

Government Orders

this country to be sabotaged we have to have rules for the electoral system, rules that are willingly accepted across Canada and are well understood.

It is not a question of depriving Canadians of their right to speak. It is a fundamental question of being different from our colleagues in the United States of America are. Do you know what they are doing there? After being here for 30 years I have friends in the Congress and Senate in the United States of America. Some are perpetually raising money in order to get re-elected. They are elected for only two years. There is a time limit for members of the lower house. For senators it is six years and for congressmen two years. Imagine, some have just been elected with President Clinton. Already I have proof.

[Translation]

I can prove that I have new colleagues who were elected and are constantly looking for that darn money that seems so necessary to get elected. Those of us who tried this system in Quebec know that it is not perfect yet, but when we always ask for more and more money, we end up with our hands tied, and I do not like it. That is what I would like people to understand.

Those who want to keep their independence should be able to belong to the party of their choice and still say: "I do not have any money, but I can raise a bit".

When I meet people on the street or at Dunkin' Donuts and they complain about anything and everything, I take the time to explain the facts to them. I explain the system to the people I meet in flea markets or churches. If only people could believe in our system.

The pages who are with us tonight can become members of any political party, contribute to that party and have a say. They give \$10 to the political party of their choice and get back \$7.50 when they file their income tax return. In that way, for a real expense of \$2.50, they earn the right to speak, to be active and present in political parties. We are talking about women today. My God, political parties are open in Canada. It is unique! You could not get involved in the political process in Europe as fast as you can in Canada, Mr. Speaker, and you know it. That is what is nice about

Canada and Quebec. If someone wants to take part in it, all he or she has to do is to join a political party whose philosophy he or she likes best and where he or she feels more at ease, and say: "I am doing it and not only that, I am going to contribute".

• (2115)

What is a \$25 contribution for someone who pays taxes and will get back \$19.75? The spirit of the elections act is a bit about all that. And it costs this person \$6.75 to say: "I am not only speaking or criticizing, I am taking part in it". Canadians by the thousands, by the millions, should set out to join political parties. But if it is not millions, it should be hundreds of thousands.

Well, this bill is very simple. It is the beginning of the reform. After listening to Lortie, after reading his report, after analyzing it, after digesting it, we produced a first update. We will continue very actively this week, I am going to tell those who have been very involved with the Lortie commission and those who have followed it closely that we have not put aside the Lortie report. We will carry on. It is called phase two. I have committed myself.

[English]

And I say that in English. My chairman is here. He knows that we would have never given our consent to phase number one. I know that the hon. member for Champlain and all colleagues feel the same, if we did not have the good conscience of knowing that we are going to come back with another report before the election which will be made on time. I see my chairman acknowledging. He is the hon. member for Calgary West who has been attacked unfairly by some people. I know that he is as determined as I am.

It is a public commitment. I am not going to fool around. I do not make a public commitment that I cannot hold. My public commitments are like my private commitments. When I say I do something, I do it. I would never have given my consent to this if I was not sure that we will proceed immediately and try to convince our colleagues to go further and further until the end of this parliament in order to modernize the institution.