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# **Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, February 28, 2013**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Joe Preston**



## Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

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• (1105)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)):** We'll call the meeting to order.

We're in public discussing redistribution in British Columbia.

First of all, I want to orientate you to the screens we're using today, folks. On your right are the ridings that currently exist, the way they are today.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** I'm sorry, Chair, I'm distracted by the planet on the left.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** This is the new world where we're going to start new ridings.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** I knew B.C. was different.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** This screen, when it is up and functioning, will be the report from the elections commission and any proposals from our members that the people working the maps from Elections Canada have been given enough detail on to.... If they haven't, they won't be able to do it.

So that's what you will have as we move forward: status quo, proposed, and suggested.

Are there any questions?

Great. We're moving on. Fantastic.

Mr. Lukiwski, did you have something you wanted to start with this morning?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC):** Yes, thanks very much, Chair. I'll try to be very brief, because I know we have some interveners here.

This is something which I think might be of importance to all colleagues. I know that Nathan will be leaving in a few moments, but I'm sure his colleagues will be able to brief him.

As most of you know, and the chair certainly knows, last night was the deadline for Saskatchewan's submissions for those MPs who wanted to intervene in this process. I put one in, so I will be appearing before the procedure and House affairs committee to give

my opinions on the new boundaries and some recommended changes.

Because I'm doing so, I feel it is appropriate that I recuse myself from the committee examination when it comes to the Saskatchewan boundaries, and for pretty obvious reasons. I think it would be a conflict for me on the one hand to be giving testimony saying that I think some changes should be made to the Saskatchewan boundaries, and on the other hand sitting here trying to develop a report based on my own testimony. I just wanted the committee to know that.

With respect to how the committee proceeds when it comes to other provinces, obviously I think that will have to be left up to the individuals. If there are members on this committee who will be making interventions, I think they themselves will have to determine whether or not they want to recuse themselves.

However, I would suggest one thing. Even though I'm recusing myself from the entire discussion on Saskatchewan, it's because Saskatchewan is relatively small population-wise, or I should say it's small in population compared with other provinces. I would think that if there are provinces with a denser population, such as Ontario, for example, and there are MPs on this committee who want to make an intervention, then I don't think—this is my opinion only, but I'll put it on public record—they necessarily have to recuse themselves from the entire provincial discussion, just because of the regional aspects that Ontario would have. Toronto would be a region, GTA would be a region, and so would eastern Ontario, and northern Ontario. So I think if they have been considering it, they might want to consider recusing themselves only for their particular region.

I will be recusing myself from the entire provincial discussion on Saskatchewan. I wanted to put that on public record.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Dion, on that topic.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** I fully agree. I think Tom is doing the right thing.

If I had to address a request, I would not participate in any debate on the island of Montreal, but I would have no problem intervening with regard to Gaspésie or other parts of Quebec.

**The Chair:** I think that's truly what Tom just said; in Ontario, the same thing.

I think we all should take a look at ourselves. If we are going to be making presentations, we'll need to have some perceived credibility by recusing ourselves for the areas.

Thank you, Tom, for saying that.

Let's get started.

Mr. Wilks and Mr. Atamanenko, it's fantastic to have you both here. I know that many members of Parliament never get a chance to sit at that end of the table. They spend their whole lives sitting along the sides, asking the tough questions. You're ready for that today, I hope.

You each have five minutes to give us a brief summary of what it is you are asking for today. Then the members will ask questions.

We have 45 minutes for the section that has both your ridings in it. You have five minutes to start, and then we'll try to adapt the questions to make the rest of the time fit.

Who would like to go first?

Do we want to go alphabetically, Mr. Atamanenko?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Sure, that's okay. I can do that.

Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much for inviting me here. It's a little bit different being at this end of the table. On the one hand it's nice to be with colleagues; on the other hand, you get a little nervous to be among your peers.

It's a pleasure being here with David. We worked together on a number of issues although we may not necessarily agree on some.

I'm trying to argue for the position that the overwhelming majority of people in my riding took at the hearings that I attended. I have a stack of letters of support here, not only from individuals in the community, but also from mayors and MLAs who basically are opposed to the current boundaries. The current riding of British Columbia Southern Interior, if you look at the map, goes from Manning Park through the southern Okanagan, takes in all of Osoyoos, runs along the border, goes to Nelson, Kaslo, and up to north of New Denver and takes in the ski area of Big White. It's large but it's workable and follows the Highway 3 corridor.

