



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

REPORT ON THE *REPORT OF THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FOR THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA, 2022*

**Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and
House Affairs**

Honourable Bardish Chagger, Chair

**MARCH 2023
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

has the honour to present its

TWENTY-NINTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)(a)(vi), the committee has considered the objections filed in respect of the *Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Manitoba*, in accordance with section 22 of the *Electoral Boundaries Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. E-3, and has agreed to report the following:

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REPORT ON THE REPORT OF THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FOR THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA, 2022

INTRODUCTION

On 2 February 2023, pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)(a)(vi) and section 22 of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act* (EBRA),¹ the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (the Committee) began its consideration of the objections filed by members of the House of Commons in respect of the *Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Manitoba* (the report and the Commission).

After each decennial census, the number of members of the House of Commons and the representation of each province is adjusted according to the rules found in section 51 and 51A of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

The chief electoral officer (CEO) is responsible for calculating the number of members of the House allotted to each province. This calculation is mathematical and the CEO exercises no discretion in the matter.

The work of readjusting electoral boundaries is carried out in each province by an independent and neutral three-member electoral boundaries commission. The mandate of these commissions is to consider and report on the division of their province into electoral districts,² the description of the boundaries and the name of each electoral district.

The EBRA 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 under section 51 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

In setting the boundaries of an electoral district, each commission is legally obliged to consider the community of interest, community of identity or the historical pattern of an

1 [Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act](#), R.S.C., 1985, c. E-3.

2 Note that the terms “electoral districts” and “ridings” are used interchangeably in this committee report.



electoral district in the province. Further, electoral districts must have a manageable geographic size, 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%.

After coming up with an initial Proposal for the electoral districts in their province, a commission is required to hold at least one public meeting 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 Committee. Members of the House then have 30 calendar days to file objections with the clerk of the Committee 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.

The Committee then has 30 sittings days to consider members' objections, unless an extension is granted by the House. The Committee's reports on members' objections are referred back to the relevant commissions, along with the objections, the minutes of the proceedings and the evidence heard by the Committee. The commission then has 30 calendar days to consider the merits of all objections, and prepare its final report.

Once all the commission reports have been finalized, the CEO 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, within five days, must 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 Manitoba was tabled in the House of Commons, and referred to the Committee on 6 December 2022. By the end of the 30-day period, the clerk of the Committee had received two objections.

A. Electoral Boundary Changes

1. Niki Ashton, the member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski and James Bezan, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman

Niki Ashton, the member of Parliament for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, and James Bezan, the member of Parliament for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, jointly objected to the proposed boundaries for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski and Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. Specifically, they objected to the Commission’s placement of two adjacent First Nations communities, the Little Saskatchewan First Nation and a recent community development by Lake St. Martin First Nation called Obushkudayang, into the proposed riding of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. At present, these two communities are almost entirely located in the current riding of Churchill—Keewatinook Aski. According to Ms. Ashton and Mr. Bezan, their proposed placement into Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman would separate them from other communities with whom they have shared interests and identity. Ms. Ashton and Mr. Bezan recommended redrawing the boundaries so that both communities remain a part of Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

Ms. Ashton and Mr. Bezan told the Committee that, as a result of the previous boundary readjustment, the reserves of Little Saskatchewan No. 48 and Lake St. Martin No. 49 and 49A were placed in the riding of Churchill—Kewwatinook Aski; they previously were part of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. In its Report, the Commission now suggested placing the entirety of Little Saskatchewan Reserve No. 48 back into Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, which would disconnect the reserve from neighbouring Indigenous communities that would remain in Churchill—Keewatinook Aski. The proposed boundaries would also split Lake St. Martin First Nation Reserve No. 49 from Obushkudayang, with the latter also being placed in Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Ms. Ashton and Mr. Bezan are concerned that moving communities repeatedly from one constituency to another might cause disenfranchisement, resulting in a reduced exercise of the communities’ democratic rights. Ms. Ashton stated that, since 2015, much work has been expended to enfranchise and inform citizens of the seven First Nations in the eastern Interlake about which constituency they are a part of, and where constituency offices and services are located. According to the members, placing two of the seven First Nations into a separate riding could contribute to confusion and mistrust, especially since the Commission’s initial Proposal did not include this change, nor were the affected communities consulted. As such, representations about keeping the seven First Nations in the eastern Interlake in the same riding could not be made at the public hearings. The members deemed the Commission’s proposed change as “unfair” and “disrespectful” to the affected communities.



