I'm just wary of adding more. It's nice to have representation, but 30, as stated, is a bit too much, but if it makes a lot more common sense, geographical lines or cultural lines, then yes, I would be in favour of that.

Chair: Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thanks, Gord — or Mayor.

Mr. Curran: I called you "John."

Hon. Mr. Streicker: When you were talking about stronger rural representation and more balance, you weren't sure whether that would come through any of the options that are there with electoral reform. Are you thinking that it could come with some other form of democratic reform?

Mr. Curran: Yes.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: You may go beyond the scope of what we're set up to do, but we're here and happy to hear if you have thoughts that you want to share.

Mr. Curran: I think some of it would come through on the single transferable vote, the proportional representation system, and potentially the mixed member electoral system. The problem was that I'm looking at our jurisdiction, and I just felt that may have been a bit overkill. That was my concern, but yes, it would come out through those two for sure. There would be a little bit — because there are independent candidates, if I remember — at large, right?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Not necessarily at large with respect to parties —

Mr. Curran: No.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: — but at large as in not tied to a geographic location.

Mr. Curran: Okay, yes, sorry; that won't work. I mean, it has to be tied to geographic in some shape or form. Sorry, I did the five-minute read before —

Chair: That's okay.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: No, it's okay.

Mr. Curran: — and I've read it before, and I'm not up on all my political systems.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: That's good for now. I'll keep thinking.

Chair: Mr. Cathers?

Mr. Cathers: Thanks, Mayor, for your thoughts. One thing I just wanted to note though is the reference mixed member proportional system. Part of the challenge that is here is that many of those advocating for change would like to see the balance in the Legislative Assembly more reflective of people's party preference, but that does create the challenge for rural representation and size. It means, unless you want a larger assembly, then trying to add seats to provide more party representation is likely to reduce the representation of rural Yukon.

I do appreciate your thoughts on there and we would welcome any additional comments you may have.

Mr. Curran: The audio was a little garbled. So, what you're saying is that some of the systems we're talking about where we would add MLAs would actually diminish the rural representation, right, if I understood?

Mr. Cathers: I don't have the best quality microphone, which is why I usually avoid Zooming in from here, but due to circumstances — so, yes, what I was quoting is that some of the systems, such as the mixed member proportional system, if you're trying to (inaudible) reflect the party, then you're left with that negative choice of increasing the size of the assembly or reducing rural representation if that doesn't happen.

Mr. Curran: I think, in terms of priority for me, it's always about balance and making sure the rural voice is strong, and yes, I wouldn't be in favour of a system that creates potentially more power in an urban centre. I guess that's through one of the — again, I haven't looked at this through — but what Brad is saying, yes, if there's a danger where you would end up with a whole bunch of MLAs coming from the urban centre, I wouldn't be in favour of that — increasing MLAs and then having that happen — because rurals would definitely be outvoted all the time.

Chair: Thank you. Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Gordon, one of the things we've been talking about is not just what the system could be or what Yukoners might want from the system, but also the process that we could take to get to a decision about a system. So, some of the things we've discussed are: If there is a proposal for a system, should we have a referendum? That's a big question that we have often asked. The other one is around something called a "citizens' assembly" where it's not political parties that are working on deciding what the system might be, but it's a representative group of Yukoners from across the territory. I'm just wondering if you have any thoughts on process, like if we were to try to consider — it's probably simpler if we're sticking with the system that we have. You don't need as much in that

sense, but if it were to change, what process would seem to make sense to you?

Mr. Curran: You know, I still think there is some value to party politics, so I'm not saying to go to the Nunavut model; I think there are issues there too. I haven't looked into it — it's just trying to create a system where there may be parties and partisan politics, but there's more willingness to work together. I mean, this is the combative nature of the Legislature. You guys have been there, so you know it better than I do, but from the outside — and perhaps it's just the newspaper articles I read — there seems to be a very difficult system in which to work together and seek compromise — just my view.

But no, I don't think — a people's assembly, I think you would end up with a lot more chaos.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I should be clear: The citizens' assembly is not to run the government; it's to consider the electoral system.

Chair: And make recommendations.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: And recommend to the Legislature.

