

claim the same financial status for our electoral funds as other parties. We have our views, we do not want to be the servants of those who finance, we do not want to be bothered by those who are interested or not interested in seeing legislation passed in this House. We do not want any lobbying, we want to serve the people of our ridings. We do not want to serve individual interests and that is why the bill still leaves the door open to individual interests which will be able to influence the legislation by way of electoral funds.

[*English*]

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, I enter this debate to make just a short statement because of the importance which my party has attached to the subject of the bill before us ever since I have been actively associated with it, which goes back some 37 years. I want first of all to congratulate the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) for the thrust of the bill which he has put before the House. This is, I have no doubt, the result of the composition of this House since October 30 last.

When one compares the bill now before us with the bill which we had a year ago, the important changes that one sees, the fact that there is now some limit of party expenditures, the fact that there is now provision requiring disclosure, and several other aspects of the bill which are different from the one presented a year or so ago, one comes to certain conclusions. The vast improvements in the present bill cannot be due to anything but the fact that the government is not a majority government, that it has to pay attention to opposition parties and their views on this matter, and that the government knew and the President of the Privy Council knew from conversations with me throughout the last number of months—I am sure he had discussions with other members of this House as well—that the kind of things which at least my party would insist on in any such bill were the elements which I have already mentioned and which I am happy to find in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I will not deal with many details of the bill, but with only one or two. I think it is important when discussing this measure to try to see the reason why, throughout many years, so many people in this country and other democracies have demanded this kind of legislation on the statute books. Why have we done that? Why have we wanted this sort of bill? I suggest to you that there are three overriding objectives that genuine democrats of whatever political allegiance have always had in mind. The first is that elections ought not to be the property of those who can get the largest amount of money somewhere at election time; that elections ought not to be bought by large amounts of money by parties, in the democratic process, and this is what has happened in the past.

The second objective that all democrats of whatever political allegiance have had is that candidates ought not to be discriminated against because they themselves have not the funds, or are not in a position to collect the funds to fight an election in this modern age of electronic media which are very expensive. The third, and perhaps most important, objective which everyone has had in mind is that the people of a democracy are entitled to know the

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source of the funds which political parties and political candidates use at election time and between elections.

I have frequently accused—and I make no apology for it—the Liberal and Conservative parties of this country of being psychologically and sometimes, if you like, subliminally—without being conscious of it—in fact obligated to the source of their huge funds. These funds, according to one money raiser for the Liberal Party—I think it was Mr. Godfrey in Ontario—Come primarily from 95 corporations. I think it was Mr. Godfrey, an important fund raiser for the Liberal Party in Ontario, who said that.

• (1630)

**An hon. Member:** It was Mr. Rankin.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I am told that it was Mr. Rankin rather than Mr. Godfrey who made that statement in Ottawa some months ago. I say that when a party, whether Liberal or Conservative, is able to collect several millions of dollars—and Professor Paltiel was dealing with what the Liberal and Conservative parties in Canada spent in 1968, and is still working on the 1972 election—that party which collects a major part of its huge sum of money from 95 corporations is bound to be affected and influenced by the source of that money.

I make no apology for having felt throughout my political activities and throughout my life that there is no way in which a party placed in that position is not likely to give preference to the wishes and objectives of the large corporations of this country. I have no doubt in my mind that the reason there is in our taxation system a whole raft of unjustified and, indeed, antisocial concessions to the large corporations of this country stems from the fact that the Liberal Party—and the Conservative Party when it is in power—is obligated to those very corporations for its lifeblood as a political party between elections and at election time.

This is not an accusation that those funds are given on condition that some good is to be returned to the corporations that give money. That is not the way it works, Mr. Speaker. All of us in politics are much more subtle than that. We do not need to be hit on the head to know exactly what is wanted. It is not that there are strings attached to these contributions; it is the very fact that they are made by the large corporations, and all that that involves must concern us. We must be concerned about the close relationship between the corporations and the fund raiser for a political party and all that that relationship involves, because it results inevitably in an influence, whether consciously or unconsciously, being exerted on governments and parties in their relationships with the corporations which provide the funds.

What if someone says to me, "What about the NDP? It gets contributions from labour organizations in this country?" That question is perfectly right, perfectly justified, and I have never denied the fact. Indeed, I have deliberately made public since becoming leader of my party, and I did that even when I held office in my party when I was short of being the leader, that we get contributions from unions in Canada, from Canadian union members and Canadian union locals. I am pleased and proud to have that support from the labour organizations of this country.