



41st Parliament, First Session

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

## **FIFTY-NINTH 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 Quebec*, 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 Quebec* was tabled in the House of Commons, and referred to the Committee on February 25, 2013. By the end of the 30-day period, the Clerk of the Committee had received 25 objections.

### **General Comments**

Redistributing the electoral map is not an easy task. It is made even more difficult with the addition of electoral districts, as is the case for Quebec with its three new electoral districts. Decisions with far-reaching consequences must be made. The Committee believes that the Commission has fulfilled its mandate successfully.

The Commission's Report is consistent and well structured. It identifies the methodological approach taken by the Commission and fully documents its deliberations and decisions. The Report also demonstrates the Commission's willingness to incorporate into its Report the local knowledge it learned from listening to people who had made representations at the public hearings. Based on these representations, the Commission did not hesitate to revisit some of its decisions, even though it resulted in major changes to its June 2012 initial Proposal. For example, its Report returns to eastern Quebec the district that in its June 2012 Proposal had been added to Montreal. The Report also renames a large number of districts following numerous representations that called into question the widespread use of surnames in the names of several electoral districts. Throughout, the Commission has shown a spirit of openness, taking into account the views expressed at the public hearings, thereby demonstrating the importance of the public consultation process under the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*.

The Committee also notes the practical approach taken by the Commission with respect to deviations from the electoral quota. The Commission had set a target of plus or minus 10%, to

which it made exceptions when necessary. The Commission even established a district with an extraordinary deviation of more than 25% when circumstances warranted it.

Members who filed objections to the Commission's Report expressed general satisfaction with the Commission's work. Nine members filed "objections" with the Committee in support of the boundaries recommended in the Commission's Report. These members are as follows: Mr. Stéphane Dion, M.P. for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville; Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet, M.P. for Hochelaga; Ms. Isabelle Morin, M.P. for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine; Ms. Hélène Laverdière, M.P. for Laurier—Ste-Marie; Ms. Paulina Ayala, M.P. for Honoré—Mercier; Mr. Alexandre Boulerice, M.P. for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie; Mr. Tyrone Benskin, M.P. for Jeanne—Le Ber; Mr. Dany Morin, M.P. for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord; Ms. Hélène LeBlanc, M.P. for Lasalle—Émard; and Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe, M.P. for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

The Members who submitted changes to the Commission's Report also recognized the Commission's excellent work. The changes they proposed are minor given the scope of the Commission's task. The Committee holds no doubt that the Commission will be open to these proposals with a view of striking a fair balance between representation by population and maintaining communities of interest and of identity in existing electoral districts.

The Committee notes that the data presented in this report, both the regional population estimates and deviations from the provincial quota in Members' proposals, were all provided by Elections Canada and based on current census data.

## **Electoral Boundary Changes**

### **Joliette**

Ms. Francine Raynault, M.P. for Joliette, objects to the transfer of Communauté Atikamekw de Manawan Indian Reserve from the electoral district of Joliette to that of Saint-Maurice.

Communauté Atikamekw is currently in the district of Joliette and the Commission's initial Proposal did not call for any change. The Commission's Report now places Communauté Atikamekw in the district of Saint-Maurice, without providing any reasoning for the change. Ms. Raynault argues that the proposal was a shock to Communauté Atikamekw. The entire community seems to oppose the change. The Conseil des Atikamekw de Manawan passed a resolution calling for the community to remain in the Joliette district, and a petition with over 600 signatures was tabled with the Committee.

Ms. Raynault claims that the Communauté Atikamekw de Manawan Indian Reserve shares a community of interest with Joliette, which is the closest urban centre and the location of the Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière. Manawan residents go to Joliette for services that are not available on the reserve. Moreover, highways link the reserve to Joliette, and residents on the reserve must go through Joliette in order to reach the urban centres of the electoral district of Saint-Maurice. Ms. Raynault submitted a substantive brief in support of her objection.

The change proposed by Ms. Raynault would affect only one other district, Saint-Maurice, and the current M.P. for that district, Ms. Lise St-Denis, supports the proposed change.

