



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

41st Parliament, First Session

The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has the honour to present its

FORTY-THIRD REPORT

Your Committee, which is responsible for all matters relating to the election of Members of the House of Commons, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(a)(vi), has considered the objections filed in respect of the *Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta*, in accordance with section 22 of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. E-3, and is pleased to report as follows:

After each decennial census, the number of Members of the House of Commons and the representation of each province is adjusted in accordance with the rules prescribed by section 51 and 51A of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. An independent three-member electoral boundaries commission is then established for each province with the mandate to consider and report on the division of the province into electoral districts, the description of the boundaries and the name of each electoral district.

The *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act* provides the rules governing the division of a province into electoral districts. The population of each electoral district must be as close as possible to the electoral quota for the province, that is, the population of the province divided by the number of Members of the House of Commons allocated to the province in accordance with the Constitution. Each commission shall also consider the community of interest, community of identity or the historical pattern of an electoral district in the province; as well as the manageable geographic size of electoral districts, in cases of sparsely populated, rural or northern regions. A commission may depart from the provincial electoral quota by plus or minus 25% in order to respect the community of interest, community of identity, or the historical pattern of an electoral district, or to maintain the manageable geographic size of sparsely populated districts. In circumstances that are viewed as extraordinary by a commission, the variance from the electoral quota may be greater than 25%.

A commission is required to hold at least one public sitting on proposed electoral districts' boundaries and names to hear representations by interested persons. After the completion of the public hearings, each commission prepares a report on the boundaries and names of the electoral districts of the province. These reports are tabled in the House of Commons, and referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Members of the House of Commons have then 30 calendar days to file objections to the proposals contained in a report. An objection must be in writing and in the form of a motion. It must specify the provisions of the report objected to, and

the reasons for those objections. An objection must be signed by not less than 10 Members of the House of Commons.

After the expiration of the period for filing objections, the Committee has 30 sittings days, or any greater period as may be approved by the House, to consider the objections. The report of the commission is then referred back to the commission, along with the objections, and the minutes of the proceedings and the evidence heard by the Committee. The commission has then 30 calendar days to consider the matter, dispose of any objection, and finalise its report with or without amendment depending on its disposition of the objections.

Once all the commission reports have been finalized, the Chief Electoral Officer prepares a draft representation order setting out the boundaries and names of the new electoral districts. This is sent to the Governor in Council, who shall, within five days, proclaim the new representation order to be in force and effective for any general election that is called seven months after the proclamation is issued.

Objections

The *Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta* was tabled in the House of Commons, and referred to the Committee on December 12, 2012. By the end of the 30-day period, the Clerk of the Committee had received ten objections.

General Comments

The Committee finds that the MPs who presented objections to the proposed electoral districts of Alberta did so in a unified, coherent, and convincing manner. These MPs coordinated their efforts in order to produce a single map which sets out their proposals (the map is appended to the Report). The proposals of each MP of this province had the support of the communities which they affected, along with the support of MPs from adjacent ridings.

The Committee is convinced the proposals submitted to the Commission in this report are an important reflection of the "on-the-ground" knowledge possessed by MPs. The Committee considers these proposals as not driven by any partisan interests but instead by a desire to assist the Commission in ensuring that the various rural and urban communities of Alberta receive their fullest representation in the House of Commons.

The Committee considers the work done by the Commission to maintain small deviations between the proposed electoral districts throughout the province to be admirable. The proposals brought forward by MPs in this report by and large maintain low deviations from the province's electoral quota, and certainly below the limits provided for in section 15 of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*. The Committee, nonetheless, respectfully wishes to remind the Commission that equality of population between ridings is but one of a number of important considerations to be taken into account during boundary readjustments, as set out in the Act.

The Committee trusts that the Commission will view the proposals in this report with openness and with a view to striking the appropriate balance between representation by population and the maintenance of communities of interest and communities of identity in existing electoral districts.

The Committee also notes that the statistics found in this report, in respect of estimated regional populations or deviations from the province's electoral quota resultant from an MP's proposal were, in all cases, provided by Elections Canada using current census data. These analyses represent approximations based on Elections Canada's understanding of the MP's proposal and need to be validated by Statistics Canada.

