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HOW BILL C-56 WORKS

Introduction

The federal government recently introduced new legislation, Bill C-56, to change the formula for readjusting seats among the provinces in the House of Commons.

Bill C-56 would be implemented after the 2011 Census has been completed and detailed population statistics generated. This normally takes about nine months and the 2011 Census could be expected to be ready early in 2012. The Chief Electoral Officer will then make a calculation based on this bill and proceed to establish the electoral boundaries commissions in the ten provinces necessary to implement the readjustment.

This note explains in step-by-step detail how the new legislation works.

Step One – Starting the Calculation

1. The first step is to determine the number that is used to calculate how many seats are initially allocated to each province – the quotient. To calculate the quotient for 2011, Bill C-56 starts from the total number of seats in the House of Commons following the redistribution based on the 1981 Census, which was 295. This is a change from the previous formula, which started with the House of Commons based on the redistribution following the 1971 Census.
2. From this, three seats are set aside for territories – resulting in **292** as the number for calculation purposes.
3. The population of the 10 provinces (as determined by the census) is then divided by 292 to calculate the national quotient.

Table 1: Ten- Province Total

Province¹	2011 Population
Ontario	13,374,700
Quebec	7,841,400
N.S.	948,500
N.B.	757,400
Manitoba	1,214,800
B.C.	4,545,000
Sask.	982,000
Alberta	3,483,200
Nfld.	512,500
P.E.I.	141,200
Yukon	31,600
N.W.T.	46,400
Nunavut	30,900

**Ten Province
Total*** 33,800,700

**Excludes territories*

Quotient:

33,800,700 divided by 292 = 115,756

¹. Provinces are in order of entry into Confederation (except for PEI & the territories)

Step Two – Initial Seat Allocation Calculation

1. To determine the number of seats each province is initially entitled to, the population of each province is divided by the quotient (115,756). For example, Ontario's population of 13,374,700 is divided by 115,756, resulting in an Ontario entitlement of 116 seats. This step is the same in the existing formula.

Table 2: Calculation of Seats by Quotient

Province	2011 Population	Seats by Quotient
Ontario	13,374,700	116
Quebec	7,841,400	68
N.S.	948,500	8
N.B.	757,400	7
Manitoba	1,214,800	10
B.C.	4,545,000	39
Sask.	982,000	8
Alberta	3,483,200	30
Nfld.	512,500	4
P.E.I.	141,200	1
Yukon	31,600	0
N.W.T.	46,400	0
Nunavut	30,900	0
10 Province Total*	33,800,700	291

**Excludes territories*

Step Three – The Senate Floor Provision

1. Since 1915, provinces have been guaranteed in the Constitution that they will have no fewer seats in the House of Commons than they have Senators. To change this would require a constitutional amendment supported by the federal government and all ten provinces. This step is part of the existing formula.
2. To ensure this requirement is respected, additions are made to the initial seat entitlements of some provinces to equalize their number of House of Commons seats to their number of Senate seats.

Table 3: Effect of Senate Floor Protection

Province	2011 Population	Seats by Quotient	Additional Seats Senate Floor	New Total
Ontario	13,374,700	116		116
Quebec	7,841,400	68		68
N.S.	948,500	8	2	10
N.B.	757,400	7	3	10
Manitoba	1,214,800	10		10
B.C.	4,545,000	39		39
Sask.	982,000	8		8
Alberta	3,483,200	30		30
Nfld.	512,500	4	2	6
P.E.I.	141,200	1	3	4
Yukon	31,600	0		0
N.W.T.	46,400	0		0
Nunavut	30,900	0		0
10 Province Total*	33,800,700	291	10	301

*Excludes territories

Step Four – The Grandfather Clause

1. If a province's (or territory's) resulting entitlement is below the number of seats it *currently* has in the House of Commons, more seats are added so that it retains its current total (the so-called "grandfather clause"). This step is also part of existing practice. (Eliminating the grandfather clause can be done unilaterally by the federal government and does not require the consent of the provinces).

Table 4: Application of Grandfather Clause

Province	2011 Population	Seats after adding Senate Floor	Additional Seats Grandfather Clause	New Seat Total
Ontario	13,374,700	116	0	116
Quebec	7,841,400	68	7	75
N.S.	948,500	10	1	11
N.B.	757,400	10	0	10
Manitoba	1,214,800	10	4	14
B.C.	4,545,000	39	0	39
Sask.	982,000	8	6	14
Alberta	3,483,200	30	0	30
Nfld.	512,500	6	1	7
P.E.I.	141,200	4	0	4
Yukon	31,600	0	1	1
N.W.T.	46,400	0	1	1
Nunavut	31,100	0	1	1
Canada Total	33,909,800	301	22	323

Step Five – Adding Seats for Alberta and B.C.

