

*Government Orders*

we know, the member for Yukon succeeded him. I wonder if he would like to respond to that quickly.

**Mr. Murphy:** I am not sure how much time I have left, Mr. Speaker, but if my colleague wants me to give a lesson to Conservative colleagues in the House I am certainly willing to do so. If I do not have enough time in this intervention I am willing to hold a little seminar in any of the rooms on the Hill. I will not charge leadership candidates any more than I will charge other members.

It is true that we set up a very restrictive program for the selection of our leader. We did not allow some of the exemptions the Prime Minister talks about. I have not had a chance to check on the actual wording of the clause that passed the Conservative Party executive just last weekend, but I recognize that travel and staff costs can be two of the major components of any campaign, whether it is a leadership campaign or an election campaign.

To exclude travel, especially in a country as wide as ours with as many groups that exist in society, can be a real problem. Obviously someone with a much larger war chest or someone with friends in the airline industry, because that does make a difference, can travel to a lot more places and meet a lot more potential delegates. There are some built-in biases if we exclude travel.

Similarly we were very careful to make sure our candidates did not use House of Commons staff or House of Commons facilities during working hours. I must admit that it got to the point where people became very nervous. I was the Whip of the party at that particular time. They did not know why I was coming to their offices but they were always nervous when I came by. It was ensuring that there was enforcement of those rules for our staff and our members.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Forestry):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-114, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act, but first, I would like to make

a comment for the benefit of my NDP colleague. It is good that our party wants to set a spending ceiling. It is a turning point in Canadian political history and politics, because a few years ago we would have discussed this issue and it would have been almost unthinkable, because we could spend as much as we wanted to elect a party leader, regardless of the party. I believe it is a step in the right direction and I urge all the other parties to do the same.

I listened carefully to my Liberal colleague from Kingston and the Islands when he discussed this issue earlier. He said that our government took a very long time to come up with this bill. Despite what my Liberal colleague said, I think that the minister responsible for this legislation did a remarkable job in the period between the tabling of the committee report and the first reading of this bill. When the minister was asked to come before the committee, he did so very diligently. When we discussed some problems in this bill with the House leader, who was the minister responsible, he listened to us very attentively on every occasion, I think. The general impression we have with this bill is that it reflects quite accurately the work done by the committee. And this is interesting, considering that sometimes with other bills the committee would work for months, almost years, only to see its report shelved.

• (2040)

I believe the government had the political will to amend the Canada Elections Act. That has been the case since 1988, since the second time this government was elected, when in the Speech from the Throne in April 1989 the Prime Minister indicated the government's intention to appoint a royal commission that would be responsible for making recommendations for changes in the Canada Elections Act.

On April 3, 1989 the government appointed the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, chaired by Mr. Pierre Lortie. The commission was established on November 15, 1989 to inquire into and report on the appropriate principles and procedure that should govern the election of members of the House of Commons and the financing of political parties and of candidates' campaigns.