The current riding is the result of appearances in 2003, 10 years ago, by, among others, a number of MPs in the area, former MPs such as Jim Abbott, Jim Gouk, who was my MP, Stockwell Day, and the former MP of the time, Tom Siddon, who basically argued against a similar proposal at that time, and as a result we have the current ridings. I thought I'd bring some of the issues that they talked about here.

For example, Mr. Gouk said that it would strain his resources to the breaking point to have a second office in Penticton and try to work between the two offices.

What the commission is proposing is to split the area where I am and to take Nelson and Kaslo and move that area into what is now David's riding, and to bring into my riding Penticton, which basically for our purposes is an urban area which does not have much in common with small rural communities, and to carve off the end, the two smaller communities, and put them into another riding.

•(1110)

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, could I just confirm something?

I've managed to get confused once again so forgive me, the riding on our right contains the boundaries as they now are, that is, it's your riding as you now represent it. Is that correct?

**A voice:** That's right, yes.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** It's the brown part over there on the left.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Right. It's just that I've been having trouble finding some of the towns that he's mentioning. Someone has a laser pointer.

Alex, when you mention some of these places that would be moved in and out, could you point to where they are just so we'll have some idea, because I'm getting lost, and I'm not doing justice to your presentation.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** This is the current riding. I believe that's Nelson.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** It is.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** And as we go here, that would be Princeton over here, with Manning Park. What they're proposing to do is to take Penticton which is here, I believe, and move it in here... or it's here.

**A voice:** It's on the left.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** And then cut this off here. That must be this map here, I would imagine.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** All right, okay. That explains it.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Chair, Madame Boisvert from Elections Canada might offer some help.

**The Chair:** Go ahead. You're in Mr. Atamanenko's five minutes.

**Mrs. Johanne Boisvert (Assistant Director, Analysis, Elections Canada):** The dark lines are the commission's proposal and what you see in colours are what's proposed this morning.

**The Chair:** This is by the members.

**Mrs. Johanne Boisvert:** Yes.

**The Chair:** So the existing over here is brown. The dark lines are what the commission is proposing, and the colour differences are what the members at the table are proposing.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Chair, if I could just add, we started this on a point of order. I hate the idea of taking this out of Mr. Atamanenko's time.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I concur. I will not—

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Okay.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** —take it out of Mr. Atamanenko's five minutes.

**The Chair:** Kind and cuddly guy...

**Mr. Scott Reid:** But I'm glad you said that because I'm still confused. I get what's on the right now. On the left we've been told there are three things there, but I see two things. I see a boundary that looks like the exact riding that is....

**The Chair:** Let me try. The brown is the current riding.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** The dark brown line is the current riding.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** You see that there's blue, brown, green, and purple. We're talking about the brown one, that's the riding as it exists. Those dark black lines.

**The Chair:** Am I right? Is the brown shading what the riding currently is?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Yes.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** No, it's not.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Yes, it is.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I don't think so.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Yes, because that's what's on the right—

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Okay.

All right, the point was not that Penticton is being taken out, because I see Penticton is still there. That was what you just said a second ago.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** You'd be looking at Princeton.

**The Chair:** Elections Canada, do you want to throw something in here?

**Mrs. Johanne Boisvert:** I think what makes it confusing is that in the suggestions it's to go back to the current. You have to look at the border. The dark lines, that's the commission's proposal.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Okay.

Essentially, it boils down to an argument for a return to the status quo. Now I understand.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Atamanenko, please, go ahead.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Yes, thanks.

Those maps are a little bit confusing at this end, too.

The main thrust we have is that in the current riding they want to take the eastern part and split off Nelson and Kaslo, and bring Penticton into the riding and cut off the westerly communities. The people, including the former MPs, argued against this very idea. For example, Mr. Abbott said that Trail, Castlegar, and Nelson are inextricably linked together with all the communities. Stockwell Day said that there had not been a single person he had spoken to who considered it to be a good idea to move the boundaries of Okanagan—Kootenay to include Penticton.