Mr. Curran: I'm not sure I have an opinion on that. I remember reading that. I think it was in some of the literature a while back. Sorry, I remember reading that, and I couldn't draw an opinion.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: No problem; thank you.

Chair: I have another one. So, one of the things that you talk about is you talk about the importance of working together, and I appreciate that two people in the room have said, "Well, if our current member isn't a member of government" — it was like that is the answer for anyone who isn't in government, they're represented by a — that person can still bring forward issues and concerns. We're in a situation right now in Yukon where we have a minority government, and so there is, I would suggest, a working together that we haven't seen.

One of the challenges I would say that I have noticed in 11 years in opposition is I have had two majority governments and one minority government, and I can say that they look different. So, when you talk about the willingness to work together, sometimes when we look at changing the system, it will force those. I don't know what the answer is; I'm not making recommendations, but when you talk about that working together, one of the challenges becomes voting systems or recommendations to make with that — but I do hear you saying the importance is that we need to work together.

Mr. Curran: Yes. And I think the minority system may have been a real pain to get things through, but to a certain extent, it forced — it gave at least a backstop to some things that could have been forced through with a majority government, so a minority — I'm not saying that we need a minority government all the time, but that's kind of what I'm looking at. At least there's some leverage so that it doesn't allow a sitting government to just do whatever they want, for the most part, other than hoping that public opinion will force the governing party to withdraw or to change their legislation. There's a lot more to it, because we know there's the public — what happens at the public level and the rhetoric at that level, and we know behind the scenes, there's a lot more wheeling

and dealing that goes on. I think sometimes it's a benefit to have that wheeling and dealing; it makes for good government, right? — if it's done right.

I mean, you're also depending on individuals doing the right thing, too, but that's a whole other thing. I mean, yes, to have that ability to — it has been my experience here at a local level, you have someone saying that we need to do this, and then you sit in a room and you try to say, "What are we trying to accomplish?" and you work it out, even at the political level, which I know is a different kettle of fish — at the territorial level is very different from the local level.

The beauty of local is that you can actually have those conversations, right? But it's just a different level of government.

Anyways, the long and short of it is that I think the minority government has accomplished some things and given at least some of us rurals, who may be out of sync with the current government, a little bit more leverage, which I think is beneficial. It doesn't give us full leverage, but at least it gives us more of a chance, right? Especially if there's something that we just don't agree with, with the sitting government, that we just feel is not right. It gives us something to work with — something.

Chair: Mr. Cathers, do you have a follow-up?

Mr. Cathers: No, I don't have a follow-up to that point and I understand that the sound quality is an issue so I will just turn it over to someone else. Thank you, Mayor.

Chair: Thank you, Brad. Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: No, I'm good.

Chair: Thank you, Mr. Curran.

Mr. Curran: Thank you.

Chair: We have an option right now. We could go to someone online.

Ms. Roberts: (inaudible)

Chair: You're ready? Fantastic.

Thank you, Ms. Roberts.

Ms. Roberts: I'm Jenny Roberts, community member. I've grown up in the electoral system. My mom used to be returning officer for Hootalinqua North. I can tell you there have been changes, but not the right changes. Voters don't like being forced to go online in the communities — lots of elders, seniors, and just people who don't have computers or Internet. They're told to go online to ensure that they're registered to vote. That's a big problem. We still need to have people who go door to door to ensure that people's information is correct, accurate, and they're on the list or, if they have moved to the other side, that they're nicely removed from the list without causing emotional stuff for the family.

As for the elections themselves, communities — we miss a lot of voter turnout due to the lack of options. In communities, we need to be able to provide a mobile polling station for both the advanced polls and regular polls, because — working federal and territorial elections, poll supervisor, DRO, poll clerk, reception — I've done them all — the common complaint is: "Well, how does so-and-so get down here? They're in a wheelchair and they can't make it, but they want to vote."

Special ballots, they're okay, but the people have to go to the local office. This year it was a hotel room. Great, it was accessible, but it still poses the problem of: How do they get there? So, the deputy returning officers need to have the ability to go to people's homes as well.

That's my feedback on that. As for representation, being linked with Faro and Ross River, our issues here don't line up with their issues, and having only one option for an MLA, whether it's opposition or leading — how does he properly represent us with our needs when we have certain issues here that are completely opposite from the other communities?