Name Changes

(a) Medicine Hat

Mr. Lavar Payne, M.P. for Medicine Hat filed an objection concerning the proposed electoral district of Medicine Hat. He suggested readjusting certain boundaries proposed by the Commission in order to include the following communities and counties into one riding to be renamed Badlands – Medicine Hat – Brooks: the County of Forty Mile, Newell County, Cypress County, the area south of the Red Deer River and north of the two counties of Newell and Cypress, including Empress and Buffalo. In respect of the name change, the Committee agrees with Mr. Payne's suggestion as this proposed name captures the communities and geographic areas encompassed within the electoral district he is proposing.

For further discussion with respect to the electoral boundaries aspect of Mr. Payne's proposal, please see the entry in this report entitled Medicine Hat and Lethbridge under the section for Southern Alberta.

(b) Edmonton – Callingwood

Ms. Rona Ambrose, C.P., M.P. for Edmonton – Spruce Grove, filed an objection proposing two name changes. She recommended that the proposed electoral district of Edmonton – Callingwood be renamed Edmonton West. The Committee agrees with this suggestion as it gives an unambiguous sense of location to the riding. The Committee also notes that following the public hearings, the Commission acceded to the request to change the riding name of Edmonton McDougall to Edmonton Centre.

Ms. Ambrose also suggested that the name for the proposed electoral district of Sturgeon River be changed to Sturgeon – Parkland. While Sturgeon River does indeed flow into the proposed electoral district, Ms. Ambrose asserts that “[n]o one single geographic feature within the electoral district should determine its name. In this case, much of Sturgeon River, including its origin at Isle Lake, falls outside the boundaries of the proposed electoral district. The river flows directly through the City of St. Albert, which is in a different electoral district.”

Ms. Ambrose did not suggest eliminating the reference to Sturgeon River, but suggested that adding a reference to Parkland County would provide a better identifier for the electoral district especially for constituents residing in the Southern part of the district.

Your Committee agrees with Ms. Ambrose that Sturgeon – Parkland would be a more suitable name for the proposed electoral district. While part of the Parkland County finds itself outside the electoral district, the proposed name would better reflect the electoral district while not focusing on “one geographic feature.” The Committee recommends, therefore, that the proposed electoral district be renamed Sturgeon – Parkland.

(c) Wetaskiwin

Mr. Blaine Calkins, M.P. for Wetaskiwin, filed a motion with the Committee that contained two separate objections concerning the proposed electoral district of Red Deer – Wolf Creek.

One of objections dealt with the proposed name of the electoral district of Red Deer – Wolf Creek. The other objection dealt with an electoral boundary change. For further discussion in respect of the latter, please see the entry in this report entitled Edmonton – Wetaskiwin under the section for Edmonton.

Mr. Calkins suggests that the name of the proposed electoral district of Red Deer – Wolf Creek be changed to Red Deer–Lacombe. The reason for this change is to avoid confusion, as Wolf Creek is the name of a local school district, whereas Lacombe is the name of a local city. Mr. Calkins indicated to the Committee a further, historical reason for his suggestion of Lacombe was that Father Albert Lacombe is the namesake of the city in that riding, and he had done extensive charitable work there. The Committee agrees with and supports Mr. Calkins’ proposal as it adds clarity and better captures the communities encompassed within this riding.

Electoral Boundary Changes

Northern Alberta

(a) Fort McMurray – Cold Lake

Mr. Brian Jean, M.P. for Fort McMurray – Athabasca, filed an objection to the proposed electoral boundaries of the riding of Fort McMurray – Cold Lake. Mr. Jean’s objection is based on community of interest, established by economic ties between towns located on a single common transportation route.

In his appearance before the committee, Mr. Jean submitted that Fort McMurray and the municipality of Wood Buffalo should not be placed within the same riding as Wabasca. He gave as a principal reason that no direct east-west route connects the two towns. Wabasca’s economic ties and service areas, and therefore its community of interest, are with the communities (High Prairie, Slave Lake, and Athabasca) located on the lone transportation route which connects it to the south (Highway 813/754). Fort McMurray, on the other hand, is tied to the communities along the lone transportation corridor which connects it to the south. The Committee agrees with Mr. Jean’s assertion that no apparent connections exist between Fort McMurray and Wabasca, be they community, economic or otherwise.

