

Madam Speaker: I was going to mention the devotion of the pages at the sitting tomorrow but I get the impression that perhaps this is the last sitting. Unfortunately, the Chair always seems to be the last to know what is going on! I do not begrudge that as I love these little surprises.

In the name of all Hon. Members I want to thank the pages for the service they have given to the House of Commons and to each of us individually. We are always happy to see the new pages come but we are also very sorry to see the others leave as we become attached to them. We know they are going on to bigger and better things and we accept that as a fact of life. We certainly wish them well in all of their new endeavours.

[Translation]

On behalf of all the Members of this House, I would like to thank the pages for the excellent work they have done for the House of Commons and its Members, and I hope that the time they spent with us will have been worthwhile. I must say that we have followed their initiation to political life with affection and interest. There is no doubt that working as a page in the House of Commons is an altogether exceptional introduction to political life, to Parliament and to the game of political strategy that is inherent to all Parliaments. I trust that they were edified by what they saw and heard, and I am sure that they learned a great deal and will share their knowledge of politics with their fellow students at the universities where they will be going now.

We wish them every success with their future plans, and we are sorry to see them go. We like our pages very much and all Members always have a very special feeling for the pages in the House. We wish them every success in their careers, and we hope to see them back often, since the pages have made a habit of coming back to Ottawa from time to time to work a few hours in the House of Commons.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ATHLETIC CONTESTS AND EVENTS POOLS ACT

MEASURE TO PROVIDE GOVERNMENT OPERATED POOL SYSTEMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lumley (for Mr. Joyal) that Bill C-165, to provide for financial assistance for industrial development in all regions of Canada, be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Mr. Speaker, we have moved from a worthy subject to an unworthy subject, that being Bill C-95, an Act to provide for the Government to operate pools systems on combinations of athletic contests and events and to amend the Criminal Code. This would mean it would not be illegal for the Government to run the numbers racket and to change the Income Tax Act so that people who win—and also people who lose—will not be in violation of that Act. That is one of the interesting things

Athletic Contests and Events Pools Act

about the Income Tax Act; if you win money you do not pay tax but if you lose money you cannot write it off.

I want to sum up the discussions that have been going on regarding this disgraceful Act. The first thing it does is establish another Crown corporation. That in itself is a disgraceful act because the record of Crown corporations established by the Government has been less than sterling.

● (1530)

I must admit that every time I see this Government establishing a new Crown corporation, I can see a brand-new bureaucracy being developed; a brand-new area wherein it can appoint its friends, and take care of them; a brand-new area in which to raise taxes in a sneaky way. And that is exactly what this is; it is a sneaky way to raise taxes. It is a disgraceful act because it is using very worth-while projects to raise money, almost to the extent of blackmailing these various organizations into encouraging Hon. Members of Parliament to pass the Act so that in fact they can receive some of the returns from this numbers racket which this Government is going to set up.

Another reason why this is a disgraceful act is the whole question of morality. The federal Government is getting back into gambling. This time it will say that it is not a lottery. The Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Regan)—old “come fly with me”—tries to tell us that this is a game of skill, that people will have to sit down and think about that hockey game, baseball game, or whatever sport is involved. One must sit down and think very carefully about not only who is going to win that game, but what the exact score will be. The Minister says this is going to take a great deal of skill; therefore, this is not a lottery, it is not a numbers game, it is a skill game. I believe that kind of representation by the Minister is disgraceful.

The Minister also made some other statements. For example, on March 18, 1982, the day after my 42nd birthday, he made this outlandish statement: “It is important that funds become available soon so that the planning and preparation of facilities can begin”. In other words, he was saying: “Look, if this lottery is not established, if this ‘numbers racket’ is not established, if we cannot get it underway, the XV Winter Olympics will not get underway”. That in itself was extremely misleading. I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, that Bill C-95 is going to be a very unfortunate piece of legislation coming in these times. I believe we will all be sorry a year or two years down the road that this Bill was even brought into the House, let alone passed by the Liberal Government.

I would like to make some predictions. This corporation will turn into another Liberal patronage machine; there is no question about that. Canada’s greatest athletic supporter sits there and shakes his head no, that is not true. He knows full well, however, that it will become another Liberal patronage machine, probably one of the greatest it has. It has started already. The Minister provided a list and it is obvious.