The commission, at that time, 10 years ago, said, "Representation at the hearings convinced us that these proposals created significant difficulties of their own and that there were better alternatives." The alternatives that they found were the current boundaries. So we have a historical precedent here.

My time is limited, so I'm going to talk about communities of interest. The main message I'm hearing from constituents and elected officials is that we need to keep Trail, Nelson, Castlegar and surrounding areas together. We have the regional hospital. We have the regional district, which links Nelson with Castlegar. The smaller communities are connected to Nelson, which is the government centre, and Castlegar, which is the airport. They call themselves the tri-cities. Trail has the regional hospital. Castlegar has the regional college. They work together. They hosted the BC Summer Games and the world juniors.

The people in Slocan Valley feed into our communities. I know that my colleague, Dan Albas, had an op-ed, and one of the things he put in, which I agree with, is that if you were living in Slocan Valley under the current proposal and you have to travel to Penticton to see your MP, that's a long drive in the winter over a couple of mountain passes, whereas now the folks go right into the area of Castlegar and Nelson.

The other thing I think is really important, and which all of us as MPs value is this whole idea of serviceability or accessibility. These are huge ridings, and our task is to make the MP as accessible as possible.

For example, David, I think you have a strong case to keep your current boundaries just based on geography. We have a precedent in our province. Right now, if we go with their proposal, and say the MP is elected from our area, and that is the West Kootenays, there would undoubtedly be an office there.

Currently I have a satellite office in Oliver, which is a smaller community in the west, that works part-time and services those small communities. If Penticton were to be added, that part-time office couldn't service Penticton. There would have to be some adjustment, and given our limited resources of hiring staff, if more of the staff were moved to Penticton, then our area would suffer. I think David has an analogous situation with Nelson and Cranbrook. If the MP were in Penticton, it would still be the same juggling act that he or she would have to follow.

It's not a good mix. It's not a good mix to put Penticton, which is for our purposes an urban centre, along with communities that are basically rural.

Another message I heard in these hearings was that the West Kootenay communities historically had been together, and they want to stay that way. Summerland and Penticton do not want to be separated because they have a similarity, an affinity, and the current proposal would separate them. It would put Penticton into this riding and Summerland into another riding.

• (1115)

**The Chair:** Could you wrap it up now.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** I'll wrap up by saying that I've done some juggling of figures and I'll table them with the committee after. If we can meet our objectives so both David and I could have roughly 96,000 people in our ridings, which would satisfy the objectives—actually, David, it would take Meadow Creek and Nakusp out of your riding and bring in Sicamous, for example—then we would each have 96,000.

I'll table some of the details later. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Super.

Mr. Wilks, do you want to try to do the same thing?

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We could make this simple if you guys would just let me go into Alberta a little bit. It would resolve everything.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. David Wilks:** I provided three maps, which you have, as well as, I believe, an explanation in both official languages.

If you go to map number one, which I'm going to refer to, you can see that right now, with the existing boundaries, I have Nakusp in my riding and I have Revelstoke in my riding. That's quite significant. Then I have Creston in the bottom end.

To get from Nakusp to Creston, I have to drive directly through New Denver. I have no choice. Highway 6 goes through New Denver. I have no choice but to go through there. If I decide to turn on Highway 31A at New Denver and go over to Kaslo, I am diverted from going through Silverton. Otherwise, I have to drive down and go through either Nelson, or more likely, Castlegar. From the perspective of saving time for the member for Kootenay—Columbia, it does nothing, because we have to drive through the other riding regardless.

If you go to page 2, which is the new riding, what I'm suggesting is relatively simple. Because I retain Revelstoke but they've taken Nakusp out, and they've given me Kaslo, Nelson, and Salmo, I'm suggesting—and I believe you have it highlighted in both red and yellow—where the boundary would go. That red line is eliminating that portion of the boundary. The reason for that is that from Revelstoke I would travel south on Highway 23, go directly through Nakusp and directly through New Denver to get to Kaslo. There's no way of getting around it. There is what I'll call a forestry road that goes from Trout Lake over to Meadow Creek, which ironically is still in the area. It's interesting.