I have had my own personal issues. I think I talked to you one time about them, Mr. Streicker. The community is still faced with issues. When I bring them to my MLA, he brings them to the governing parties, and there's never an answer of how we can sit down and work together to fix these issues. Regardless of majority or minority, we have to work together.

I do know the current MLA probably would like to retire, but we don't have candidates who are wanting to put their names in. Why don't they? Why does nobody want to put their name in? That's a good question as to how we recruit people to represent us. I have to echo Chief Morris and Mayor Curran — yes, it's a system that really needs work. What these options are — they're great on paper, but how do they look in reality? So, I'm on the fence, like Mayor Curran, as to which way would better suit this territory. I'm on the fence between our status quo — status quo might work if we could break up some boundaries, like Faro-Ross River. They're closer, maybe have their own representation.

Like the mayor says, everything centres around Whitehorse, so we feel like we don't get heard when we do bring our issues to our MLA to bring to the governing parties. Yes, which way is going to serve us the best?

We talked about youth, Kate. I can tell you that the school here, the teachers and principal, any election, they have their own little mock election, and the teacher and principal do always make an appointment to bring their class down to observe the process. We do have very interested youth in politics in this community.

As for lowering the age, Yukon's age is 19; federally, it's 18. Why don't we come in line with federal age requirements, to start with?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think we are, Jenn.

Ms. Roberts: No.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: No?

Ms. Roberts: Legal age in the Yukon is 19; federally, it's 18, so —

It has always been because people don't know, because of those differences, right? A lot of people, having back-to-back elections, nobody knows who or what. Is this territorial? Is this municipal? Is this federal? Yes, people are voted out. They're exhausted by it.

So, as much as this is important, people are probably not here tonight because they're just tired of elections.

Chair: Thank you for all this.

Ms. Roberts: I have more.

Chair: Oh, you can —

Ms. Roberts: But it's all over the place, so we'll just leave the key points at that.

Chair: I will point out, Jenn, that you are more than — I can give you some lined paper and a pen, and if you want to —

Ms. Roberts: I'll e-mail you.

Chair: Perfect. Okay, so first of all, I just really appreciate that you bring us the perspective of growing up with a returning officer as a mom.

Ms. Roberts: I actually had two very political parents.

Chair: And I appreciate that. I also really appreciate you talking about the bones of how — this one thing that we talk about, I would say, generally territory-wide is: How do we help people get to polls? So, you are saying, "Why don't we take the polls to people?" and I appreciate that.

Ms. Roberts: I do have accessibility issues myself, so I'm not in that position that some of our community members are, and they feel left out.

Chair: So, I appreciate that you're talking about how to change that system. I don't have questions, because you were very clear in how you stated it. I do appreciate that you let us know that Teslin does have mock elections. They happen in most schools across the territory, and youth are very interested. I think it's very interesting — oh, the Clerk has just gone on —

Ms. Roberts: The Clerk is verifying our age requirements?

Chair: So, it is 18.

Ms. Roberts: Is it?

Chair: It is 18, yes.

Ms. Roberts: Because a lot of people, because legal age in the Yukon is 19, they don't think they can vote in the territorial.

Chair: Which I thank you for pointing that out. If we were different from the feds, that would be a great and easy recommendation right there to get in line.

Ms. Roberts: But I do agree with the mayor that 16 — I remember 16. I was starting to pay attention then, but I wasn't ready to make a choice of: I want that person because — you're still learning, right? So, 17, 18 is when you really start to — now you're really growing up, maturing to the reality of life and being on your own, and you have these choices and rights.

Chair: Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes, thank you so much, Jenn. You started off by saying that you're a little bit split between the status quo, and I just missed what the other possibility was from your thoughts.

Ms. Roberts: In reading the summary, the big book is a little bit more in-depth, but they're all great in their own way, but I can't see how, other than the status quo right now and possibly the mixed member one — I can't see how the other two would better represent — myself personally, more just boundary-changing, lining up would better represent the proportions in the districts, right? Those members would be better able to represent their communities' true needs, just like ours, whereas we have totally different issues from Ross River and Faro, so how does one person represent us all when he's not really in tune with the other areas they represent?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you.

