

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

What I want to say to our fellow Canadian citizens is that it is an honest effort to modernize our election act. But there is a point which I would like to emphasize. I know that if the Lord is willing to keep me in good health and if voters are willing to re-elect me or to appoint me somewhere else, I would still want to participate very actively in the election process, since I have been talking about it for 30 years or 35 years. At university, in college, I was very active in those issues. The next thing I would like to see is a permanent voters' list. A big project. I will try to describe it in some detail before I close.

What is a permanent electoral list in Canada? It means that instead of taking 55, 50, 47 days for an election—that costs a lot of money. The more money we need, the higher the risk of seeing what is happening right now all over the world: scandals in Japan, in Italy, everywhere, in France, in England, but less in England. If we shorten the election period to 30 days, I cannot conceive such a modern country as Canada—

[English]

Canada is such a modern country, the envy of the rest of world. We do not repeat that enough.

[Translation]

Canada is the envy of the rest of the world. People come here to see how we hold elections.

• (2120)

Our electoral officers are in demand abroad as trainers. Only Canadians seem unable to see that we have a good electoral system, an excellent system, one that we are constantly improving. We should not be afraid to say that it is not perfect, but at least we are improving it and it is so good that others come and imitate our system.

I am now coming to the permanent list of electors. Why? Because thanks to all this modern technology that I do not understand much—but be warned, I started to learn how computers work—it could be possible, one day, to have only one registration, which could be made available free of charge to school-boards for their elections.

If you would allow me a few moments—I know you can show great patience—I would like to finish my speech. So, to conclude logically, imagine that in my area, at a given time, there are three registrations: school-board, municipal and provincial. You can imagine that it would be possible to reduce costs. If we had good co-operation at all levels, national, provincial, municipal and school boards, the same list of electors could be used by all, as it seems that with computers we can feed data to the computer and it produces the lists we ask for. This way we could save huge amounts of money and at the same time shorten the electoral period.

This is about all there is now to talk about. Many amendments are being considered, and my colleagues mentioned some of them. But, I am abusing your goodwill and I would like to conclude by stating my admiration, shared by my colleagues I am sure, for our system.

[English]

I am sure all my colleagues will join with me in thanking the Elections Canada people. The retired returning officer, Mr. Hamel, did a marvellous job. The new Chief Electoral Officer is an officer of the House of Commons, Mr. Jean-Pierre Kingsley.

I know all my colleagues would like to thank the many people who work with them anonymously who are making Canada a country that many people are envious of. Elections Canada has been invited to teach other countries of the world how to manage an election.

I think it is to their credit and to the credit of people who are involved in the election process. I have no hesitation to commend my colleagues. It is not perfection, but we are on our way to making it better and better. There is no doubt in my mind we will come back soon with this law so we can proceed with the other phases.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his contribution this evening and all members who have contributed. I think it has been the right kind of debate and the right kind of atmosphere.