Ms. Ashton and Mr. Bezan stressed that, over the last two decades, the affected communities have dealt with major upheaval and relocation caused by floods. They told the Committee that dividing the community of Lake St. Martin between two ridings would be detrimental to the efforts undertaken to ensure community stability and continuity. As for Little Saskatchewan, disconnecting the reserve from the neighbouring Pinaymootang First Nation, Dauphin River First Nation and Lake St. Martin First Nation (except for Obushkudayang) would be inconsistent with the principle of keeping communities of interest in the same constituency. It was noted that individuals in these communities have close ties among families, share celebrations and access common services together. Further, these nations are part of the same regional Interlake Reserves Tribal Council.

The members also noted that the member of Parliament for the riding of Churchill—Keewatinook Aski would still need to transit through both the Little Saskatchewan First Nation and the community of Obushkudayang when visiting nearby Indigenous communities.

As an alternative, the members proposed to:

- place the reserves of Little Saskatchewan No. 48 and Obushkudayang in the Churchill—Keewatinook Aski riding; and
- divide the Rural Municipality of Grahamdale as follows:

The Rural Municipality of Grahamdale be intersected with the boundary between Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman and Churchill—Keewatinook Aski commencing from Fairford Reserve No. 50 northerly along Fairford Road (Municipal Road 49W); continuing northerly down Kotelnyk Road (Municipal Road 49W) and further northerly down municipal road allowance for Road 49W at approximate latitude 51.67271 N till Provincial Road 513; thence easterly along PR 513 till the westerly limit of Obushkudayang; thence northerly, easterly and southerly of said First Nation to the northerly limit of Lake St. Martin Reserve No. 49 and 49A;

They noted that, according to the 2021 census data, their proposal would result in electoral district populations as follows:

- a) Churchill—Keewatinook Aski: 82,737 (with a variance from the provincial electoral quota of -13.70%); and

- b) Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman: 98,624 (with a variance from the provincial electoral quota of +2.87%).

Ms. Aston and Mr. Bezan’s objection is supported by a letter signed by Craig Howse, Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Grahamdale. At the public hearings, this municipality made representations to oppose the initial Proposal that would have divided the hamlet of Gypsumville between the two ridings; however, the municipality agrees with the alternative proposed by Mr. Bezan and Ms. Ashton as described above.

The Committee supports Mr. Bezan and Ms. Ashton’s objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Manitoba consider it favourably.

2. Daniel Blaikie, the member for Elmwood—Transcona

Daniel Blaikie, the member for Elmwood—Transcona, objected to the boundaries proposed in the Commission’s Report for Elmwood—Transcona. Specifically, he objected to the proposed expansion of the riding to the east and the inclusion of territory that is located outside of the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Blaikie explained that, in the Commission’s Report, the proposed riding of Elmwood—Transcona expands east to include the community of Dugald, which is located in the Rural Municipality of Springfield. The effect of this proposal would be to convert Elmwood—Transcona from an urban riding into a mixed urban-rural riding. Mr. Blaikie indicated that, in his view, the proposed change places communities with divergent interests and priorities into the same riding. Further, he stated he proposed change would significantly alter the type of work the member of Parliament for Elmwood—Transcona would undertake, including having to develop relationships with rural members of the Legislative Assembly, health authorities and the council for Springfield.

Mr. Blaikie noted that, in the Report, the Commission justifies its changes to the riding of Elmwood—Transcona out of a need to balance the population sizes of Elmwood—Transcona and the adjacent riding of Provencher. The Commission indicated the communities of Transcona and Dugald have shared ties.

Mr. Blaikie indicated that, in his view, the ties between Transcona and Dugald are tenuous. He noted that, to his knowledge, the only administrative link in recent memory between the two communities is the former school district of Transcona–Springfield, which was disbanded in 2002. Mr. Blaikie also noted that the current trend existed that saw an administrative separation between the communities of northeast Winnipeg and



the communities of the Rural Municipality of Springfield. As such, the Commission's proposal would go against this prevailing tendency.

Mr. Blaikie told the Committee that the northeast side of Winnipeg is one of the fastest growing areas of the city and that he expected this growth to continue, although he did not have exact figures to provide to the Committee. He indicated that the population of Elmwood—Transcona would, in the coming years, continue to grow within the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg. As such, in his view, it would make more sense to increase the geographic size of the adjacent riding of Kildonan—St. Paul, which already is made up of an urban and a rural area, rather than to include rural communities in Elmwood—Transcona. Mr. Blaikie told the Committee that similarities existed between some of the rural communities that are currently part of Kildonan—St. Paul and the rural communities the Commission is proposing to include in Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Blaikie told the Committee that, in order to offset the decrease in population size that would result from his alternative proposal, the Commission could modify the proposed northern boundary of Elmwood—Transcona to incorporate a larger portion of the neighbourhood of North Kildonan. Mr. Blaikie told the Committee that this neighbourhood shares multiple demographic, historical and service similarities with the communities in his current riding.