1. Provinces with smaller populations than the largest province that benefits from a seat guarantee (i.e. Quebec) are entitled to equivalent representation. This provision is new.
2. Seats are added to the totals of these provinces (i.e. Alberta and BC) to reduce their quotients until their average constituency size is about the same as the larger province's (Quebec's), with the qualification that their average constituency size must be at least a little larger.
3. Provinces that have a higher population than Quebec's (i.e. Ontario) are not entitled to equivalent representation.

Table 5: B.C. and Alberta Adjustment

Province	2011 Population	Interim Seats	AB/BC Adjustment	Final Seat Allocation	Average Const. Size
Ontario	13,374,700	116		116	115,299
Quebec	7,841,400	75		75	104,552
N.S.	948,500	11		11	86,227
N.B.	757,400	10		10	75,740
Manitoba	1,214,800	14		14	86,771
B.C.	4,545,000	39	4	39	105,698
Sask.	982,000	14		14	70,143
Alberta	3,483,200	30	3	30	105,552
Nfld.	512,500	7		7	73,214
P.E.I.	141,200	4		4	35,300
Yukon	31,600	1		1	31,600
N.W.T.	46,400	1		1	46,400
Nunavut	31,100	1		1	31,100
Canada Total	33,909,800	323	7	330	102,426

New House of Commons

The House of Commons resulting from the full implementation of Bill C-56 is summarized in the table below.

Table 6: House of Commons Post-2011 Census

Province	2011 Population	Share of Population	Final Seat Allocation	Share of Seats	Degree of Under/Over Representation	% Point Difference - Seat share minus Pop'n Share
Ontario	13,374,700	39.4%	116	35.2%	-12.2%	-4.3%
Quebec	7,841,400	23.1%	75	22.7%	-1.8%	-0.4%
N.S.	948,500	2.8%	11	3.3%	15.2%	0.5%
N.B.	757,400	2.2%	10	3.0%	26.7%	0.8%
Manitoba	1,214,800	3.6%	14	4.2%	16.7%	0.7%
B.C.	4,545,000	13.4%	43	13.0%	-3.1%	-0.4%
Sask.	982,000	2.9%	14	4.2%	31.0%	1.3%
Alberta	3,483,200	10.3%	33	10.0%	-3.0%	-0.3%
Nfld.	512,500	1.5%	7	2.1%	28.6%	0.6%
P.E.I.	141,200	0.4%	4	1.2%	66.7%	0.8%
Yukon	31,600	0.1%	1	0.3%	66.7%	0.2%
N.W.T.	46,400	0.1%	1	0.3%	66.7%	0.2%
Nunavut	31,700	0.1%	1	0.3%	66.7%	0.2%
Canada Total	33,909,800	100.0%	330	100.0%		

Alternate scenario that would meet the Federal Government's Commitment – BC/AB type adjustment for Ontario

- If Ontario was entitled to add seats until its average constituency size was equivalent to Quebec on the same basis as British Columbia and Alberta, it would receive an additional 11 seats on top of the 116 in the federal proposal for a total of 127.

PROJECTED IMPLICATIONS OF BILL C-56

The following charts show the current composition of the House of Commons (based on 2001 Census data), as well the projected¹ (post-2011, 2021, and 2031 re-adjustments) composition that would result from employing the Bill C-56 formula.

Actual – Based on 2001 Census (First Used in 2004 Election)

Province	Population	Seats	Share Seats	Share Pop'n	Degree of Under/Over Representation	% Point Difference - Seat share minus Pop'n Share	Avg. Constituency
Ontario	11,410,046	106	34.4%	38.0%	-10.5%	-3.6%	107,642
Quebec	7,237,479	75	24.3%	24.1%	0.8%	0.2%	96,500
N.S.	908,007	11	3.6%	3.0%	16.7%	0.6%	82,546
N.B.	729,498	10	3.2%	2.4%	25.0%	0.8%	72,949
Manitoba	1,119,583	14	4.5%	3.7%	17.8%	0.8%	79,970
B.C.	3,907,738	36	11.7%	13.0%	-11.1%	-1.3%	108,548
Sask.	978,933	14	4.5%	3.3%	26.7%	1.2%	69,923
Alberta	2,974,807	28	9.1%	9.9%	-8.8%	-0.8%	106,243
Nfld.	512,930	7	2.3%	1.7%	26.1%	0.6%	73,276
P.E.I.	135,294	4	1.3%	0.4%	69.2%	0.9%	33,823
Yukon	28,674	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	28,674
N.W.T.	37,360	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	37,360
Nunavut	26,745	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	26,745
Total	30,007,094	308	100.0%	100.0%			97,426