The transfer of Communauté Atikamekw de Manawan Indian Reserve from the district of Saint-Maurice to the district of Joliette would also require the transfer of the unorganized territories of Baie-Atibenne and Lac-du-Taureau. The population of Communauté Atikamekw de Manawan would total 2,073 residents, while the unorganized territories do not have any residents. The population of the district of Joliette would increase from 98,610 residents (with a deviation from the electoral quota of -2.68%) to 100,683 residents (with a deviation of -0.63%) while the population of the district of Saint-Maurice would decrease from 112,346 residents (with a deviation of 10.88%) to 110,273 residents (with a deviation of 8.84%). Ms. Raynault's proposal would bring both districts closer to the electoral quota.

The Committee supports Ms. Raynault's arguments and recommends that the Commission make the changes to the boundaries of the district of Joliette as proposed by Ms. Raynault.

### **Salaberry and Vaudreuil**

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach, M.P. for Beauharnois—Salaberry, and Mr. Jamie Nicholls, M.P. for Vaudreuil—Soulanges, submitted objections the boundaries of the proposed districts of Vaudreuil and Salaberry.

Prior to the Commission's Report, the RCM of Vaudreuil-Soulanges and the federal electoral district of the same name (Vaudreuil-Soulanges) had the same boundaries. The Commission explained, however, that the addition of a district on Montreal's south shore requires the district of Vaudreuil-Soulanges to be broken up (Report, p. 7). This territory was therefore divided into two new districts: Salaberry and Vaudreuil.

Neither Ms. Quach nor Mr. Nicholls calls for a return to the boundaries of the district of Vaudreuil-Soulanges. Instead, Mr. Nicholls suggests a more modest adjustment, proposing that the municipalities of Très-Saint-Rédempteur, Sainte-Marthe and Sainte-Justine-de-Newton be transferred from the district of Salaberry to the district of Vaudreuil. He claims that these municipalities are hard to reach in winter by roads that serve the territory of the district of Salaberry. He also claims that Très-Saint-Rédempteur and Sainte-Marthe are part of Mont Rigaud, which is located in the district of Vaudreuil. He argues that these three municipalities share a community of interest, requiring that they all be grouped together in the same district. Lastly, Mr. Nicholls argues that his proposed change would make it easier for the residents of the three municipalities to access the constituency office. Ms. Quach supports Mr. Nicholls' proposal.

The electoral district of Salaberry has a population of 107,036 with a deviation of 5.64%, and the electoral district of Vaudreuil has a population of 111,905 with a deviation of 10.94%. Mr. Nicholls' proposal would require transferring 2,911 residents from the district of Salaberry to the district of Vaudreuil. This would result in a population and deviation of 114,816 and 13.32%, respectively, for Vaudreuil, and 104,125 and 2.77% for Salaberry. The Committee notes that the deviation of 13.32% for Vaudreuil is above the deviation of 10% that the Commission had set as a goal but within the deviation permitted under the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*.

The Committee also feels that the community of interest arguments are sufficient to justify this deviation.

The Committee supports Ms. Quach and Mr. Nicholls' proposal and recommends that the Commission change the boundaries of the district of Salaberry and the district of Vaudreuil accordingly.

### **Beauce**

Mr. Maxime Bernier, M.P. for Beauce, objects to the boundaries of the district of Beauce. He proposes that the municipalities of Saint-Robert-Bellarmin and Saint-Ludger be transferred from the district of Mégantic—L'Érable to the district of Beauce and the municipality of Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon be transferred from the district of Beauce to the district of Lévis–Lotbinière.

Mr. Bernier's proposal can be succinctly summarized as follows: "Beauce for the Beaucerons." His proposal is based on the community of interest argument. Mr. Bernier claims that the municipalities of Saint-Robert-Bellarmin and Saint-Ludger are an integral part of Beauce because of their social, cultural and economic ties. The urban centre for these municipalities is Saint-Georges-de-Beauce, located in the district of Beauce, not the city of Mégantic, located in the district of Mégantic—L'Érable. The municipalities of Saint-Robert-Bellarmin and Saint-Ludger support Mr. Bernier's proposal and have passed resolutions reaffirming that social and geographic criteria naturally establish their communities in Beauce.

