

Greyhound Races

record of this Government, will undoubtedly be spent and this Parliament will never know on what.

I am sure all Canadians have difficulty envisaging an amount of \$29.55 billion. It was the amount of \$4 billion which triggered the ringing of bells not so long ago which almost brought this Parliament to a halt. This borrowing is in an amount which each of us is trying to depict to our listening and reading audience. It is an amount which represents over 90 per cent of what all Canadians together, all across this land, will put away in savings in any single year. It is an amount, Mr. Speaker, approaching \$3,000 for each Canadian taxpayer. It is, in short, Mr. Speaker, a staggering sum of money which simply cannot be justified. Cut it in half! Deficits were once the domain of accountants and economists. The ordinary Canadian paid little or no attention to what deficit financing was, until John Turner came along. In fiscal year 1971-1972, the deficit of this nation stood at \$702 million. Four years later, just four years, that deficit was approaching \$5.5 billion. Canada has not looked back since, except once. The sole exception was the fiscal year 1979-1980 when the Progressive Conservative Government addressed the problem of our national deficit and trimmed it by almost \$800 million.

I call it five o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): The House will now proceed to Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—PUBLIC BILLS

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Shall all orders and items preceding Order No. 8 be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Stand.

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● (1700)

CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENT RESPECTING GREYHOUND RACES

Mr. Raymond Dupont (Chambly) moved that Bill C-210, an Act to Amend the Criminal Code (greyhound races), be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with this opportunity to speak to Bill C-210, which I tabled in the House on December 20, 1983. The aim of this Bill is to amend Section 188 of the Criminal Code, and its title is: An Act to amend the Criminal Code concerning greyhound races.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we do not often see private businesses prepared to invest \$12 million without asking the Government for financial assistance. As far as job creation is

concerned, 600 new jobs could be created in a project of this kind, which would promote the dog breeding industry in Quebec and several other Canadian provinces.

In terms of economic potential, Mr. Speaker, establishing the first greyhound track in Quebec on the South Shore, less than an hour's drive from a major urban centre with a population of three million, would have an impact, and people are inclined to forget this, on the use of public transportation on the South Shore. Second, Mr. Speaker, it would also have considerable bearing on the development of tourism and the necessary infrastructure, such as hotels, restaurants and all the accommodation, goods and services required within the immediate vicinity of a greyhound track.

Another important point, Mr. Speaker, would be the tax revenue this would generate. An undertaking of this size would generate tax revenue in the form of amusement tax and business tax in connection with race track operations. This would make it possible to generate greater regional activity in other areas. For instance, the town of St. Hubert alone could collect between \$600,000 and \$1 million in taxes. With one race track, the Provincial Government could collect over \$20 million in taxes the first year.

On December 22, 1978, the Government of Quebec passed a Bill regulating lotteries, races, advertising contests and amusement parks, which, in addition to horse racing, allows all other kinds of racing, including greyhound races.

Mr. Speaker, the reason we must act quickly is that the United States might get ahead of us in this field. Only last weekend, Mr. Speaker, I read in the weekend press that a greyhound track was scheduled to open in the Vermont region at any time. As far as support for the plan in my region is concerned, it is coming from the Société pour le progrès de la rive sud, the town council of St. Hubert—a large town in my riding which 63,000 inhabitants—where the first greyhound race track could be located. There are also the Association touristique régionale du Richelieu, local business councils and so forth. It is unjustifiable that only men on horseback be given a monopoly over the racing industry in Canada. Greyhound races are not a new phenomenon in sports and leisure, Mr. Speaker. England is known as the world capital of horse racing and has over 150 greyhound tracks. Japan, France and Australia have some as well. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, on the continent in which we live, only our country, Canada, has a limited number of such tracks. That is most unfortunate because Canadian Racing Association surveys indicate quite clearly that the demand for this type of entertainment is very strong.

Mr. Speaker, it seems obvious to me that we cannot accept horse racing and bar greyhound racing without being openly unfair to greyhound racing enthusiasts, for reasons which are not immediately apparent, not to mention the fact that many Canadians take holidays to go and spend a lot of money in the United States, either in Florida or in New England. To those