

Criminal Code

the country and create a number of other problems. The minister is young and intelligent, and I find it hard to believe he thinks this is a reform measure.

Mr. Woolliams: He is younger than you.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): His concept of reform is vastly different from mine. I do not find very much wrong with some of the other amendments in this bill. In fact, in some cases, there is too little being done. As was mentioned earlier, half a loaf of bread is better than none. I cannot understand why one proposal in this omnibus bill sets back the whole trend of reform. I presume there have been political pressures, perhaps within the government caucus. Perhaps there have been pressures we have not heard about in this chamber which have been brought to bear on the department and its officials. The government has not assessed what is proper reform when drafting in this bill.

I will be happy to support this amendment. As I say, it does not go far enough. Religious institutions should be teaching that we should not expect something for nothing. It is shocking to see that they might be permitted, under this bill, to carry on games of chance. There are the very people who would condemn a man who becomes addicted to gambling, whether at the race track, in a poker game or in whatever form it may appear. Now, of course such a man will be encouraged in a large way to believe this is a good thing. He will even be encouraged, in the advertising that will follow, to believe that in some way he is supporting his country because he buys lottery tickets on a regular basis.

● (9:30 p.m.)

If that is the kind of attitude we are going to generate amongst the people of this country, then God help us all because we have fallen far short of understanding what it is that really makes for an effective society in which people work together, not for one person to gain a great many advantages over another without earning them, but in which each individual makes his own contribution for the mutual benefit of all.

I plead, as other members have done, that the minister give this matter very serious consideration. I would also speak frankly to hon. members on all sides of the house, telling them that in my estimation this is the most illiberal aspect of these amendments to the Criminal Code.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my support for the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for reasons that I do not think have yet been expressed this evening but that I believe are in the minds of members in all parties. I support the amendment because it seems to me that government lotteries whether they be federal, provincial or municipal, are essentially an evasion of the principle of responsible government. They are an attempt at the evasion of the consequences of taxation legislated by parliament, legislatures and municipal councils. They are an attempt to finance government by taking advantage of something that might be considered a weakness in all of us. They are an appeal to an instinct or to a state of mind that has been generated through the brainwashing that has taken place for so many years, the brainwashing which says that there is something intrinsically bad about a tax dollar spent, and something intrinsically good about a dollar spent by or for private endeavour.

Government lotteries in my opinion are an attempt to create a myth or an illusion that there is an easy way to finance the cost of governing ourselves. They are not an easy way, Mr. Speaker. Those of us who are in parliaments, legislatures and municipal councils know that the ways of paying for governing ourselves are never easy. All of us, as legislators, accept the responsibility of assessing the costs of governing ourselves, and from time to time should we assess the wrong ways of taxing ourselves we should be prepared to accept any consequences. Lotteries are an attempt to evade such consequences.

Whatever demand there may be in the country for lotteries, be it a majority demand or a minority demand, be it from some provinces or municipalities, even be it in the minds of some of the members of the government, I submit that demand has arisen mainly as a result of the brainwashing that has taken place as a result of the unholy amount of editorials and publications that have continually condemned government spending and government taxation. This myth that there is something bad about a tax dollar spent and something good about a private dollar spent needs to be exploded once and for all.

It seems to me that legislators above all should be doing a positive job in stressing the value of tax dollars, in urging citizens to be concerned about those from whom tax dollars are raised and how they are raised and spent,