Mr. Bernier also spoke on behalf of the population of the municipality of Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon. According to the Commission's Report, this municipality would be included in the electoral district of Beauce, although it is currently included in the district of Lotbinière–Chutes-de-la-Chaudière. The municipality objects to this transfer. It stated in a resolution that the "residents of Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon have close ties with the City of Lévis through their social, economic financial and cultural activities." Mr. Bernier therefore calls for the city to remain in the electoral district of Lévis–Lotbinière.

The municipalities of Saint-Robert-Bellarmin and Saint-Ludger are in the RCM of Le Granit, all of whose municipalities are in the district of Mégantic—L'Érable. The city of Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon, for its part, is in the RCM of Nouvelle-Beauce, all of whose municipalities are in the district of Beauce. The Committee understands that the boundaries of regional county municipalities undoubtedly played a role in the Commission's decision on federal electoral boundaries. While these boundaries may indicate communities of interest, they are in no way a decisive factor in determining the boundaries of electoral districts. Mr. Bernier clearly made the case that the territory of the regional county municipalities does not reflect the region's communities of interest.

It is important to note that the changes to which Mr. Bernier objects were not included in the Commission's June 2012 initial Proposal. Mr. Bernier and the municipalities involved were therefore unable to express their objections prior to the Commission's Report.

Mr. Bernier's proposal would affect the districts of Mégantic—L'Érable and Lévis—Lotbinière. The current Members for these districts support Mr. Bernier's proposal.

Mr. Bernier's proposal would transfer 1,931 residents from the district of Mégantic—L'Érable to the district of Beauce and 6,177 residents from the district of Beauce to the district of Lévis—Lotbinière. This would result in a population of 108,268 with a deviation of 6.86% for the district of Beauce, a population of 86,814 with a deviation of -14.32% for the district of Mégantic—L'Érable, and a population of 107,593 with a deviation of 6.19% for the district of Lévis—Lotbinière. While the deviation of -14.32% for the district of Mégantic—L'Érable exceeds the  $\pm 10\%$  limit set by the Commission, the Committee notes that it is well under the  $\pm 25\%$  limit permitted by the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act* and is fully justified in terms of the community of interest.

The Committee supports Mr. Bernier's proposals and recommends that the Commission change the boundaries of the district of Beauce, the district of Mégantic—L'Érable and the district of Lévis—Lotbinière accordingly.

### **Lévis—Bellechasse**

Mr. Steven Blaney, M.P. for Lévis—Bellechasse, filed an objection respecting the transfer of nine municipalities in Les Etchemins from the district of Lévis—Bellechasse to the district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

The nine municipalities concerned are as follows: Lac-Etchemin, Saint-Camille-de-Lellis, Saint-Cyprien, Sainte-Aurélie, Sainte-Justine, Sainte-Rose-de-Watford, Sainte-Sabine, Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, Saint-Luc-de-Bellechasse and Saint-Magloire. These include all the municipalities in the RCM of Les Etchemins with the exception of Saint-Benjamin, Saint-Prosper and Saint-Zacharie.

According to the 2003 representation order, these nine municipalities are currently in the electoral district of Lévis—Bellechasse, and the Commission's June 2012 initial Proposal did not make any changes in this regard. The Commission's Report now proposes to transfer these nine municipalities to the district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

Mr. Blaney's proposal is based on the communities of interest between Les Etchemins and the other communities of Lévis—Bellechasse. He argues that Lévis, Bellechasse and Les Etchemins form a north-south corridor of social, cultural and economic communities of interest, from the St. Lawrence to the Canada-U.S. border. Highways 277, 279 and 281, the region's major roadways, are proof of the north-south ties and the links uniting the communities of Bellechasse and Les Etchemins. He told the Committee that "Bellechasse and Les Etchemins are naturally, historically, culturally, socially and economically complementary." Many organizations and common projects link Bellechasse and Les Etchemins, including the Bellechasse-Etchemins Chamber of Commerce. From a historical perspective, Mr. Blaney pointed out that the regions of Les Etchemins and Bellechasse date back to the beginning of Canadian confederation. Mr. Blaney added that there are no natural ties between Les Etchemins and Montmagny and the other communities in Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

Mr. Blaney's objection has strong regional support. All the municipalities concerned, the adjacent municipalities and the RCMs of Bellechasse and Les Etchemins have passed resolutions supporting his proposal. A petition with over 1,400 signatures also supports his proposal. Moreover, Mr. Blaney was joined by over 30 people from Les Etchemins at his appearance before the Committee.