Further on, if you go to the last large map—and I've highlighted it in pink—you can see Revelstoke. That's Highway 23. You travel down to Shelter Bay. You cross on the ferry to go to Galena. Follow it down to number 5, which is Nakusp. That's the riding right now. It will be taken away. I'll just have Revelstoke. What I'm suggesting is since, as you can see from the highways, I have no choice but to drive through these two communities to get to Kaslo, they might as well come into the riding. It's for continuity of the riding, and it's just better travelling for the MP. Otherwise I believe that the MP would be wasting their time by driving through two communities which they could service instead of just driving through them.

I showed the pink line going down to Fauquier, or the Needles ferry, because it's in the riding now and there are only about 400 or 500 people. It just makes sense.

Then the pink line that goes over to Kaslo is Highway 31A. It intersects at New Denver. Then from New Denver you have to travel north to Nakusp or south down through the Slokan Valley.

That's my presentation, Mr. Chair. I accept the findings of the commission. If they're going to give Salmo, Nelson, and Kaslo to

Kootenay—Columbia, then let's make it easy for me to travel around. Thank you.

• (1120)

**The Chair:** That makes sense.

Mr. Lukiwski, are you up first?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** I guess I am.

**The Chair:** We can always try five minutes. We may not get to everybody.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Sure. Let me see if I have this straight, and please correct me if I'm wrong, because I probably am.

Do I understand from both you gentlemen that you both disagree with or are making suggestions other than what the boundaries commission has suggested, and you're both suggesting different boundaries for your two ridings that butt up against one another? In other words, you both agree on one thing, that you don't like the commission's recommendations, but you can't agree on where the boundary lines should be drawn. Am I correct in saying that?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** I would say that is correct.

**Mr. David Wilks:** I am not opposed to Salmo, Nelson and Kaslo. I get it. If you're going to do that, for continuity let me bring back Nakusp—they took out what I have right now—and add New Denver, which I don't have right now, but I have to drive through.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** It would make it easier for David or any other MP, if we take those areas he mentioned, Kaslo and New Denver and Nakusp, and retain them, put them in the current riding of British Columbia Southern Interior and, I'm not sure, take Sicamous, which is on Highway 1, which is currently in a riding of 121,000 according to the proposal, and add that to your riding.

I'm not sure what your thoughts would be on having another community on Highway 1, David, rather than doing all the mountain passes and trying to navigate through Nelson and Slokan Valley. That would be my suggestion as far as how we could get around that, and then just base Kootenay—Columbia on geography, adding one small community. That would take a lot of pressure coming in and going through.... The mountain pass that David would have to travel to get to Nelson is the highest one in Canada. In the winter, it's often closed. I have a couple of them in my current riding, but I don't think it's as bad as that one. There are two passes to get into Nelson from Cranbrook.

• (1125)

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** I appreciate the comments from both of you. One of the reasons I asked the question is this is the first time we've encountered a situation whereby we have two MPs who have disagreed on where the boundary should be, so it makes our job perhaps a little more challenging, other than just reporting accurately what their suggestions are. In most of the other presentations we've been dealing with, we've had MPs make suggested changes to boundaries, but the boundaries or the other ridings they're affecting by their recommendations have been accepted by the other MPs.

I appreciate your comments, but beyond that I think I'll pass my time to the NDP.

**The Chair:** Okay.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** I will start.

I have been to Trail, Nelson and Castlegar. I fully appreciate how difficult it is, especially for Mr. Atamanenko, to travel from one place to the other, given the mountains and all.

Where did the people who appeared before the commission stand? To what extent did they support one proposal over another?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Ms. Turmel, most people support what I am proposing. In other words, they are against what the commission is proposing. The main reason is that they want to have what are known as communities of interest. They don't want Nelson, Castlegar and Trail separated. And, as I pointed out in my presentation, they don't want to separate Penticton from Summerland to put Penticton in the other riding.

**Ms. Nycole Turmel:** Very well.

Mr. Wilks, what about you?