2011 – Projected

Province	Population	Seats	Share Seats	Share Pop'n	Degree of Under/Over Representation	% Point Difference - Seat share minus Pop'n Share	Avg. Constituency
Ontario	13,374,700	116	35.2%	39.4%	-12.2%	-4.3%	115,299
Quebec	7,841,400	75	22.7%	23.1%	-1.8%	-0.4%	104,552
N.S.	948,500	11	3.3%	2.8%	15.2%	0.5%	86,227
N.B.	757,400	10	3.0%	2.2%	26.7%	0.8%	75,740
Manitoba	1,214,800	14	4.2%	3.6%	16.7%	0.7%	86,771
B.C.	4,545,000	43	13.0%	13.4%	-3.1%	-0.4%	105,698
Sask.	982,000	14	4.2%	2.9%	31.0%	1.3%	70,143
Alberta	3,483,200	33	10.0%	10.3%	-3.0%	-0.3%	105,552
Nfld.	512,500	7	2.1%	1.5%	28.6%	0.6%	73,214
P.E.I.	141,200	4	1.2%	0.4%	66.7%	0.8%	35,300
Yukon	31,600	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	31,600
N.W.T.	46,400	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	46,400
Nunavut	31,100	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	31,100
Total	33,909,800	330	100.0%	100.0%			102,426

1. Projections for 2011, 2021 and 2031 are based on Statistics Canada data found at (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/91-520-XIE/00105/tablesectionlist.htm>), Table 10 – Scenario 3.

2021 - Projected

Province	Population	Seats	Share Seats	Share Pop'n	Degree of Under/Over Representation	% Point Difference - Seat Share minus Pop'n Share	Average Constituency
Ontario	14,776,600	121	35.6%	40.4%	-13.5%	-4.8%	122,121
Quebec	8,176,800	75	22.1%	22.3%	-1.4%	-0.3%	109,024
N.S.	968,200	11	3.2%	2.6%	18.8%	0.6%	88,018
N.B.	766,400	10	2.9%	2.1%	27.6%	0.8%	76,640
Manitoba	1,288,100	14	4.1%	3.5%	14.6%	0.6%	92,007
B.C.	5,040,000	46	13.5%	13.8%	-1.5%	-0.2%	109,565
Sask.	977,400	14	4.1%	2.7%	34.1%	1.4%	69,814
Alberta	3,841,900	35	10.3%	10.5%	-1.9%	-0.2%	109,769
Nfld.	510,700	7	2.1%	1.4%	33.3%	0.7%	72,957
P.E.I.	146,100	4	1.2%	0.4%	66.7%	0.8%	36,525
Yukon	32,700	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	32,700
N.W.T.	51,100	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	51,100
Nunavut	32,500	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	32,500
Total	36,608,500	340	100.0%	100.0%			107,330

2031 – Projected

Province	Population	Seats	Share Seats	Share Pop'n	Degree of Under/Over Representation	% Point Difference - Seat Share minus Pop'n Share	Average Constituency
Ontario	16,130,400	126	36.0%	41.3%	-14.7%	-5.3%	128,019
Quebec	8,396,400	75	21.4%	21.5%	-0.5%	-0.1%	111,952
N.S.	979,400	11	3.1%	2.5%	19.4%	0.6%	89,036
N.B.	767,200	10	2.9%	2.0%	31.0%	0.9%	76,720
Manitoba	1,355,700	14	4.0%	3.5%	12.5%	0.5%	96,836
B.C.	5,502,900	49	14.0%	14.1%	-0.7%	-0.1%	112,304
Sask.	975,800	14	4.0%	2.5%	37.5%	1.5%	69,700
Alberta	4,144,900	37	10.6%	10.6%	0.0%	0.0%	112,024
Nfld.	505,600	7	2.0%	1.3%	35.0%	0.7%	72,229
P.E.I.	149,500	4	1.1%	0.4%	72.7%	0.8%	37,375
Yukon	34,000	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	34,000
N.W.T.	54,400	1	0.3%	0.1%	33.3%	0.1%	54,400
Nunavut	33,300	1	0.3%	0.1%	66.7%	0.2%	33,300
Total	39,029,500	350	100.0%	100.0%			111,165

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