

Criminal Code

should be required to bring in legislation, submit that legislation to the house, have it examined by members of the house and by the appropriate standing committee, and have it dealt with as any other measure would be dealt with. What we are being asked to do here is to give the government a blank cheque, to say to the cabinet, "You can draft any kind of plan you like. You can completely reverse the process of fiscal policy and take from the many and give to the few, and you can do this without reference to parliament, without parliament having one word to say about it until after you have established the plan and it is in operation." And the only privilege which the Minister of Justice says that we will be allowed then is that on an allotted day we may say we like it or we do not like it. If that is democracy, then we are going down a very dangerous road toward the kind of totalitarianism that is all too common in other parts of the world.

Mr. Stanfield: I wish to ask the Minister of Justice a question. Is it his opinion—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the Leader of the Opposition but under our Standing Orders my understanding is that the only way he can pose a question is if the Minister of Justice has the floor, and the minister has already spoken—unless, of course, there is unanimous consent. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: No.

● (3:30 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, to assess the amendment now before us, it is important to analyse the reasons that have led the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) to move it.

Under our present economic system, the taxpayer is called to depend exclusively on taxes to promote his welfare, and this brings us to make some particular remarks.

In principle, it is abnormal at this time to rely on the exploitation of some passions to obtain additional revenue, for the fact of exploiting the fondness of the public for gambling is, in my opinion, a tax on passion. Several bodies, among which the various religious denominations of this country, make it clear, from a moral standpoint, that we exploit the passion for gambling through lotteries.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

In the present economic system, we endeavour by all available means to tax, sur-tax and over-overtax. However, there may be a more pleasant way of getting money out of the taxpayers' pockets in order to finance the general administration of the country. Therefore, the legalization of lotteries would be based on the reaction of the people.

I agree with the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Mongrain) because I know that for many years provincial governments, and more particularly that of the province of Quebec, as well as municipalities have been asking that the Criminal Code be amended in order to enable provinces and municipalities to conduct lotteries.

If one agrees with the distinction I have just made, I think that the people would behave in the following way: they would back the legalization of lotteries not because it is good in itself but because in the present system different solutions must be found, and that lotteries may be acceptable.

It is only in view of those considerations that I say I do not entirely agree with the contents of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

This is proof that members of the Ralliement créditiste, are not afraid of freely expressing their opinions. In spite of the fact that our leader (Mr. Caouette) and the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin), have already declared themselves in favour of the amendment, none of us remains silent. We exert no control whatsoever on individual freedom and we are all free to express ourselves. Were all the other members as free as we are, especially on the government side, the administration of the country would be healthier, more efficient, and much more representative of the people. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we have requested that this bill be split.

One can readily agree to most of the clauses on this bill and still be compelled to vote against it because of some clauses forced upon us.

To come back to the amendment, Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with this particular part of it which tends to delete paragraphs (a) and (b). The first reads as follows:

Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this Part relating to gaming and betting, it shall be lawful,

(a) for the government of Canada to conduct and manage a lottery scheme in accordance with regulations made by the governor in council and for that purpose, for any person, in accordance with