[English]

**Mr. David Wilks:** It was different for us because we had hearings in Cranbrook, which is in my riding, but Nelson and Castlegar are not right now. I have spoken to the mayors of the area. Nakusp is in my riding right now, and the mayor would prefer that Nakusp stay there. I can't speak for Kaslo or Nelson, because they do genuinely want to stay with what is now referred to as B.C. Southern Interior. But it is what it is; they want to get to 105, and I don't know how else you do it.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nycole Turmel:** My other question is about services.

If you include Penticton in this plan, how can you serve all the communities in question?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** It would be hard, given that the demands of an urban population are different from those of small rural communities.

It also depends on our staff. Frankly, if I were the member for a riding like that, I don't know how I could serve the people of Penticton and all the other regions in the riding. I don't know how I could be there to address their needs. Stockwell Day mentioned that in his presentation, ten years ago. It's the same thing.

**Ms. Nycole Turmel:** When the people of Nelson and Trail need something, do they automatically go to Penticton, or do they just go to Vancouver if they're making a trip anyways?

• (1130)

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Actually, we try to encourage buying local. We have what we call the Tri-Cities. Unfortunately, sometimes people cross the boundary to buy cars in our region. If they want something from a big city, they usually go to Kelowna. They can get there without going through Penticton, since they're heading north. Of course, there is also Vancouver.

[English]

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** For both of you, this is one of the more complicated parts of British Columbia, or maybe the country, to drive around just because of the mountain passes and the

communities, so I appreciate the attempts to try to keep some sense to things.

Alex, how close is the Summerland-Penticton connection that you talked about in your presentation? I want to get a sense because they're being divided under the current model that Elections Canada is proposing.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Eight miles, David was saying, so they're close.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Close and connected, as you would say, David. For them to be in different federal ridings, I'm trying to understand the sense of it.

**Mr. David Wilks:** I'm not going to speak to another riding, but in my previous career with the RCMP, I was stationed in Penticton. We dealt with Summerland quite often. They are eight miles apart. That's all I can say. They're eight miles apart.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** They are eight miles apart and have lots of connections. Some places are close in geography but not close in terms of service or anything else.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Can I just say something? The people in the west, in Penticton, don't really care about what happens in the West Kootenays, and the people in the West Kootenays don't really care about what happens in Penticton.

The feedback I got, and David mentioned he worked there, is that in Penticton there's more of this affinity with Summerland and other communities there. To be honest with you, the communities in the southern Okanagan wouldn't mind being aligned with Penticton, but the communities west towards E. C. Manning Provincial Park, the smaller communities of Keremeos, Cawston, and Princeton, feel comfortable being part of that Similkameen Valley corridor and being aligned in the current riding. It's a difficult situation.

**The Chair:** Yes.

Monsieur Dion.

[Translation]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I would like to come back to the comment Mr. Lukiwski made before. When you were invited to this committee, there was a list of questions you received. The first question was, is there a domino effect to the surrounding ridings occurring from the changes you are proposing? The second question was, have you talked to your colleagues about these proposed changes, and if so, do they agree?

Is it that you did not speak to each other, or did you? Mr. Atamanenko came with a suggestion that Mr. Wilks seems to have heard for the first time in his life, if I'm not wrong.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Monsieur Dion, the letter I sent to the committee I sent to David to get his comments. I also sent it to Dan Albas, because I knew Dan had written the op-ed where he argued strongly to separate urban and rural, which this proposal doesn't do. I did receive feedback from David saying that he doesn't really support what I'm saying, but he basically was saying that if we have to do this, we should include the other communities there. I have been in communication with my two neighbouring MP colleagues.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Maybe you may react to the suggestions Mr. Atamanenko made a couple of minutes ago.

**Mr. David Wilks:** The problem I have, Mr. Dion, is that because my riding borders up against Alberta, there's only one way I can go. If the boundaries commission decides to make the riding larger, I have to go west. To me, to bring in Sicamous, as Mr. Atamanenko has suggested, would be challenging at best. From my residence to Revelstoke is six hours one way. Add another hour to get to Sicamous. I might as well just go to Vancouver because it's only five hours. It's a big, big area.

The problem is Penticton, in my opinion. That's the problem. The contiguation of Kootenay—Colombia is really irrelevant. It's moving west that triggers everything else. All I'm saying in the change to the commission is just bring back Nakusp and New Denver. It's 4,000 people at best. It's taking a part of the riding that I already have and just putting it back in. It's the northern part of the riding.

