

*Criminal Code*

track betting. It states that if Greenwood opens its pari-mutuel system in order to bet on races at another track, it is not expected to generate nearly the attendance figures realized at racing events. Perhaps the minister will find it in his heart to answer, when given the opportunity, the following question: Is it not reasonable to assume that people who go to race tracks for the purpose of placing bets and enjoying racing, but who have to travel some 50 or 100 miles in order to do so, will choose simply to go down to the closed neighbourhood track or to telephone the local track to place their bets? Of course attendance will be detrimentally affected by the legislation, and the end result will be a further deterioration, as the hon. member for North Vancouver-Burnaby indicated, of a fairly progressive, reasonably lucrative and well-run operation. It will be a further deterioration of the industry, and we will be back here in the not too distant future looking for other ways to get more money to compensate for the loss in attendance, and therefore the loss of revenue to people dependent upon race tracks for their livelihood.

● (1430)

I must confess that I am having difficulty with this bill. I am trying, and I know the minister realizes it. It is difficult for me to bring myself to vote against this legislation, given the priority the government has placed upon it. It is difficult, but I think I might be forced into it.

**Mr. Young:** I might join you.

**Mr. Deans:** The hon. member for Beaches (Mr. Young) indicates that he may even join me, because he is as worried about it as I am.

I am sure Mr. Speaker is wondering why we are dealing with this matter today. Why is the government attempting to undermine the stability of racing in Canada with this legislation, given that there are many other important matters with which we could be dealing, such as unemployment? Imagine what we might have been able to do in an afternoon discussing the major unemployment problems confronting people from coast to coast in the country.

**An hon. Member:** This won't cost jobs.

**Mr. Deans:** The hon. member whose riding I cannot recall at the moment, who is sitting over there in the back where she ought to be, is interjecting and saying that there will be no loss of jobs. I suggest to her that there will be a loss of jobs at the tracks as a result of this piece of legislation. It will make it unnecessary for as many people to work at the tracks as were needed prior to its implementation. I am absolutely positive—and only the future will bear me out—that as a result of this legislation a deterioration in the crowds at the tracks will inevitably occur.

**Mr. Cook:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**Mr. Deans:** What is out of order? I am entitled to speak to the bill.

**Mr. Cook:** Would the hon. member accept a point of clarification?

**Mr. Deans:** No. I will be happy to accept it when I am finished. Clarification is not something one offers, and on top of that, obviously it was not a point of order.

I do not doubt for one moment that the crowds will dwindle away as the punters make their bets by telephone. Local tracks will only require people to relay the bets. There will be a loss of direct employment, such as the people who sell at concessions or work at the kinds of employment which go with crowds in attendance. I think the legislation is self-defeating. In fact, I was really surprised when I listened to the hon. member that he himself did not come to that conclusion.

Then, of course, there are all the other various arguments. What next, I say? The hon. member said that there has been horse racing since there have been domestic horses and that as a result there has been betting of one kind or another since the inception of horse racing. That is not really a good argument, nevertheless. Many things have been in existence since the beginning of time that we do not condone or support, so I can hardly think that that argument is persuasive.

Then he went on to explain, as did the minister, that the racing industry needs this legislation. I suppose the same argument could be used by those who run football teams in Canada. For example, Montreal lost substantial sums of money over two or three seasons. Its football team may feel that it would be helpful to have pari-mutuel betting on football so that it could derive some revenue from the betting which takes place to offset its losses. Then there are the various hockey teams across the country which are not really making it at the gate. They might feel that pari-mutuel betting on hockey games would be useful.

**Mr. Lapierre:** Wait until the next bill.

**Mr. Deans:** This is why I am talking about it. That is exactly why. The hon. member is a good straight man. I need him, I really do. Then there are soccer teams which are barely eking out a living. I am sure they would like to have the benefit of pari-mutuel betting. We could have it at the local ball diamond. If it is baseball, one would nip down to the local ball diamond, go to the concession and place a wager on the ball game. One might not bet on the game which is being played at the time—and there might not even be a game taking place—but on some other game which is being played in some other part of the country or some other part of the world. It could be argued that this would really be helpful and that it would be one way for them to make up their losses. The hon. member opposite who interjected said that I should wait for the next bill. That is exactly what worries me.

I know Mr. Speaker will be interested in what I am about to say, and that is that I do not like the drift toward more and more legalized gambling. I am no moralist, but I do not like the drift which is taking place. I did not like it when I was a member of the Ontario legislature and we began with—what was the name of it?