Chair: I'm just going to follow up on that. So, boundary changes — as an example, in Yukon, we made a decision that it was important for Old Crow to have their own seat, and across the country, there is a percentage — that plus or minus is kind of how they make the decision. In Yukon, we blow those out of the water where we've made the priority of making sure that there is rural representation.

One of the challenges that I see right now is with the Whistle Bend neighbourhood. When it's all built out, it will have 8,000 people, and currently it has one person representing it, which is almost the same number of nine other ridings, as an example. I'm not suggesting that we put nine MLAs in Whistle Bend, but when you talk about boundary changes, are you open to adding? Would you be open to adding more seats?

Ms. Roberts: Definitely, if it means that us, the people — that we feel we will be heard and our issues will be better able to be brought to whomever — minority or majority. If Faro-Ross River had one allotted there, one in Whistle Bend — like, lining them up per population or in rural would make better representation to their issues, then most definitely, but we don't need 30, you know. We do have to keep our numbers, or stats, realistic to the representation at the same time.

Yes, 9,000 people — that's a lot of people, but if you look at other ridings south, I know that they're larger populations, but there are a lot of municipalities that are rural that mimic Yukon municipalities and ridings, so how do they make one person work for 100,000 people?

Chair: I guess the question we'd be asking the other 100,000 people is if one person works for them.

Ms. Roberts: Yes, but just throwing numbers out there.

Chair: I appreciate that.

Ms. Roberts: It's the representation and the community, really. Whitehorse — they speak for themselves, and they're very loud about it, so it's our turn to be loud.

Chair: No, absolutely. Just so you know, I am an urban; I am in Whitehorse, but I say that Whitehorse is not the centre, and we shouldn't have all the decisions based on Whitehorse. So, I hear that.

Mr. Cathers? Are you going to give me a head nod if you have a question?

Mr. Cathers: At this point, I would just thank you for your comments. I don't have any additional questions right now, but thank you for your thoughts.

Chair: Mr. Streicker, any additional questions?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes, if you were trying to think in terms of — do you think in terms of numbers, Jenn, or do you think in terms of communities? In other words, you need a representative who represents Teslin, or maybe you could think Tlingit, or do you think in terms of numbers? Do you agree with the whole idea of Old Crow? It's a small population, but it has representation.

Ms. Roberts: Oh, it's never about numbers. It's about the representation, right? It's about the feeling that you can connect to the person whom the people have chosen to represent you. Whether I like my MLA who is chosen at the end of the night, I have to let that go, because that's the person who is representing me, so I have to be able to feel comfortable

to bring my issues forward. If I'm not comfortable with who is representing me, I'm going to just stay in that corner in my house and quietly complain and hope something changes the next time around, and I'm pretty sure that's how a lot of Yukoners feel.

But it's never about numbers; it's about — you have to be able to have a certain working relationship with your representation. I'm pretty sure people in Faro-Ross River are like: "Our MLA is never here; how do we get him here to sit down and talk with us about our issues?" Yes, that's not just the challenge for our MLA but all MLAs who have those distant ridings from each other.

Chair: I would suggest that there are two ridings that are particularly spread out. Yours, Pelly-Nisutlin, with Teslin, Faro, and Ross River, and then Mayo-Tatchun is Carmacks, Pelly, and Mayo. Kluane is Mendenhall, Haines Junction, Burwash, D Bay, and then Beaver Creek. So, they are the rural ridings that have that real spread.

Ms. Roberts: So, how does an MLA properly serve all the people?

Chair: That is a great question. I would say it's exhausting, and there's lots of miles put on cars, probably.

Ms. Roberts: Yes. So, it boils down to the representation and, geographically, do they really line up?

Chair: Great things to think about. Thank you very much.

Ms. Roberts: Thank you.

Chair: We have one person online. Mr. Brekke, would you like to present today?

Unidentified Person: (Inaudible)

Chair: Excellent. So, at this point, the hearing is on until 8:00 p.m. Seeing as how there is no one who is ready to present, what we will do is take a 15-minute break, and we will see if anyone else is in the room or wishes to present at that point. So, we will be back at 7:15 p.m.