According to the Commission's proposal, the population of the district of Lévis–Bellechasse would be 102,288 (with a deviation from the quota of 0.95%), and that of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, 107,358 (with a deviation of 5.96%). Mr. Blaney's proposal requires transferring 10,097 individuals from the district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup to the district of Lévis–Bellechasse. This would result in a population of 112,385 and a deviation from the electoral quota of 10.92% for Lévis–Bellechasse and a population of 97,261 and a deviation of –4.01% for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup. The Committee notes that, while it is slightly higher than the 10% deviation the Commission had set as a goal, the deviation of 10.92% for the district of Lévis–Bellechasse is well under the deviation permitted under the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*. In fact, the Commission's Report proposes 10 districts with a deviation over 10%. The Committee believes that Mr. Blaney's arguments fully justify a deviation of 10.92%.

Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup would be the only district affected by Mr. Blaney's proposal. Mr. François Lapointe, its current M.P., appeared before the Committee in support of Mr. Blaney's proposal. He confirmed that the nine municipalities at issue have no shared interests with the other communities in the district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup. He noted, moreover, that adding Les Etchemins would complicate existing challenges respecting the territory's vastness and the number of municipalities the district already includes.

The Committee fully supports Mr. Blaney's arguments and proposal. The Committee recommends that the Commission change the boundaries of the district accordingly.

### **Ahuntsic–Cartierville**

Ms. Maria Mourani, M.P. for Ahuntsic, objects to the boundaries of the new district of Ahuntsic—Cartierville. She calls for the current district of Ahuntsic and all existing districts on the Island of Montreal to be maintained.

Ms. Mourani cites community of interest in support of her objection. She argues that the boundaries proposed in the Commission's Report divide the communities of Ahuntsic and Sault-au-Récollet and constitute a social and historical mistake. According to the Commission's Report, part of the Sault-au-Récollet neighbourhood would be placed in the district of Bourassa.

In support of her objection, Ms. Mourani submitted a letter from four fellow Members who also call for the status quo on the Island of Montreal; a letter from the Quebec Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities and Minister responsible for the Charter of the French Language, Ms. Diane De Coucy; a letter from the city councillor for the Sault-au-Récollet neighbourhood,

Mr. Étienne Brunet; and a letter from the city councillor for the Ahuntsic neighbourhood, Mrs. Emilie Thuillier.

The division of Sault-au-Récollet is unfortunate, and the Committee agrees with Ms. Mourani on this matter. However, the Committee understands that the Commission had to make tough choices and that it could not maintain the integrity of all municipal boroughs and neighbourhoods on the Island of Montreal.

Following representations on its June 2012 initial Proposal, the Commission decided to maintain the current number of districts on the Island of Montreal. Yet population changes required boundary changes for some districts. For example, the current district of Jeanne–Le Ber would have a population of 115,821 (with a deviation from the electoral quota of 14.31%) according to population data from the most recent census, and that of Saint-Laurent–Cartierville, 117,950 (with a deviation of 16.41%).

It seems that the Commission used the borough of Ahuntsic—Cartierville as a basis for the federal electoral district of the same name. Yet with a population of 126,891, which would result in a deviation of 25.24% from the electoral quota, the neighbourhood could not be maintained in its entirety in a single electoral district.

Maintaining the current boundaries of the electoral district of Ahuntsic, yet with the new boundaries of the surrounding electoral districts, would result in deviations from the electoral quota of 16.41% for the district of Saint-Laurent and –11.33% for the district of Bourassa. This would result in a total deviation of 27.74% for two neighbouring districts. The Committee notes that the deviations of 16.41% and –11.33% exceed the deviation of 10% that the Commission set as a goal and to which it scrupulously adhered to in urban areas. The Commission noted that the deviation of –7.38% resulting from its proposal for the district of Saint-Laurent was an exception (Report, p. 11).