We have spoken, Mr. Atamanenko and I. We disagree fundamentally on some of the lines. If you were to ask Mr. Atamanenko, the problem herein is Penticton because it adds in a lot of the population. What do you do with it?

• (1135)

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** On this whole urban-rural thing, the idea is that, in general, if we're going to be adding population, it's a lot easier for accessibility to add it to urban ridings, where you add a few more city blocks. There's not much difference in the access to the MP.

This commission seems to be really worried about population more so than what I believe in the rural area should be geography. We have Nathan's riding; we have David's riding.

The question I would have for you, David, is this. Would you be happy just keeping the riding as it is, given the difficulty you have now of getting around? If we could really argue for that geographical point rather than trying to juggle and find out how we're going to fit the pieces of the puzzle and what we're going to do there.... What's wrong with keeping it like it is?

**Mr. David Wilks:** Do you want me to respond, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes, go for it.

**Mr. David Wilks:** The problem is that when I'm in the cusp—if you look at map number three or two—I have no choice, none whatsoever. Either I drive through Kaslo, Nelson, or Salmo, or drive through Castlegar and Salmo to get back to Creston. I have to drive through these areas. I have no choice. There's no other way around. They won't let me fly. What do you want me to do? I have to drive through these areas.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** In your submission, Mr. Wilks, you conclude by saying, "This is a small change that I believe would be accepted by both Nakusp and New Denver." You believe it, but did you check? Do you have the mayors' views?

**Mr. David Wilks:** I spoke to both Mayor Hamling and Mayor Bunka. Mayor Hamling would prefer to stay in the riding that she's in now. Mayor Bunka, who is in New Denver, which is 30 miles down the road from Nakusp, would prefer to stay with Alex. There's a conflict between 30 miles. I'm only asking to put in two communities, New Denver and Silverton, which is in area H, I

believe. That's all I'm asking for, because I have to drive through them. Either way it's a pretty simple thing.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** I think this once again goes fundamentally against what all of these people and the 50 or so people who appeared before the three commissions stated. They do not want the West Kootenay split up. We have MLAs and mayors, and I just received letters from some mayors this morning, from Trail and from Castlegar and Nelson, and the small communities. They feel...their interest for their communities is for historical reasons. There hasn't been a split for something like 100 years. The West Kootenays have always been together. To now have this happening, they're opposed to this based on the affinity, this community of interest. What I'm trying to do here is reflect what they're saying.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you, Alex.

We have just a couple of minutes left in this piece, a couple of one-off questions if we want.

I have Mr. Menegakis first.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a quick question on the document I have in front of me that Elections Canada has prepared on Mr. Atamanenko's summary of his proposal. I see the riding here of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, population of 138,517. I don't know, is that a result of your recommendations? Is that what that overview column is? Maybe the Elections Canada people could confirm that. Is the overview what the members are recommending?

**Mrs. Johanne Boisvert:** Exactly.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** So that particular riding will go to 138,000, which would be 32% above what the commission has stated for the province. Is that right? Is that correct? I just want to get clarification on that. That's what that is.

• (1140)

**Mrs. Johanne Boisvert:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Reid, be really quick.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** That was my question.

**The Chair:** That was the same one.

Are there any other one-off questions? We have time for one more. Does anybody need one?

We thank you for coming today.

I was going to suggest arm wrestling or something.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** I've seen him work out. Bowling, it doesn't matter. No, he's a bowler too.

**The Chair:** I knew that too, that's why I threw it in.

We'll suspend for a minute while we allow our witnesses to leave and our other witnesses to come.

Thank you.



•(1140) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•(1140)

**The Chair:** Order, please.

We have two further witnesses.

Mr. Garrison, it's great to have you here today. Mr. Zimmer, it's always good to see you, too.

We've given you both only a very short time today because we've been pre-reading your reports, and they're maybe not as complicated as those of our last two guests.

Mr. Garrison, would you go first for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Thank you for hearing me today. I could be here today talking about something as complex as the previous presentations, but the good news for Vancouver Island is that we have had an extra seat added. The commission had to make some difficult choices. While their report doesn't really reflect what most of the people in my existing riding wanted, I think there's an acceptance that, in order to get a new seat, some changes have to be made, and there weren't a lot of good choices.