The Committee supports Mr. Blaikie's objection and recommends that the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Manitoba consider it favourably.

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
House of Commons	2023/02/02	49
Niki Ashton, M.P., Churchill—Keewatinook Aski		
James Bezan, M.P., Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman		
Daniel Blaikie, M.P., Elmwood—Transcona		

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 49 and 53](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Bardish Chagger
Chair

**Report on the Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of
Manitoba 2022: Conservative Dissenting Report**

This Dissenting Report reflects the views of the Conservative Members of Parliament who serve on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (“PROC”): MP John Nater (Vice Chair of the Committee, Perth-Wellington), MP Luc Berthold (Megantic-L’Erable), MP Blaine Calkins (Red Deer-Lacombe), and MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton).

Introduction

Two Notices of Objection were submitted to PROC in response to the Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Manitoba, including a Notice of Objection by MP Daniel Blaikie, and a joint Notice of Objection by MPs James Bezan and Niki Ashton.

We respectfully disagree with the conclusions in the Report of PROC to support the objection of MP Blaikie and set out our observations in this Dissenting Report.

We agree with the conclusions in the Report of PROC to support the joint objection of MPs Bezan and Ashton. The basis of this objection, and the proposal of MPs Bezan and Ashton are well stated in the Report of PROC, with which we fully concur.

The Blaikie Objection

MP Blaikie requested the Commission transfer the rural area, comprising of part of the Rural Municipality of Springfield (“RM of Springfield”), in and around the community of Dugald, from Elmwood-Transcona to Kildonan-St. Paul. To maintain population parity, MP Blaikie proposed extending the northern boundary of Elmwood-Transcona into Kildonan-St. Paul as much as necessary to compensate for the population loss in Elmwood-Transcona due to this proposed adjustment.¹

Our Observations

We submit that the Commission’s decision to extend Elmwood-Transcona into part of the RM of Springfield in and around Dugald is reasonable. We observe that this area is proximate to Transcona, with a driving distance of less than 15 minutes from Dugald to Transcona. The main transportation route that runs through Dugald is Dugald Road, which connects Dugald with Transcona. From a community of interest standpoint, Dugald and the surrounding area is more closely connected to Transcona than the northeast Winnipeg neighborhoods situated in Kildonan-St. Paul.

The Commission weighed concerns about extending Elmwood-Transcona into part of the RM of Springfield. However, these concerns were balanced against the need to adjust the size of

¹ Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 2 February 2023 (Daniel Blaikie).

Provencher. As a “compromise” the Commission added territory in and around Dugald to Elmwood-Transcona.²

At PROC, MP Blaikie was asked if he had garnered support for his objection. In response, MP Blaikie stated that he had not heard from anyone who has expressed opposition about the way the Commission drew Elmwood-Transcona following the issuance of the Commission’s report.³ Moreover, during the public consultation process, there were submissions in support of connecting all the RM of Springfield with Elmwood-Transcona. We further observe that no other Manitoba MP signed on to MP Blaikie’s objection.

Conclusion

We defer to the Commission’s conclusions regarding the configuration of Elmwood-Transcona, having regard for the following: (1) the consideration the Commission had already given to concerns about extending Elmwood-Transcona into the RM of Springfield; (2) the Commission’s findings that this extension is a reasonable “compromise”, having regard for the size of Provencher; (3) that Dugald and the surrounding area has closer ties with Transcona than other parts of northeast Winnipeg situated in Kildonan-St. Paul; (4) that submissions were made to the Commission in support of connecting the RM of Springfield with Elmwood-Transcona; (5) the lack of evidence of community support for MP Blaikie’s objection; and (6) that no other Manitoba MP signed on to MP Blaikie’s objection.

Respectfully submitted,

John Nater, MP, Vice-Chair
Perth Wellington

Luc Berthold, MP
Megantic-L’Erable

Blaine Calkins, MP
Red Deer-Lacombe

Michael Cooper, MP
St. Albert-Edmonton

² Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Manitoba, pp.10-11.

³ Evidence, Procedure and House Affairs Committee, 2 February 2023 (Daniel Blaikie).