

*Government Orders*

tee members to deal with the issue. I would ask my colleague, who does it very honourably anyhow, to speed up the process in phase two so that we can get to phase three and deal with the financing of political parties.

In closing, I will remind my friend that since 1988 the Prime Minister has always been in favour of cleaning up the way political parties are financed, and he has proven it many times. I think that imposing for the first time a spending limit on candidates for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada below \$1 million per candidate, shows the commitment of this government and of the Prime Minister to clean up political parties' financing as we will see with our chairman and the committees during the third phase of the report.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate—I have given the hon. member extra time. I have been watching the clock.

**Hon. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis):** So you turned him down, Mr. Speaker. I would have liked to have listened to his speech.

[Translation]

If there is an issue I have always been interested in, since my teen-age years as a matter of fact, it is the reform of electoral mores. I remember that when I was president of the young Liberals in the Laurier riding, when I was about to enter the provincial race after having been chosen as a candidate in the provincial election during the Jean Lesage era, we were already discussing the issue of electoral reform and of party financing. Throughout my career—as is known I did not run provincially for all kinds of reasons I have already explained in this House; at the request of Jean Lesage, I gave up my seat in favour of René Lévesque—I was elected in 1964 and I have always had a keen interest in the issues of electoral spending and election reform.

So, to put the debate in context and for the benefit of our listeners, let me say that what we are doing right now is revamping the Canada Elections Act so that it becomes a better instrument than it was yesterday, but certainly not as good as what we would like to have tomorrow.

[English]

I wish to thank very publicly our chairman—I like to call people by their name, but the rules say that I should call them by their district—the member for Calgary West.

[Translation]

I would also like to thank our vice-chairmen, the hon. member for Champlain and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and the committee members. We have been working together for a year, and I want to thank them because in Parliament often those who make the greatest fuss are not the ones who work the hardest. It is now 9 p.m., Monday but as early as 9 a.m. today, we were already getting ready to debate this legislation all day long and to continue discussing it, as we will keep on doing tomorrow and the rest of the week. That we do in parliamentary committee, or *commission parlementaire*, as they say in Quebec. It is tedious work. This committee managed to find a *modus vivendi*, if the Chair who rather likes those expressions allows me to say so, to come up with draft reform legislation which I generally support. But I wanted more, as our chairman would tell you. I will say again that I am very conservative about change. That is what I always say. Being a member of the Liberal Party, that remark makes my colleagues smile. I want to thank the pages who are working late tonight to allow us to dispose of this bill, and I also want to thank the university students who are listening carefully, because they are, in fact, more directly concerned by this debate than we are, since we are older.

• (2105)

We have been waiting a long time for this bill. People must know that it took a lot of time to come up with this 114 pages bill before the House tonight. One can get discouraged just by trying to read it, but it is a beginning. As my colleagues said earlier, it results from the famous report submitted by the Lortie commission which sat for more than two years and probably sounded out opinion and picked the brains of all academics in Canada, to such an extent that it has not finished publishing its findings yet. We, on the other hand, must act. We must modernize the legislation.