Having said that, what I focus on here is trying to give a name to the riding that people will actually understand locally. I know most of you won't know the geography or understand any of this, but the basic problem is that the commission accepted one thing that I said. The municipality of Saanich makes up about 30% of my existing riding, and its name didn't appear. So when I was knocking on doors, I had people saying I was in the wrong place, the Saanich Gulf Islands is where they lived. I would respond by saying, "No, you are actually in Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca."

So the commission added the name "Saanich" but then retained Juan de Fuca. But in their division of my riding, which was very large, they put most of the provincial riding called Juan de Fuca in the riding called Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. So, by retaining the name "Juan de Fuca" in their new riding, they've actually confused the public because those in the provincial riding will live in the other federal riding of the same name, if you follow me.

What I did was I sat down and asked if there was a historical name that connects all of these people. There isn't. So I simply said that, because it's a triangle riding, let's just use the triangle points. You can't name all the communities and, if you name the triangle points, everybody will know which riding they're in. What order they went in caused a lot of local discussion, so I suggested that it be alphabetical. So it's called Esquimalt—Saanich Sooke.

I submitted the resolution of the Esquimalt council. They were very concerned because Esquimalt has been the name of a riding for at least 60 years. In the proposed new name, by geography, people in Esquimalt would not think they were in that riding, so we create a new problem of exclusion if we go with the proposed name.

Really, that's it. It's a triangle with Esquimalt at one point, Saanich at another point, and Sooke at the other. The communities in between would not be named. They'll be disappointed, I think, but they'll know which riding they're in.

That's all I'm asking you to consider today. It's a very simple proposal.

I've checked with the members of Parliament for Victoria, Saanich—Gulf Islands, and Nanaimo—Cowichan, and all of them support this change.

•(1145)

**The Chair:** All right. We'll have Mr. Zimmer give his piece, and then we'll question you both.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Thanks for letting me appear today.

My rationale is that in Prince George—Peace River, which is our riding name now, we have a significant portion of it that is termed the Northern Rockies as a regional district, but it's not represented in the current name. What I am proposing is that we add the name "Northern Rockies" to the original name, so it would be "Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies".

I do have the support of the mayor of Fort Nelson, which is the main community within the Northern Rockies regional district. He is happily supportive of it and hopes that it'll make it through.

I did actually make this submission to the Electoral Boundaries Commission in October and I'm just going to read that letter out to you now. I apologize for not having it in French. We made it in English, so the French is actually being done as we speak.

Dear Mr. Justice J. E. Hall,

I am writing the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for British Columbia today to propose changing the name of the electoral district of Prince George—Peace River to Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

As the Member of Parliament for this riding, I do not believe the current name for this electoral district fully represents the people and communities that live within the proposed boundaries. According to the most recent census, the Northern Rockies Regional District has a land area of 85,111 square kilometres. This land area represents a significant portion of the proposed district and I believe changing the name to Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies would more realistically represent the riding as a whole.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this proposal. Should the Commission have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Lastly, I did answer the question Mr. Dion asked previously as to whether I'd seen the six questions. I have.

What is the rationale for the objection? To me it recognizes the unrecognized.

Does your objection have community support? Yes it does; it has the mayor's support.

What are the demographic consequences of the changes you're proposing? There really are none. There are no travel issues or anything. It's actually a positive in that it recognizes them.

Is there a domino effect? No, it is the largest unrepresented region by name.

Is your objection a repeated argument made before the commission? As I said, I submitted the letter, which I just read, on October 16, 2012.

Have you talked to your colleagues about the proposed changes? Yes. When we originally went around to get signatures for support to make the change, I told the 10 people who I had sign my document what I planned on doing, and then they signed it. So they endorsed it.

That's it.

**The Chair:** Super, thank you both for being succinct.

Mr. Lukiwski, do you want to go first? Let's just go one or two minutes each.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Sure, thanks very much.