Mr. Stéphane Dion, M.P. for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, who objects to Ms. Mourani’s proposal, noted in his presentation and in his brief to the Committee the improvements that would result from the Commission’s Report regarding the grouping together of communities of interest on the Island of Montreal. For example, he notes that the entire neighbourhood of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce would be in the same electoral district, whereas before it was divided. The Committee notes that Mr. Dion, who participated as a substitute member for most of the proceedings of the Committee relating to redistribution, recused himself from the proceedings relating to the consideration of and decision on Ms. Mourani’s objection.

The Committee does not support the objections filed by Ms. Mourani.

### **Name Changes**

Prior to addressing objections to the names of electoral districts, the Committee desires to remark the following regarding the guidelines concerning the selection of names for federal electoral districts.

These guidelines, last updated in January 2012, are issued by the Geographical Names Board of Canada and provide helpful tips for naming electoral districts. The guidelines are provided to federal electoral boundaries commissions soon after they are established.

It goes without saying that the guidelines are a valuable tool for federal electoral boundaries commissions. The Committee recognizes their importance in ensuring that electoral districts are named properly. However, boundaries commissions should not, however, feel constrained by these guidelines. Historical, demographic and geographic realities may require a departure from the guidelines in order to ensure that names of districts reflect these realities.

The Committee notes, moreover, that the Parliament of Canada itself established, under *An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts*, S.C. 2004, c. 19, the names of certain electoral districts resulting from the 2003 representation order. Parliament's intention, particularly with regard to the suitability of a four-part name, should also be taken into consideration by boundaries commissions in their choice of district names.

### **Saint-Léonard—Villeray**

Mr. Massimo Pacetti, M.P. for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, and Mr. Justin Trudeau, M.P. for Papineau, object to the new name of Saint-Léonard—Villeray for the proposed district that falls essentially within the boundaries of the current district of Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel. They suggest that the Commission has made a factual mistake, as the municipal neighbourhood of Villeray lies fully outside the district of Saint-Léonard—Villeray, in the district of Papineau. Mr. Pacetti and Mr. Trudeau propose that the current name of the district, Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, be maintained.

The Committee supports the arguments of Mr. Pacetti and Mr. Trudeau and recommends that the Commission maintain the name of Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel for the district.

### **Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour**

Mr. Louis Plamondon, M.P. for Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, objects to the name of the district of Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour. This is both the current name and the name proposed by the Commission for the district. Mr. Plamondon explained that the current name of the district is based on the names of three regional county municipalities: the RCM of Bas-Richelieu, the RCM of Nicolet and the RCM of Bécancour. He submits that the RCM of Bas-Richelieu changed its name in 2009 to the RCM of Pierre-de-Saurel. Mr. Plamondon therefore proposes Saurel—Nicolet—Bécancour as the new name of the district.

As the district's name is based on the regional county municipalities that it includes, it follows that a change to the name of one of these municipalities requires a consequential change to the name of the electoral district. The Committee recommends the change suggested by Mr. Plamondon to the Commission.

## **Salaberry**

Ms. Quach proposes that the district of Salaberry be renamed Suroît. She argues that the name “Salaberry” does not create a sense of belonging for the district’s constituents. She instead suggests the name “Suroît,” which would receive local support and be more inclusive. She argues that regional organizations such as the Office du Tourisme du Suroît already use the name “Suroît.” Should the Commission not retain the name “Suroît,” Ms. Quach proposes, as second choice, Salaberry–Soulanges.

The Committee agrees in principle with the proposal of Ms. Quach. The name of a district should be inclusive and correspond to the district’s geographic and historical realities. Mr. Nichols, as explained below, also proposes to include “Soulanges” in the designation of the district of Vaudreuil. The Committee notes that there could be some confusion created were the name “Soulanges” to be retained for both districts.

## **Vaudreuil**

Mr. Nicholls proposes that the district of Vaudreuil be renamed Vaudreuil-Soulanges Est, since the district contains part of the former seigneurie of Soulanges. He also emphasized the heritage character and historical importance of the name “de Soulanges,” which refers to the first concessionnaire of the seigneurie of Soulanges, Pierre-Jacques de Joybert de Soulanges et de Marson.