Recess

Chair: At this moment, the Committee will take an additional 15-minute break, and we will be back at 7:30 p.m.

Recess

Chair: Thank you and welcome back to this select committee hearing on electoral reform in Teslin. I will invite Mr. Doug Martens to the microphone.

Mr. Martens: Thank you for the floor. I have a little initial item I would like to say. One of my friends made the statement that no matter who you vote for, the government always gets in. For some of us, that's more of a problem than for others, but I thought it was kind of clever. There's kind of an unelected bureaucracy that remains in place, and many of these people serve their entire terms, and they make some pretty profound decisions that affect us all without having the support, sometimes, of the public.

Having said that, my next point is rather than discussing how we vote in Canada, would it be possible to look at a

completely different political system? I had the privilege of spending some time in Switzerland, and the main thing I noticed about their political system is the public has a much higher level of input into what's actually happening. They have referendums on — I don't know what the trigger point is, but a certain expense, a certain level of interest in a topic, and there's a referendum, plebiscite. People get to vote.

For instance, if they're trying to determine if they want another nuclear plant, they put it out to referendum; everybody votes, and usually there are multiple items they're voting on, and it's very easy to do with the Internet. We have this thing that most people have the Internet these days, right? So, it's quite easy to vote on these things and come to a decision that is what the public wants. The way we do, like electing one individual for a four-year term — my argument is that placing that much power in one cabbage is silly. We have 28-whatever million people in Canada — it's much more now, isn't it? Anyway, something like 38 million people, and all those people are giving this much power to one cabbage and one skull. Yes, there are a few checks and balances, and not everything can be done according to the whims of this individual, but it's too much power.

In Switzerland, they have seven elected representatives. There are different cantons — which roughly correspond to our ridings — and each one sends a delegate. They decide on these issues collectively. There will be one sort of chairman who has a higher level position for a year, and then it's switched around like that. Because you have seven, it's an odd number, so you never have a tie vote. It's virtually impossible to have a tie vote on any particular topic.

I think it's a better system, and I think Canada should look into it, really. They have quite a peaceful sort of country, for the most part, and I think that's one of the reasons. You don't have one person take the ball and run away with it and go off in his own direction; it can't happen.

As far as what system we should use, I think we should use that system. I don't know if I'm going to be heard, but if not, we could also go to another system where we vote against the person that we least want to have and put a big, black mark through the person you definitely do not want to be the prime minister of Canada, or your local representative, and pick the one we least despise.

Chair: Thank you. Before you go away too far, we have some questions. Just so you know, you are not the first person to talk about Switzerland. In our first public hearing, in Whitehorse, we had someone talk about the Swiss system, so we have heard not only from you but from the other person as well.

Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Doug. So, in Switzerland, where they use a more direct democracy with referenda versus a representative democracy, are you thinking — I just want to ask a couple of questions about that just so I understand, so I can hear you — keep some representative democracy or do it all by direct democracy, and when it reaches a threshold — that's my first question, and I'll just ask a couple more about sort of referenda and your thoughts around it.

Mr. Martens: Well, I'm not sure if I get what you're asking, really.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: How much should be through that system where people get to vote in referenda, and should it be all of government or big decisions?

Mr. Martens: I'm not too sure how the triggering works, as I've said. I think in a lot of cases it's the amount of monetary expense, and it also probably has to do with the public feelings on an issue. If they don't care about it, you know, it can probably be decided by the seven — they call them the "seven dwarves" somewhat disrespectfully, but anyway.

It's kind of an antidote to the dictatorial-type situation that can arise over a period of time. I think it makes a lot of sense.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Okay. And we've been discussing around electoral systems and how we would choose. Do you believe it should be a referendum here on what electoral system to happen?

