

Criminal Code

out of its sweepstakes. The idea of sweepstakes has been tried recently in the state of New York and the reports coming from that state already suggest it has been a failure. It has also been tried in our own country, in the city of Montreal, and that city seems to be in greater financial difficulty now than it was before this venture was undertaken. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that state lotteries cannot be operated without giving to the people the notion that this is going to be an easy way of providing for public needs, whether they are welfare, health, education or what have you programs. The money obtained in this way simply will not be sufficient to underwrite these programs. Furthermore lotteries, particularly state lotteries, are really the most regressive form of taxation the mind of man can conceive.

• (3:10 p.m.)

We have enough regressive taxes already from this government across the way. There is the social development tax which is being collected from the people of Canada now even though it is not yet the law of the land. It is a highly regressive tax. It is a tax of 2 per cent payable on the first \$6,000 of taxable income but anyone with a taxable income over \$6,000 does not pay one cent more. So the result is very regressive. However, when there is an attempt to raise public money by lotteries the people make their contribution not according to ability to pay but according to their dire need and their desperate hope that somehow they may break out of their poverty. The fact is it is the poor who will put the money into state lotteries. As a result they will be caught in a scheme of regressive taxation that is utterly wrong, utterly unscientific and utterly out of line with any economic theory that applies in this country today. So I hope we will make this distinction.

As I said a moment ago, I have been pleased with the letters I have received from a number of churches, both national bodies and local congregations. I have noted with interest their comments on this very subject. The churches write to me to say they do not like gambling at all. They think it caters to the worst in people, that it degrades and cheapens life; but then they say they realize it is unrealistic to try to legislate today against private games of chance or against the fun people have in various kinds of small private lotteries. In other words, the churches are being realistic in admitting there is a point beyond which they or we cannot go.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Having said that, however, the churches come down exactly where I have come down, that is, whatever else we may agree to, let us not make the social and economic mistake of establishing or even permitting state lotteries at the federal, provincial or municipal level. I agree with them and I welcome their support. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner), when bringing forward this bill and speaking on the matter, said it was a kind of local option the government had in mind in bringing this forward in the bill in this way. I submit it is more than that. If this bill passes containing the provisions about state lotteries this will be parliamentary approval of the principle of raising money in this way and of the principle of the most retrogressive form of taxation there is. Therefore when I move an amendment at the report stage to clause 13 of the bill to delete the reference to state lotteries, unless the standing committee has already taken it out, I hope my amendment will receive the support of a majority of the members of this house.

When I move that amendment it will not be cluttered, obscure or part of a package. It will stand on its own feet just as will the amendments regarding other contentious subjects. I look forward to the report stage of this bill. At that point we will stand up, we will be counted, and we will take our decision on these various points. I hope the result will be a bill that is even better than it is now. It will be better if it deals with the problems of abortion or homosexuality in human terms, and it will be better than it is now if it deals with such problems as corporal punishment, the right to counsel, the deletion of criminal records and wiretapping which are not contained in the bill. It will also be better than it is now if we take out the retrograde proposal to approve state lotteries. Therefore it will be a pleasure for me to vote for the second reading of this bill so that it can be studied by the committee, but either in the committee or back in the house I hope we will make the kind of improvements I have tried to suggest.

Mr. Steven Otto (York East): Mr. Speaker, my purpose in speaking to this bill is to bring to the attention of the house and the country the little things that appear in bills. When we discuss vast subjects, as we did in respect of the house rules, the comment can be made that things are passed that are not even debated. The point I want to bring to the attention of the house is a small one in this bill. It has to do with clause 16 which involves drinking and driving. I wish to