Mr. Jean proposed to retain Cold Lake on the eastern portion of the proposed Fort McMurray – Cold Lake electoral district. In respect of the riding's western border, he proposed that it go no further west than the fifth meridian (a map of Mr. Jean's proposal is appended) and, as such, exclude Wabasca. The Committee notes that the Commission's initial proposed electoral districts did not place Fort McMurray and Wabasca in the same riding, and that it was only following the public hearings that the northeastern portion of the map was reconfigured to place Wabasca within the same riding as Fort McMurray. As such, Mr. Jean and the communities affected by this change did not have the opportunity to oppose this proposal during the public hearings.

The Committee is conscious of the laudable work done by the Commission to have maintained a deviation of no more than 5.29% above or below the electoral quota throughout the entire province. Indeed, the 5.29% deviation below the quota is for the electoral district of Fort McMurray – Cold Lake. Mr. Jean's proposal would give the Fort McMurray – Cold Lake electoral district a population of 96,688 or a 9.82% deviation below the province's electoral quotient. The committee is comfortable recommending such a deviation on the basis that it is well below the maximum deviation provided for by section 15 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. Further, the purpose of allowing such a deviation, as set out in the Act, is to provide for effective representation for geographically remote rural areas, such as the proposed electoral district of Fort McMurray – Cold Lake.

Another reason the Committee feels comfortable recommending Mr. Jean's proposal, despite its enlargement of the deviation below the provincial electoral quota, is that Mr. Jean provided the Committee with compelling evidence that Statistics Canada's census data for the municipality of Wood Buffalo may not have adequately captured the actual number of people resident in that municipality. The evidence provided by Mr. Jean to the Committee suggests that the census data may have underestimated this population by up to 25%. The Committee is aware that the Commission must, by law, rely solely on the census data provided by Statistics Canada, and not from other sources. It is also not the Commission's role to "second-guess" the census data. The Committee, nonetheless, respectfully puts forward that sufficient grounds exist to consider the municipality of Wood Buffalo, as the centre of oil sands economic activity and one of the fastest growing municipalities in the country, as an exceptional electoral district in terms of its potential unmeasured or shadow population, along with the municipality's potential for future population growth.

(b) Peace River—Westlock

Mr. Chris Warkentin, M.P. for Peace River, filed an objection to the proposed electoral boundaries of the Peace River – Westlock riding, along with its adjacent ridings of Grande Prairie and Yellowhead. The reasons for Mr. Warkentin's objections are based on community of interest, common service areas, municipal boundaries, and practical issues of transportation for MPs representing these proposed electoral districts.

Mr. Warkentin emphasized to the Committee that rural MPs with dispersed populations have added responsibilities, as compared to urban MPs. These responsibilities need to be better understood. Using himself as an example, Mr. Warkentin explained that he had 26 municipal councils and 32

First Nations leadership groups to meet with, whereas an urban MP might have only one municipal council to meet with, and it might be shared with other MPs.

In its report, the Commission asserted that advances in communications technology continue to facilitate representation to the north. Mr. Warkentin made clear in his appearance before the Committee that access to the Internet and mobile phones remains limited in northwestern Alberta. He further noted that literacy rates in the north of Alberta are far below the national average. He stated, and the Committee agrees, that the most important manner for communicating with these communities of the north remains via face-to-face meetings on a regular basis.

Mr. Warkentin submitted that communities of interest and identity, based on common service areas and economic ties, exist among the towns located along the lone transportation route (highway 35) running north-south in northwestern Alberta. He explained that under the electoral boundaries as proposed by the Commission, these communities would, in essence, be split into opposite sides of one highway. In its report, the Commission explained that this configuration is meant to better serve these communities by having two MPs share the work of representing the far north. Mr. Warkentin, however, raised a number of convincing practical difficulties that would arise under such an arrangement. Mr. Warkentin provided the Committee with a detailed description of the undesirable logistical difficulties for an MP seeking to conduct face-to-face town hall meetings along this stretch of highway with some communities, while not others, depending on which side of the highway these communities were located on. The requirement that two MPs, rather than one, travel the long distances from the southern part of the riding to its northern reaches also strikes the Committee as an undesirable duplication that could be avoided by capturing this transportation corridor and its communities within a single riding.