Mr. Martens: Provided the public was well enough educated, and I don't know how you would do that. Because I was looking over the brochure, and I'm a little confused. I would have to read the full thing and spend some time with it. The first-past-the-post is fairly easy to understand. You get into some of the other realms, you know, of kind of mixing vote for party and determining who is going to represent the situation — it almost seems like somebody could win the election and be tossed because of a formula, and I'm not sure if that would be a good thing.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have one more question. There's another thing that some people have presented to us as an idea, and I just wanted to try to get your thoughts on it. It's called a "citizens' assembly". So, rather than it being party folks who consider what might be the best system for the Yukon, it's a series of representatives from around the territory who aren't necessarily aligned with political parties, and they would dig into how these systems might work and ultimately make a recommendation about a system for the Yukon and then probably get to a referendum. I'm just wondering what you think of that concept of a citizens' assembly.

Mr. Martens: Well, the more input we have, the better, right? I mean, you just kind of feel like you're getting, sometimes — if I can use an analogy, like you're jumping into a car, and you think the driver is sober, and it turns out he has had a few, and he's all over the road and there's nothing you can do about it. Your country is going in a direction that you can't believe, and you want to stop it, but you have to wait four years for the next election to make any kind of difference, and really, even then, you're voting for this dictator or that dictator. It's just very little input that the public has, and I'm sure that's by design. I wish we could have a more citizen-based situation, which the Swiss system is really admirable; I really believe that. I don't know why it's not more emulated in the world.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you.

Mr. Martens: My friend from Switzerland finds it quite annoying, actually. There are quite a few referendums, and it takes a while to go through all the questions, but ultimately, you've had your say.

Chair: There are more questions, Doug; there are more questions. Mr. Cathers?

Mr. Cathers: Can you hear me?

Chair: Yes.

Mr. Cathers: I found a headset that hopefully will improve the sound quality here.

I just wanted to thank you for your thoughts, Doug, and one thing that is interesting to me — the discussion about electoral changes, most people tend to focus on the model of the legislative assembly, and while that is a relevant consideration, the other thing that has been happening across countries is an increasing trend of the major decisions being dealt with in regulations, so effectively being made at the Cabinet level, not at the legislative-assembly level. It was interesting hearing your thoughts on more involvement by citizens in direct democracy, and I just wonder if you have thoughts or comments on that trend that has occurred toward more of the substantive decisions actually just being made by whomever the Cabinet of the day is here and across the country.

Mr. Martens: Yes, that is one of the problems that we face right now, if I understand our political system, and I'm not a political expert by any means, but a lot of decisions are being made in Cabinet. It just feels again like the captain of this ship is just running away with the whole thing, and we just have no mechanism to rein him in.

A personal example: I donated a small amount of money to the truckers during the protest, and I participated in the demonstrations in Whitehorse. As a consequence, my bank doesn't allow me to do e-transfers anymore — the Scotiabank. I've been with them — I'll give my age away — I've been with them 50 years, half a century. I've paid every penny of interest that I ever owed on any amount I've borrowed. Still, like, months later, I'm not allowed to make an e-transfer. This came down from high levels of authority. Once the government begins to meddle in your personal bank account and your financial interests, money you've earned yourself, this is way over the top. I don't recognize the country anymore.

We have to get some kind of control over what's happening. I don't know if I've hit the nail or not.

Chair: I'm just going to interject and say that, from the fact that you're the second person who has talked about the Swiss model and that it is a combination of both direct democracy through referendum, but then also through the elected portion, I will do more research on the Swiss model and bring it back to the group to take a look at, because I think it's important.

I do appreciate that. Mr. Cathers, do you have a follow-up question?

Mr. Cathers: I don't have a follow-up question. I would just like to thank you for sharing your thoughts, Doug, and particularly the experience that you ran into after making a small donation there to the truckers convoy. That's certainly interesting to know and I share your concern as well.

Mr. Martens: You're welcome.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Cathers: We're good?

Chair: Yes, sorry, there just is a point. It turns out the Swiss legislature has 246 seats. We have 19. So, I was trying to figure out what scalability works. I just asked John what the population was, but we will look more into it as it's a point of interest — 246 is —

Mr. Martens: There is a hierarchy, I believe, of seven individuals. The wisdom of that is, if we took everybody in the room here, we would have roughly seven people. No one would have the power to just make some sort of arbitrary decision, ram it through the Cabinet, bully everybody into line, and get the results that they want. It's a common problem that has happened all over the world. Mao Zedong, and others we could name, have taken full command of a country and run it into the river. We don't want that here.

