

Criminal Code

as well as the amount of tax dollars. As I have said, lotteries are an attempt to evade the principle of responsible government.

I hope that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) will change his mind and will agree that the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is valid.

I do not know if this will be a sufficient reason for the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald), but I submit that when a church, a lodge or a fraternal organization has a raffle, a punch board, or whatever other means they may use to raise funds, in almost all cases the overwhelming majority of those funds are raised from their own members. It is a way of taxing themselves to pay for their own organization. It may also be an admission by an organization that it is unable to do its financing through what could be considered more ethical and moral means. But it is still a way of taxing themselves for their own benefit because they cannot go to property, incomes or corporations for their financing. They rely upon voluntary giving, and they look upon raffles as a form of voluntary giving.

I suppose that all hon. members, after spending a week-end in their constituencies, return here with pockets full of raffle tickets. If one were to add them up they would represent a fair number of dollars over a year and very few, if any of us, have ever won a prize. I know I haven't. I am a born loser in these things. I hope that I am making some reasonable rationalization as between state lotteries and raffles held by fraternal, charitable and religious organizations. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that I consistently refuse to buy a raffle ticket from an organization whose aims and purposes I oppose. For example, I would never buy a ticket in a draw sponsored by the Liberal Association in Regina-Lake Centre constituency.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): But each time you run as a candidate for the N.D.P. that is the greatest gamble you can take of your life.

Mr. Benjamin: When political parties hold raffles in my constituency most of the proceeds come from their own members and supporters. It is a method of taxing themselves. But surely, it is not logical in a democratic society for a government to attempt to evade responsibility and the consequence of taxation by using lotteries as a mythical, easy way to help finance government. Surely, this is an appeal to base instincts and base motives.

[Mr. Benjamin.]

Surely, it is an appeal to greed and selfishness of the worst kind. While this may be bad for individuals and small organizations, surely it is doubly bad for governments. I hope that the Minister of Justice will agree that the responsibility for and consequences of tax levying by governments must remain with the field of legislating for taxation rather than in the field of lotteries.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, now before the house is a motion proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) to delete from the omnibus bill, paragraphs (a) and (b) of clause 13 seeking to legalize lottery schemes at the levels of the federal as well as the provincial governments.

Mr. Speaker, clause 13 of the omnibus bill reads in part as follows and I quote paragraph (a) of subsection 1:

(a) for the Government of Canada to conduct and manage a lottery scheme in accordance with regulations made by the Governor in Council—

Moreover it would be legal, and I read paragraph (b):

(b) for the government of a province, either alone or in conjunction with the government of another province, to conduct and manage a lottery scheme in that province, in accordance with any law enacted by the legislature of that province—

Mr. Speaker, it is then a matter of establishing a national lottery scheme, making it possible for a province to participate. On the other hand, those of us who follow those questions closely, already know about a municipal lottery which, in fact, is nothing but a voluntary tax levied by the City of Montreal.

The City of Sherbrooke has also approved the establishment of a municipal lottery similar to that of Montreal but on a smaller scale.

However, in paragraph (c) of the bill, it is further proposed to legalize any lottery scheme for a charitable or religious organization, under a licence issued by a province, provided the benefits are used for charitable or religious purposes.

● (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, there are consequently many kinds of lotteries. In my opinion, it is important then to distinguish among them, with regard to the amendment of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that seeks to reject the government proposals.