Mr. Warkentin also indicated to the Committee that a large, relatively unpopulated forested area lies between Valleyview and Whitecourt. He asserted that no meaningful connection exists between communities to the south of this forested area, and those to its north. Indeed, the communities located in the southern portion of this riding would utilize services and share a community of interest with Edmonton, whereas the communities north of this forested area would form a community with interests unrelated to those of the south. The Committee agrees with his submission that the southern border of the Peace River—Westlock riding should not extend further south than this forested area, as it acts as a natural geographic divide.

Mr. Warkentin proposed that the Peace River – Westlock riding capture the communities located along highway 35 (Manning and High Level) and the northern portion of highway 2 (Peace River, Grimshaw and Fairview). The riding would encompass Swan Hills and Valleyview at its southern end, but not Whitecourt (which would be located in north end of the proposed Yellowhead electoral district). Mr. Warkentin's proposal would change the deviation of the proposed electoral district of Peace River – Westlock from 0.82% to -10.75%. The Committee is comfortable in supporting Mr. Warkentin's proposal because this deviation remains well below the maximum deviation provided for by section 15 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. Reduced populations are often the norm in rural areas and regions where the populations are dispersed.

The Committee supports this proposal and views it as an improvement to the one proposed by the Commission.

(c) Yellowhead

The Hon. Rob Merrifield, P.C., M.P. for Yellowhead, filed an objection to the proposed boundaries of the electoral district of Yellowhead and the adjacent districts of Grande Prairie and Peace – River Westlock. Mr. Merrifield's objection is based on communities of interest and identity and historical patterns.

Mr. Merrifield informed the Committee that the town of Whitecourt does not belong in the proposed electoral district of Peace River – Westlock as its economic and cultural associations are to the south and east, not to the north. Mr. Merrifield also explained that a natural geographical gap of forest and farmland separated Whitecourt from the next nearest town to its north, Valleyview, which lies almost 200 km away.

In its report, the Commission states that the southern counties in the electoral district of Peace River – Westlock are desirable to increase representation in the northwest. Mr. Merrifield informed the Committee that contrary to this logic, Whitecourt, Barrhead and Westlock are in fact so large, in comparison to the communities of the northwest, that they would dominate the riding.

Mr. Merrifield proposed that the town of Whitecourt and a portion of Woodlands County be placed in the proposed electoral district of Yellowhead. In order to balance population quotas, Grande Cache and a portion of Greenview No. 16 would transfer out from Yellowhead and into the proposed electoral district of Grande Prairie. The natural boundaries of the Athabasca River to the north of Yellowhead and the Berland River to the south of Grande Cache could act as rough guidelines for boundaries for Mr. Merrifield's proposal.

The net result of Mr. Merrifield's proposal would alter the deviations from the province's electoral quota for the three proposed electoral districts as follows: Yellowhead: -2.47% to 5.00%; Peace River – Westlock: 0.82% to -10.75%; and Grande Prairie: -0.44% to 3.65%.

The Committee notes the increase in the deviation for the electoral district of Peace River – Westlock would be the largest in the province. The committee, however, is comfortable recommending such a deviation as it agrees with Mr. Merrifield's view that the removal of Whitecourt from the Peace River – Westlock riding better serves both the people of Whitecourt, who have no common community of interest or identity with the northwest of Alberta, as it does the communities of the northwest, whose issues, interests and concerns would be at risk of being marginalized or dimmed by having been included in a riding with a large southern population base.

Further, a -10.75% deviation from the province's electoral quota remains well below the maximum deviation provided for by section 15 of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*. The Committee considers such a deviation warranted in this instance as the purpose of allowing for deviations from strict representation by population is to provide for effective representation for geographically remote rural areas, such as the proposed electoral district of Peace River – Westlock.