Chair: So, we'll look toward the Swiss. Thank you, Doug.

Juanita, do you want to present?

Ms. Kremer: Mine's easy; just two comments. Number one is probably not related to electoral reform as much as it is the boundary reform. I, as a Teslin resident, am upset that I'm put with Ross River and Faro, because I think it would be better or smarter for us to be with Carcross, Tagish, and the Southern Lakes, just by interest, by First Nation, by landscape, by all of the stuff that makes more sense. This might not be the place, but at least I'm going to tell you.

The other one is that I don't know much about electoral process, but what I do constantly fight for and what upsets me the most about the way that we host elections, both in Canada and in the Yukon, is that by the time Whitehorse seats are determined, the rest of us in the communities are kind of screwed just because the majority of the population lies in Whitehorse, and therefore, most of our decisions are made from Whitehorse-based people. Canada-wise, when we're talking about the federal government, whoever is determined to be the leaders in Ontario, the rest of Canada is screwed, which kind of makes the rest of us feel lesser than necessary.

Like you said, the seats that were in Switzerland, they had how many?

Chair: It was 246.

Ms. Kremer: And we have —

Chair: Nineteen.

Ms. Kremer: — 19. So, just because it is still relevant, right? Even though there are less of us, we still want to feel like we're heard, like we're listened to, like we're a part of this territory. Often, I think — here's my bias — I'm a lifelong resident of Teslin; I'm a lifelong resident of the Yukon, and often people who come to Whitehorse are fly-by-nighters. A lot of them come here for four or five years, maybe eight years, 10 years, but I come from a community where my grandmother, who is still alive today, lived in wall tents and mushed a dog team to get back and forth to get her food and stuff. That's only like two generations from simplistic living and here we are moving forward with cellphones and all of this other stuff — just somehow making reference to communities and how important — we're a big part of the Yukon.

Chair: Thank you. Mr. Cathers, do you want to start?

Mr. Cathers: First of all, thanks for sharing your thoughts on there. It is interesting; from the people who have been at the meeting tonight in Teslin, we're hearing a lot of a common theme about riding boundaries and less about the systems themselves and more about the importance of rural representation.

I don't really have a question at this point, but I would just like to thank you for sharing your thoughts on this.

Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cathers. I was just thinking about some — and I do think rural representation is important, and rural voices are important. Interestingly enough, both the Liberals and the Yukon Party — just going off the top of my head, currently, there are three rural MLAs for the Liberals and four rural MLAs for the Yukon Party, and there is one rural MLA with the NDP. So, no one could have had the majority without the rural representation.

But what we hear over and over again is making sure that the rural voices don't get run over by the Whitehorse voices. When you talked about boundaries, I think boundaries are important, and it's totally the right place to talk about them. So, from your perspective that there should be that broader conversation on boundary redrawing, to look at cultural or —

Ms. Kremer: To me, it just doesn't make sense. Don't get me wrong; I'm not a Kaska, but it sort of makes sense to put us with the Southern Lakes and Carcross just logically. Distance-wise, our MLA often has to drive all the way through to Faro and stuff, and I'm sure ditto with them and their MLA down here in Teslin — they don't necessarily feel 100 percent that their voice is heard either.

Chair: So, just on that flip side, though — and this is just playing the flip side of the coin — if Teslin was to be part of the Southern Lakes and your MLA lived in Carcross, you would still feel represented by —

Ms. Kremer: I would think so, yes, just because, as a Dakh-Ka Nation, we work together as it is, right?

Chair: Yes.

Ms. Kremer: So, us with Atlin, Carcross, and Teslin — and we all have families — not that we don't have families in Ross River, but it just sort of makes logical sense that we would work with Carcross/Tagish.

Chair: Yes, that's an excellent point. Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Juanita, right now, we have eight rural MLAs and 11 Whitehorse. Do you think that's the right split? Would you like to see that number changed?

Ms. Kremer: I don't know specifically if that is the answer. My analogy is that the closer you get to Whitehorse, the better the roads get.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Right.

