

officers. There is the list of electors to prepare and to forward to candidates. There is the enumeration to do.

We asked the Chief Electoral Officer what the minimum amount of time required to do all those things was under the present system, and he said at least 47 days. This is precisely what the committee decided to recommend to the government and this is the reason why Bill C-114 proposed a period of 47 days.

Clearly, I would like the election period to be even shorter, but for that we would have to find other means, other ways to accelerate the various administrative aspects without compromising the right of every Canadian to his or her vote on election day, and guaranteeing that this vote could be cast on election day.

Another element of these changes to the act provides for the continuation of the possibility for members of the Armed Forces or the federal Public Service posted abroad to vote by mail, but these provisions are now extended to provincial public servants. Electors in urban polling divisions will now be able to register on election day and then vote. This option is already available to rural voters. This addition is a clear example of the greater accessibility of the electoral system.

Under the present rules, electors in urban polling divisions cannot register on election day and then vote. The registration system in urban polling divisions is such that it will be done at a revision office. Registered voters must go to their polling station. This system was devised to reduce undue delays at the polling station and to prevent possible frauds.

The provisions prohibiting judges and handicapped people from voting have been struck down by the courts and are repealed by this bill. The bill also deals with the voting rights of inmates. Anyone serving a sentence of two years or more cannot vote.

• (2055)

The bill on electoral reform will also improve the administration of the election process. For example, enumeration of electors will be modified so that as many voters as possible can be registered. Furthermore, the revision period will be extended up to the fifth day before polling. All those measures will improve access to the electoral system.

Thanks to those amendments, our electoral procedure will be one of the most sophisticated in the world. For example, requirements concerning candidate nomination and filing of papers have been re-examined and will now take into account the increase in population and the

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value of the dollar. These new requirements should not hamper any serious candidate. The already existing embargo period imposed on parties and candidates during the first three weeks of the campaign, on election day and on the day before will also apply to third parties, in fairness to all participants in the electoral process.

And finally I would not want to take up too much House time, but I think the main purpose of our committee was first and foremost to allow the government to initiate this new elections act. I believe the work done by the committee, and by all the members of this House without exception, was such that all the ideas submitted to the government were the result of a consensus. We hope that the government will be as prompt in proposing a bill at the second and third stages as it was at the first. In doing so, it will allow our committee to complete the great task it was entrusted with, that is to amend the Canada Elections Act, to make it more efficient and, most of all, more in tune with the expectations of all Canadians.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the hon. member for Champlain. As he no doubt has noted, the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing proposed to limit the expenses of a candidate in a leadership race. We have heard these last few days that the Prime Minister had proposed such a limit for his own party. If his party had had a real limit during the leadership campaigns of 1976 and 1983, the Prime Minister himself would have been disqualified since he had not informed his party of his expenses and gifts he had received and so on. Canadians would undoubtedly have been spared the problems this government has created under this Prime Minister.

My question to the hon. member for Champlain is this: Would he want us now to adopt the royal commission's recommendations on the expenses of leadership candidates or is he satisfied with the system that has allowed the Prime Minister to become his party leader and that has led to the destruction of the Canadian government?

• (2100)

**Mr. Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised by my colleague's question; he is not usually partisan, at least in committee. Apparently, you are never too old to learn. I would like to remind him of this: If we had imposed on his own leader the limits we are about to impose on the next, he himself would have been disqualified. That is why one really has to be extremely careful with what one says. I think I know that my colleague is just as eager as I and the other commit-