

Criminal Code

without losing any face whatsoever, to remove the government from the support of greed and avarice with respect to public finances.

This debate grows more weird, strange and confusing every day. On the one hand we have the state, with respect to gross indecency, explaining its stand on the ground that the state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation, and on the other hand we have the state saying it does have a place in the gambling dens of the nation. There is a fundamental inconsistency here that must considerably disturb the Minister of Justice. I hope the minister will accept the amendment and at least extract himself from the dilemma in which he finds himself with regard to these very basic and important moral issues.

I know the tendency is to criticize anyone who takes a stand on these issues as being antediluvian, a sort of social jingoist, if I may use that word, or someone suffering from what might be called a residual puritanism. These measures are put forward in terms of reform and progress. This is not a progressive step. This is the most retrogressive step that any government could take. Look at history. The problem of gambling is not new among mankind. Indeed, as I have already indicated, it is one of the seven deadly sins. The progress of the human family has been in the reverse direction; as mankind and his society became more enlightened and progressive, the vice of gambling was gradually abolished. One can follow the pattern throughout most of the western world.

It is governments which are confused about fiscal policy and lack social responsibility which have authorized state lotteries. I can refer, of course, to South American republics. Sometimes I think Canada is becoming more like a South American republic every day under this just society. State lotteries are a retrogressive step; they are a step back into a period when governments were less stable and less fiscally responsible. I urge the minister, because he is responsible for putting this bill through the house, to exert the authority that must be his and not take Canada back in the direction of official sponsorship by the state of the vice of gambling.

I could go on at some length on this matter, but I think the point has been made by many speakers. As a final word may I say that perhaps one of the worst aspects of the state's indulgence in the promotion of lotteries and gambling is the blow it strikes at genuine philanthropy and charity. It permits the

something for nothing philosophy. It militates against the war on poverty, because the people who tend to be caught up in the vicious grip of gambling are those who can least afford to be involved. It undermines the strength of human personality. It promotes greed and avarice, and it is compulsive like alcoholism.

I am sure that if we took a referendum on this matter the minister would find that the vast majority of Canadians are against the state's participation in gambling and lotteries. As the leader of the New Democratic party said just a moment ago, it is being provided for at the national level surreptitiously, so there is a double affront to the people of Canada. Surely the majority of Canadians have some rights and privileges. I hope the Minister of Justice will not carry the charade further and will accept a reasonable amendment which at least removes the state from this sort of promotion of social vice.

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Speaker, would my hon. colleague allow a question?

Mr. Dinsdale: Certainly.

Mr. Mongrain: I am quite at a loss to follow the trend of his reasoning.

Mr. Dinsdale: I can understand that.

Mr. Mongrain: That is why I am asking him the question. The hon. member has told us about the seven deadly sins, among which are greed and avarice, and the state having to take these measures in order to help its fiscal situation. Am I right?

Mr. Dinsdale: You have it absolutely right.

● (4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Mongrain: How does the hon. member reconcile this train of thought with the fact that in this country, for as long as I can remember, churches of all denominations have organized raffles and bingoes which are, after all, games of pure luck?

Mr. Dinsdale: I think the hon. member missed the point of my contribution completely. We cannot deal with the vices of individuals or of organizations, because ours is a pluralistic society. As a member of parliament it is not my obligation to try to urge that the state legislate morality. Morality cannot be legislated. The point I was making was simply that the state should not promote immorality in this bill.