Ms. Kremer: And that's unfortunate. Out here, we get a lot less services, a lot less stuff, than Whitehorse does, so if it meant that we got better roads and better services, yes. I don't know how you solve that, but it does feel like, often, we don't get heard, because the majority of the people who are represented are Whitehorse people. Whether this is the time to repeat it, but that was when I was telling you that we met with the Minister of Highways and Public Works the other day, and he said we classify the highways, and highway number one, the

classification is around Whitehorse. To me, the whole Alaska Highway should be No. 1, because look what happens when the highway goes down — when it went down a couple of years ago — not the big one down in BC, but it washed out just out of Teslin, and we were out of services for six days.

So, just simple thinking, you know. I think probably paying attention to the fact that we're all part of a greater community and we're spread throughout the rest of Yukon.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The other question that I often ask folks who come to talk to us is: How important in your perspective is that the representation is local, meaning, whomever it is you are electing is from the community itself? Is that important, from your thinking?

Ms. Kremer: My bias thinking is that it's yes, because somebody is going to be here who speaks the language of the community. It's not easy for somebody to come to Teslin and represent us properly if they have not been here, they don't live here, they don't walk through the trenches with us individually. However, that being said, sometimes, some people are fabulous at listening, and half the time, I think maybe we just don't feel like we're listened to.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Any additional questions, Mr. Cathers?

Mr. Cathers: I do not have any additional questions at this point, just thank you again for your thoughts.

Chair: Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: No, I'm good, thanks.

Chair: Thank you very much for coming.

We currently have two people online, but we only have seven minutes before the end of the hearing. Mr. Pinard, you haven't responded to the chat, but would you like to present?

Mr. Pinard: Yes, sure; I'll be very short.

Chair: Excellent. Please go ahead.

Mr. Pinard: Thank you. I have read Michael Lauer's submission, the citizens' assembly proposal, and I really like what he has written and that we should follow what he's saying. He has the citizens' assembly, he has the price tag, budget and all that, and he's even recommending it should be done in conjunction with the next election, territorial and federal, and that it should establish a secretariat and then have Yukon University host it.

By the way, you could rename yourself the "special committee on the citizens' assembly on electoral reform". That's what's written here. This is the BC report on a citizens' assembly, and they use Simon Fraser University, so I think it would make sense to use Yukon U and possibly professors from there.

So, that's my recommendation, and that's it. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pinard. Mr. Cathers, any questions?

Mr. Cathers: No questions. Thank you for your comments.

Chair: Mr. Streicker?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, JP. Is there anything within Mr. Lauer's presentation to us, representation to us, that you would recommend differently?

Mr. Pinard: Not really. He's suggesting something like in the order of 107 members representing all cross-sections of the Yukon, and I think that seems like a reasonable number. He's talking about how many days of meeting time these members would have over — I think it's about a year he's talking about, 20 days in total, and then their offering per diem and then support staff to manage this. I think the Yukon University, being the host, could provide space and since they have campuses in many communities, they would be a good institution to actually host it.

So, your government — the government, our government — it belongs to all of us — would pay for this. We would provide the budget to make this citizens' assembly happen, and then — he's just offering suggestions, but holding this referendum at the same time as the election makes a lot of sense, but I think that's really the citizens' assembly's to make the decision on how that would be done most effectively.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pinard. As often, you are very succinct, and so I thank you for your presentation.

For anyone who is interested, as Dr. Pinard pointed out, this submission is on the Committee's webpage, and it was posted on June 27.

It's Michael Lauer — M-I-C-H-A-E-L L-A-U-E-R — and it was posted on June 27.

Thank you, Mr. Pinard, for your presentation today and for joining us.

Before I adjourn this meeting, I would like to say a few words on behalf of the Committee. First, I would like to thank everyone who presented their thoughts to the Committee. I would also like to thank the Yukoners who are listening and watching this hearing.

The Committee will be hearing from Yukoners at more community hearings. We will be in Watson Lake tomorrow, and hearings will be held in September in Carmacks, Mayo, Dawson City, and Whitehorse. Information on those public hearings, as well as transcripts and recordings, will be available on the Committee's webpage at yukonassembly.ca/SCER.

The public can learn more about potential voting systems at HowYukonVotes.ca.

This hearing is now adjourned.

The Committee adjourned at 7:58 p.m.