Edmonton

(a) Edmonton – Wetaskiwin

Mr. Blaine Calkins, M.P. for Wetaskiwin, filed an objection to the proposed electoral districts of Edmonton – Wetaskiwin and Red Deer – Wolf Creek.

Mr. Calkins informed the Committee that the riding of Wetaskiwin has existed in Alberta since Confederation, and is one of Alberta's original five cities. Under the map currently proposed by the Commission, however, Wetaskiwin as a riding would cease to exist, with its pieces split into three surrounding ridings. Mr. Calkins informed the Committee that this decision was a source of dissatisfaction among his constituents and that a substantial number of presenters from Wetaskiwin had pleaded for this decision to be reconsidered at the public hearings before the Commission.

Mr. Calkins' main concern, which is shared by his constituents, was that the interests of a big city will be put ahead of those in the rural areas of the riding. He explained to the Committee that his constituents held strong concerns that Wetaskiwin, one of the founding cities of Alberta, would change from a rural community of prominence to an "afterthought" community in a riding dominated by a large urban centre.

Mr. Calkins indicated that he was grateful to the Commission for adjusting its maps following the public hearings to keep the County of Wetaskiwin whole. Mr. Calkins noted, however, that the Commission's most recent proposal continues to sever a community of interest which exists between the communities located on the east-west trading corridor of highway 11 and highway 53.

Mr. Calkins proposed that Rimbey be relocated into the proposed electoral district of Red Deer – Wolf Creek, as it has economic and political connections with Sylvan Lake, Lacombe and Ponoka. Rimbey, conversely, has no such connections with the communities further to its west, such as Grande Cache, Hinton, and Edson. Mr. Calkins also expressed an interest in seeing Rocky Mountain House included in the Red Deer – Wolf Creek riding, as it is a community which considers itself to be a central Alberta community, and has much stronger economic and political relationships with the communities to its east. The addition of both or either community to the electoral district of Red Deer – Wolf Creek had the full support of the current MPs of the ridings in the area.

The net result of Mr. Calkins' proposal to add Rimbey to the proposed electoral district of Red Deer – Wolf Creek would alter its deviation from the province's electoral quota, along with that of Yellowhead, as follows: Red Deer – Wolf Creek: 0.72% to 6.04%; and Yellowhead: -2.47% to 7.80%. Adding Rimbey and Rocky Mountain House to Red Deer – Wolf Creek would alter the deviations from the province's electoral quota as follows: Red Deer – Wolf Creek: 0.72% to 15.39%; and Yellowhead: -2.47% to 17.15%.

Mr. Calkins indicated that he does not expect the Commission to completely redraw the electoral districts of central Alberta. Instead, his proposal focusses on asking the Commission to give serious consideration to the maintenance of existing relationships between longstanding communities of interest. The Committee fully supports Mr. Calkins' proposal. The disappearance

of a Wetaskiwin riding, for the first time since Confederation, is an understandable source of dissatisfaction/unhappiness for its residents. The Committee enjoins the Commission to be cognisant of the importance of maintaining a strong rural voice in the ridings of central Alberta when preparing its final map for the province.

Calgary

(a) Calgary Centre

Ms. Joan Crockatt, M.P. for Calgary Centre, filed an objection with respect to the location of the northwestern boundary and the eastern boundary of the proposed electoral district of Calgary Centre. Ms. Crockatt's objection is based on the maintenance of cohesive communities, historical patterns, the well-established flow of commerce, and the traditional provincial, federal, and municipal boundaries. Ms. Crockatt considers the Commission's proposed electoral district to amount to "radical surgery" in a situation where continuity could instead be maintained.

Ms. Crockatt proposed that the area in the northwest of Calgary Centre bounded by 37 St SW and Bow Trail SW be removed from the riding. She proposed that the area south of 26 Ave SW and north of Glenmore Trail SE be given a new western boundary of the Scarcee Trail SW. The reason for this suggested change is to prevent the disruption of communities located east of the Scarcee Trail (the Calgary ring road). Ms. Crockatt explained these communities are very cohesive, residential communities whose traffic patterns are east-west, with the Scarcee Trail acting as a natural boundary. Residents of these communities have close ties; their community associations collaborate, as do their churches and schools. The provincial ridings of Calgary-Elbow and Calgary-Currie both use Scarcee Trail as their boundary.