The Committee agrees in principle with the proposals of Mr. Nicholls for the same reasons it agrees with Ms. Quach’s proposal: the name of a district should be inclusive and correspond to the district’s geographic and historical realities. Again, the Committee notes that there could be some confusion created were the name “Soulanges” to be retained for both districts.

## **Avignon—Matane**

Mr. Jean-François Fortin, M.P. for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, objects to the name proposed for the district of Avignon—Matane. This district includes four regional county municipalities: the RCM of Avignon, the RCM of La Mitis, the RCM of Matane and the RCM of Matapédia, but only two of these RCMs are included in the name of the district. The district previously included the names of four regional county municipalities, including the RCM of Haute-Gaspésie. The changes to the district’s boundaries resulted in the RCM of Haute-Gaspésie being replaced by the RCM of Avignon, thus the name Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia proposed by Mr. Fortin.

We cannot but agree with the Commission’s goal of simplifying the overly complex names of some districts; the name proposed by Mr. Fortin is, indeed, long. However, this name is acceptable to the Committee given the history of the district’s name, its geographic reality and Mr. Fortin’s unsuccessful efforts to find a name agreeable to all residents of the district. The current name of the district is the result of *An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2004*, which replaced the name “Matapédia — Matane,” which referred to two of the four RCMs in the district, with the name “Haute-Gaspésie — La Mitis — Matane — Matapédia,” which referred to all four of

the district's RCMs. In its 2004 legislation, Parliament stated the appropriateness of a four-part name where circumstances warrant, such as the geographic and demographic realities of the district. Mr. Fortin recounted to the Committee his efforts with local elected representatives to find a simpler name. It goes without saying that the geographic reality of the district, which includes two of Quebec's administrative regions—Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie—made the situation more complex. Mr. Fortin indicated to the Committee that the only name which received local consensus was Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, the name he proposed.

The Committee agrees with Mr. Fortin's arguments that the name be more inclusive. The Committee therefore recommends that the district be renamed Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

### **Saint-Maurice**

Ms. Lise St-Denis, M.P. for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, objects to the name of Saint-Maurice for the district that is currently named Saint-Maurice—Champlain. She claims that the name proposed by the Commission could cause confusion since there is already a provincial electoral district called Saint-Maurice in the current district of Saint-Maurice—Champlain. She notes, moreover, that the name "Champlain" refers to the municipality of the same name in the district that borders the St. Lawrence River, not the Saint-Maurice River.

The Committee notes that the boundaries of the current district of Saint-Maurice—Champlain and those of the proposed district of Saint-Maurice are substantially the same. Moreover, if the change proposed above by the Committee is taken into account, they are almost identical. In these circumstances, the Committee does not believe a change is warranted.

The Committee supports Ms. St-Denis' proposal and recommends the name of Saint-Maurice—Champlain for the district.

### **Lévis—Bellechasse—Les Etchemins**

Mr. Blaney proposes that "Les Etchemins" be added to the name of the district should Les Etchemins be returned to the electoral district in accordance his proposal respecting the boundaries. The name of the district would therefore be more consistent with its geographic reality and reflect the importance of Les Etchemins to the district. For example, the names of many regional organizations include a reference to Bellechasse and to Les Etchemins. Mr. Blaney also expressed the regional consensus wanting "Les Etchemins" to be included in the district's name.

The Committee supports Mr. Blaney's proposal. Should the Commission accept Mr. Blaney's suggestion with respect to the boundaries of the electoral district, the Committee recommends that the name of the district be changed to Lévis—Bellechasse—Les Etchemins.

### **Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup**

Mr. François Lapointe, M.P. for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, filed an objection concerning the name of Montmagny—Rivière-du-Loup being given to the current district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

In June 2012 the Commission proposed Elzéar-Bernier as the name for the district in honour of Joseph-Elzéar Bernier, a famous explorer and sea captain. However, because of the numerous objections regarding the general use of surnames to designate electoral districts in Quebec, the Commission revisited its decision and now proposes, in its Report, Montmagny—Rivière-du-Loup, a reference to the district's two largest urban centres. The reason for the change was to “simplify[...] names that had become overly complex” (Report, p. 18).

