



Remarks of the Chief Electoral Officer

***on Bill C-37, An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts and
to amend the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act***

**before the
Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs**

June 16, 2014

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Introduction

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for inviting me to discuss Bill C-37, *An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts and to amend the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*.

Purpose of
Bill C-37

The purpose of Bill C-37 is to change the names of 30 electoral districts created under the representation order of October 2013. The bill also amends the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act* to change the name of the electoral district of the Northwest Territories.

The provisions of Bill C-37 do not create any issues for my Office, and we will be able to implement them as part of our preparation for the next general election.

For the benefit of the Committee, I would like to briefly talk about the administrative implications of changing names after redistribution is completed.

Administrative Implications of Changing Electoral District Names

Within seven months of the proclamation of the representation order,

Printing
Required by
Redistribution

Elections Canada is required by law to produce digital and print maps for the country. This includes individual maps of each electoral district showing the boundaries of the district as well as individual maps of each province and territory showing the boundaries of the districts in that province or territory.

By May 2014, the Canada map showing the 338 electoral districts, as well as the related atlases, were distributed to all political parties, MPs and senators. Additionally, digital versions of the maps were published on the Elections Canada website.

Name Changes
Outside
Redistribution

When names are changed outside of redistribution, such as Bill C-37 proposes, there are a number of administrative implications. At Elections Canada, many products have to be reprinted, including the maps and atlases I just mentioned, as well as various communications tools for political parties, candidates and electors. We also have to update the information in our corporate database and systems.

Other
Institutions

Indeed, the impacts of these name changes extend beyond Elections Canada. They affect all institutions that use and publish information containing federal riding names – for example, the House of Commons, the Senate, Statistics Canada and Natural Resources Canada. Political parties also need to update their systems accordingly.

Costs

Depending on the timing, names changes can generate significant costs for my Office. With this in mind, I am pleased to see that changes proposed by Bill C-37 are made under one single bill, and during the current session of Parliament. This allows us to implement the changes in time, as part of our preparation for the next general election.

Conclusion

Mr. Chair, I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.