Ms. Crockatt also explained that no portion of Signal Hill should belong in the proposed electoral district of Calgary Centre. Its topographical difference is significant, meaning virtually no traffic flow occurs between the neighbourhoods inside the ring road and outside the ring road.

As for the eastern boundary of Calgary Centre, Ms. Crockatt proposed that the large industrial area located to the east of both Macleod TR SW and 3 ST SE, along with Ramsay and Inglewood, be removed and placed into Calgary Sheppard. In her submission to the Committee, Ms. Crockatt suggested the Elbow River as a natural eastern boundary and one utilized by the provincial and municipal ridings. Ms. Crockatt explained that a large industrial area in Calgary Centre is a poor fit in terms of community of interest. Calgary Centre is a populous riding containing head offices, homeless shelters, a large immigrant population and suburban communities. In her view, a low population density industrial area would be a better fit in the proposed electoral district of Calgary Sheppard, which contains a large, industrial area after which the riding is named.

The Committee finds Ms. Crockatt's arguments persuasive and fully supports her proposals in their entirety.

Ms. Crockatt also indicated that her proposal would leave Calgary Centre and its adjacent ridings within plus or minus 5% of the province's electoral quota; that the communities affected by the proposal, including the sitting MPs who represent the current ridings in the area, have written to her

in support of this proposal. In addition, Ms. Crockatt made the Committee aware that she took her seat in the House of Commons on 11 December 2012, only days before the Commission presented its report on 13 December 2012. As such, the riding of Calgary Centre did not have did not have a sitting MP during most of electoral boundaries readjustment process.

(b) Calgary Northeast

Mr. Devinder Shory, M.P. for Calgary Northeast, filed an objection with the aim of adding a small geographic section to the proposed electoral district of Calgary Skyview from the adjacent riding of Calgary Forest Lawn. His proposal is meant to ensure his riding's constituency office, which has been in the same location for approximately twenty-five years, would remain within the electoral district of Calgary Skyview.

Mr. Shory proposed that the western boundary at 36th Street NE and 32nd Avenue NE be moved further westward towards either Barlow Trail NE and 32nd Avenue NE or Deerfoot Trail NE and 32nd Avenue NE.

Mr. Shory submitted that the population of the electoral districts involved in this change would be approximately five people, as the extended boundary incorporates only commercial areas. The adjacent riding is represented by Mr. Deepak Obhrai, M.P. for Calgary East, who, in correspondence with Mr. Shory, has indicated his support for this proposal. Mr. Shory emphasized to the Committee that his riding is culturally diverse, welcoming many new Canadians each year. Over the past two decades, his constituency office has become an easy-to-find community fixture. While the office is not located centrally within the riding, access to it remains very convenient for constituents as it is located on a major road. The Committee views Mr. Shory's request as a simple one to accommodate and supports it fully.

Southern Alberta

(a) Medicine Hat and Lethbridge

Mr. Jim Hillyer, M.P. for Lethbridge and Mr. Lavar Payne, M.P. for Medicine Hat both filed objections to the inclusion of the counties of Cardston and Warner in the proposed electoral district of Medicine Hat and the inclusion of the town of Brooks, Bassano and the County of Newell in the proposed electoral district of Bow River.

Instead, Mr. Payne suggests that the proposed electoral district of Medicine Hat be readjusted as follows: that the County of Forty Mile, Newell County, Cypress County, the area south of the Red Deer River and north of the two counties of Newell and Cypress, including Empress and Buffalo, become an electoral district. He further suggests this district be renamed Badlands – Medicine Hat – Brooks.

According to Mr. Payne, a strong community of interest in terms of economic, cultural, social, education and health linkages existent between these communities and Medicine Hat, the nearest large city. He indicated that these affinities are based on business and industry connections, health authorities, responsibilities in jurisdictions, hospitals, central medical and clinical designations, and

school divisions. Common issues between these communities also include an emphasis on agricultural protection.

Mr. Payne's suggestion would move approximately 29,849 people out of the proposed electoral district of Bow River and into the proposed Medicine Hat electoral district.