Normally when it comes to name changes, I don't have a lot of questions. One question is to provide me with a little update. Are the boundaries of either or both of your two ridings changing whatsoever from where they are currently?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Yes. My existing riding has a larger population than P.E.I.'s, 138,000. About one-third of my riding is moving to what is essentially a new riding on Vancouver Island. Of course I'm disappointed to lose any of those constituents, but they have to make the switch one way or the other to create a new riding because my riding is too large. I either lose people on the west end or I lose people on the north end. The geography means somebody has to go.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Bob, what about yours?

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Tom, look at the two maps I've handed out, the existing boundaries on one sheet and the proposed boundaries on the next. All that's changed is the very southern tip of the riding. We added Valemount to the riding. It was a pure geographical challenge for the other MP. I said that I'm already going to be down there, and for me it's a half-hour trip, so we added Valemount to my riding. That's the only change we're making.

• (1150)

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** The only other question I have, and I think you've both answered it, is for confirmation.

You've consulted with members of your constituency, your riding, and no one has objected. Randall, you said that some people may feel left out, but the triangle points you've given really define the riding. Are you suggesting that there are no real objections that you've found in your riding to the name change you're suggesting?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** I've been on talk radio, all kinds of things, and there's been a surprising amount of interest over the name. People get quite excited. The only thing they said was, "Well, I guess you can't list them all, right? You can't list all 10 communities". Other than that, no. People agreed that by choosing the end points, it does tell people what riding they live in and solves that problem.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Bob, any objections to your name change?

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Quite the opposite. It's a beautiful part of the country, as most Canadians would agree. To add it to my riding of Prince George–Peace River, when we have the Rockies running right through it, it's an understatement, I would say, that it just adds that element for us. There's absolutely no opposition.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Thanks.

That's all, Chair.

**The Chair:** That's great.

Madame Latendresse, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Thank you for your comments.

You gave your presentation to the commission. Why do you think they didn't agree with your recommendation?

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** I still think that's up to PROC to decide. I submitted it on October 16, so I think the process is still ongoing.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse:** I am talking about the commission. You went to the commission's public hearings and you gave your presentation.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** No, I didn't attend the public hearings. I just sent the letter.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse:** I see.

Unless I'm mistaken, generally the commissions tried to shorten the names. In fact, the names of some ridings, especially in Quebec, are made up of four or five community names. So they are quite long. There was this desire to have names that were a bit shorter. I was wondering if that was the case. Unless I'm mistaken, none of you spoke about the names during the public hearings of the commissions.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** I suggested adding Saanich, which they did. When we were on talk radio, there was some discussion that the riding should be called "Esquimalt–Saanich Sooke is awesome", and when the Speaker would call on the member, he would always say, "the member for Esquimalt–Saanich Sooke is awesome".

Other than that—

**The Chair:** Thank you for that statement.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** On the question of names, what the commission actually said was, "We aren't going to pay too much attention because we know that you will fuss with them at the PROC committee later". They actually said that at our hearing.

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse:** Fair enough.

**The Chair:** Fuss with them? We'll be reviewing the commission's after.

Monsieur Dion, go ahead.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** I object to not hearing the beautiful name of Juan de Fuca anymore in the House of Commons; otherwise, I have no problem.

**The Chair:** Defend yourself, sir.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Can I just say that Juan de Fuca is a body of water that no one lives in. That's part of the confusion with the riding: using a name of a body of water. It also borders three different ridings. I have the name in mine, but it's also part of Victoria and part of the northern riding. For many years it has been a source of confusion to have it there. The change I'm suggesting provides us with three first nations' names and eliminates the name of the Spanish explorer.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** I just want to say that—

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** He wasn't Spanish; he was Greek. I'm sorry.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** I just want to say that I fought to keep the name of Cartier for the whole of Canada, and you want to keep Juan de Fuca only for British Columbia.

I would suggest to my two colleagues that the more proof you provide that you have support from your communities, the better opportunity you will have to convince the commission.

**The Chair:** Mr. Menegakis, did you have one quick question?

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** It's been corrected, Mr. Chair, but I'll just add this. He was the very first Greek to come to Canada, for what it's worth.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We thank you for the cuisine.

Is there anything else with our witnesses?

Thank you for coming and being very direct in what you're asking for.

We will be going in camera to look at reports, so we will suspend for a couple of minutes while we do that.

Thank you again for coming today.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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