Mr. Lapointe objects to the district's new name. He proposes maintaining the current name that refers to the four regional county municipalities included in the district: Montmagny, L'Islet, Kamouraska and Rivière-du-Loup. He argues that the name of the district should not be changed because the new district has virtually retained the same boundaries of the current district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup. Mr. Lapointe also points out the regional consensus on the name of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

The Committee notes that, if Mr. Blaney's proposal concerning Les Etchemins is agreed to by the Commission, the boundaries of the current district and the new district of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup would be identical. Moreover, the name of the district was established by Parliament itself in *An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2004*.

The Committee supports Mr. Lapointe's arguments and proposal and therefore recommends that the name of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup be maintained for the district.

### **Gaspésie—Les Îles**

Mr. Philip Toone, M.P. for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, objects to the name of Gaspésie—Les Îles for the new district that basically duplicates the current boundaries of Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Mr. Toone argues that the district's boundaries have not changed significantly to warrant a name change. He also notes that the territory covered by the district is called Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine at the federal, provincial and regional levels. Furthermore, he told the Committee that “Les Îles” is just part of the regional vernacular and that it could be confused with islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence or the St. Lawrence River. Mr. Toone also notes that the name of the district has included “Îles-de-la-Madeleine” for a long time.

In its June 2012 initial Proposal the Commission gave the following reason for the name of Gaspésie—Les Îles: “Reason: This electoral district includes the entire Gaspé Peninsula and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine” (p. 36). As “Les Îles” clearly means the Îles de la Madeleine, the Committee believes that the name of the district should be clear as well and refer to “Îles-de-la-Madeleine.” It is true that the district's boundaries have been changed. However, these changes concern the boundaries of the Gaspé Peninsula only, not the Îles de la Madeleine. In support of his objection, Mr. Toone submitted a resolution from the municipality of the Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

The Committee supports Mr. Toone's proposal and recommends that the Commission retain the name of Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine for the district.

### **Verchères—Les Patriotes**

Ms. Sana Hassainia, M.P. for Verchères—Les Patriotes, objects to the name for the proposed district of Verchères—Les Patriotes.

The boundaries of the district of Verchères—Les Patriotes will be changed by the Commission's Report. While the current district includes only part of the city of Boucherville, the new district will include the entire city. Ms. Hassainia suggests adding "Boucher" to the name of the district in honour of Pierre Boucher, the founder of Boucherville. With this addition the district will better reflect its geographic reality. It will also strengthen the sense of belonging of Boucherville residents toward their electoral district. Ms. Hassainia insisted, however, that the other elements of the name of the district, Verchères and Les Patriotes, be maintained.

The Committee supports Ms. Hassainia's arguments and recommends that the Commission rename the district "Boucher-Verchères—Les Patriotes."

### **Rimouski**

M. Guy Caron, M.P. for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, objects to the name of Rimouski for the district that has exactly the same boundaries as the current district of Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Mr. Caron notes that the name of Rimouski, which refers to the largest urban centre in the district, is a problem because it does not reflect the cultural, historical or geographic realities of the district. The district's territory is vast and includes numerous communities of interest that the name of Rimouski does not capture. The district includes three regional county municipalities: the RCM of Rimouski-Neigette, the RCM of Témiscouata and the RCM of Les Basques. Moreover, Mr. Caron notes that the city of Rimouski lies to the electoral district's extreme east.

Following consultations with the wardens of three regional county municipalities that are included in the district, Mr. Caron suggests the name "Centre-du-Bas-St-Laurent." This compromise would be more inclusive and representative of the geographic reality of the district, which indeed lies in the centre of the Bas-St-Laurent.

The Committee supports Mr. Caron's arguments and recommends that the name of the district be changed according to his proposal. The Committee notes, however, that should the name "Centre-du-Bas-St-Laurent" not be selected, the district's current name, Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, would also be suitable, as the boundaries of the district have not changed and Parliament itself chose this name in 2004 by enacting *An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts*.

## **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 Quebec*, 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 70, 71, 75, 78, and 80](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

JOE PRESTON  
Chair



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