In order to counterbalance this loss of population in the Bow River riding, Mr. Hillyer suggests relocating the counties of Cardston and Warner from the Medicine Hat riding, to the proposed Bow River riding. The population of the counties of Cardston and Warner are approximately 25,209 people. In terms of population, the readjustments proposed by Mr. Hillyer and Mr. Payne result in minimal changes to the deviations of these ridings from the province's electoral quota and remain well below the allowances provided for in section 15 of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act* (Bow River: -3.12% to -1.46%; Medicine Hat: -3.09% to -4.25%; and Battle River – Crowfoot: -0.07% to 0.56%).

Mr. Hillyer stated to the Committee that no connection or affinity existed between Medicine Hat and the rural areas of Cardston, Warner, Watertown, Blood Reserve or other communities west and south of Taber and Lethbridge, either economically, professionally, medically or scholastically. He emphasized that the residents and leaders of the rural counties of Cardston and Warner wished to remain, and felt that they would receive better representation, in a federal riding which was rural in character. Mr. Hillyer expressed concern that Medicine Hat, a city that residents of Cardston and Warner felt no connection with, would dominate the proposed electoral district of Medicine Hat, leaving Cardston and Warner as afterthoughts. The Committee notes also that it was not until after the public hearings that Cardston was placed in the Medicine Hat riding. Therefore, no opportunity had previously existed to object to this proposal.

Both Mr. Hillyer and Mr. Payne expressed a degree of concern that the Commission appears to have given preference to the community of interest and identity that exists along the historic Mormon Trail, at the expense of other, equally vibrant and vital communities of interest in southern Alberta.

In support of their proposals, Mr. Hillyer and Mr. Payne received letters from the Reeve of Cardston, the mayors of Magrath, Cardston, Raymond, Stirling, Coutts, and Milk River, along with nearly 1,200 signatures from residents of this region. Their proposals are also supported by Mr. Kevin Sorenson, M.P. from Crowfoot, and the Hon. Ted Menzies, P.C., M.P. for Macleod.

The Committee agrees with and fully supports the proposals put forth by Mr. Hillyer and Mr. Payne. The Committee appreciates the diligence and thoroughness the Commission appears to have lent the readjustment of the boundaries of southern Alberta. The Committee respectfully suggests that the Commission consider the proposals put forward by Mr. Hillyer and Mr. Payne as important, practical and widely supported.

(b) Foothills

The Hon. Ted Menzies, P.C., M.P. for Macleod filed an objection to the incorporation of communities residing in the area between Waterton and Belly Rivers into the Medicine Hat riding.

He proposes instead that these communities be included in the Foothills riding. The reason for this objection is based on a community of interest, based on travel and trade, which exists between these communities and that of Pincher Creek, rather than with Lethbridge or any major community in the Medicine Hat riding.

The population for the communities referred to in Mr. Menzies' objection amounts to 892 people. The proposed Foothills electoral district is 104,459 or 2.56% below the province's electoral quota and the population for the proposed electoral district Medicine Hat is 103,903 or 3.09% below the province's electoral quota. The changes proposed by Mr. Menzies would result in an increase in the Foothills riding population to 105,351 or 1.74% below the province's electoral quota and the population for Medicine Hat would decrease to 103,011 or 3.92% below the province's electoral quota. Both of these deviations remain well below that allowable under section 15 of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*, and also below the standard for deviations that the Commission has set for itself in readjusting the province's electoral boundaries.

The Committee appreciates the difficulty the Commission encountered in balancing requests to group certain communities together, and that following the public hearings, it re-examined various configurations for ridings in southern Alberta before arriving at its most recent proposal. The Committee, nonetheless, considers Mr. Menzies' request to be a minor but important adjustment, and supports his request.

Conclusion

In accordance with subsections 22(3) and 23(1) of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*, the *Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta*, the objections, the minutes of proceedings and evidence of the Committee will be returned and referred back to the Commission for its consideration of the matter of the objections.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos 58, 59, 60, 61 and 63](#)) is tabled.

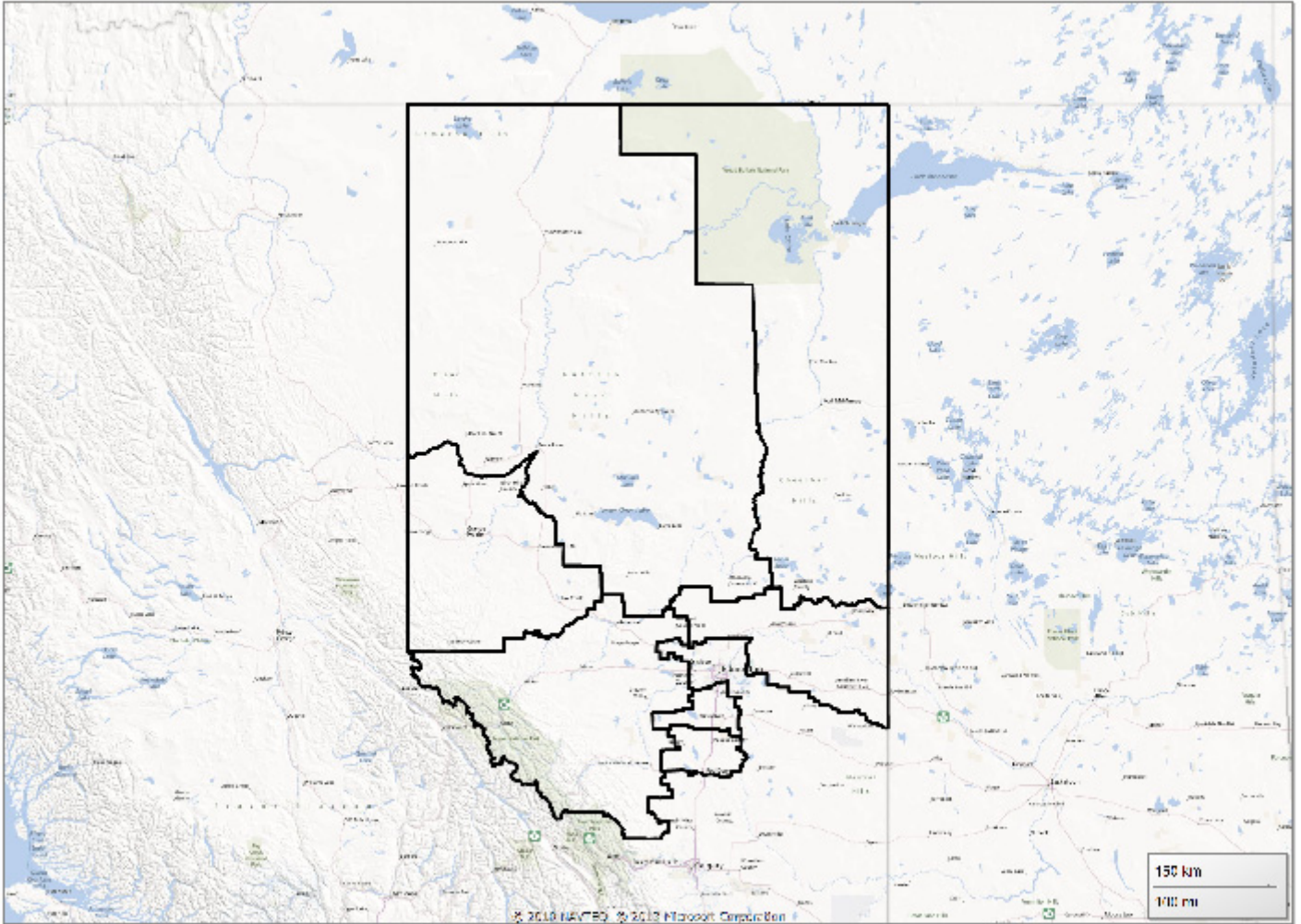
Respectfully submitted,

JOE PRESTON
Chair

APPENDIX

Riding Boundaries

Fort McMurray-Cold Lake, Peace River-Westlock, Lakeland, Edmonton-Wetaskiwin, Yellowhead, Red Deer-Wolf Creek, Grande Prairie



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