

Criminal Code

of the member who does not understand what is happening in the energy industry. It is affecting directly a community in the country, Fort Erie and the Niagara Falls area. This is in addition to lay-offs which Inco has caused in Port Colborne, where several hundred people are affected by a strike, also in Fleet Industries, where 300 people have been laid off. So there is a very serious economic problem in that part of the country. If on top of that we layer a shutdown of a major employer such as the Fort Erie racetrack, we could have a very serious situation in what used to be a thriving part of our country.

I would also point out that the Fort Erie track in itself has lost a secondary market. That secondary market is Kitchener and Toronto and the communities around the major population centres of Toronto. The price of gasoline is causing people to think twice before they will drive 70, 80 or 90 miles. That market is shrinking, and that is having a direct impact on the attendance at the Fort Erie racetrack. That same problem, that same phenomenon is affecting a number of racetracks in the country today. Therefore, it is important that there be this legislation to allow those tracks access to the former market base that they had. To that extent it is important that we proceed with this legislation.

Moral considerations have been raised in the House. I have had these raised also with me in discussions I have had with my colleagues and with others outside the House. We cannot ignore the impact of the increase in any breakdown of the morality of our people. My colleague from North Vancouver-Burnaby (Mr. Cook) has outlined it very clearly. He said that there will be a greater degree of control on organized crime as a result of this legislation. He has pointed out the comments made by Don Winterton of the Race Track Security Canada organization as well as the comments of Mr. Harold Adamson, the security director of the Ontario Jockey Club. These gentlemen have a clear understanding, being former police chiefs themselves, of the impact of organized crime on betting. I always feel concerned when it appears that there could be an increase in betting as a result of some action taken by government. But this is not one of those situations where the direct result of this legislation will be an increase in betting. It will be a more controlled, more organized betting and more under the auspices of the government than has been the case in the past.

I might point out, Mr. Speaker, as a humorous sidelight, that there is one little anomaly here, an ironic situation. About three or four years ago one of the exercise boys at the Ontario Jockey Club did hit the jackpot, that one in three million, or one in a million and a half chance of winning the million dollars. He did win. He got this money and he went directly to the president of the Ontario Jockey Club, took his advice on how to invest the money. He is now living in the same elite apartment building in my riding that the president of the Jockey Club used to live in.

Mr. Cullen: Where is the president?

Mr. Wilson: So it is not all one way. There are some winners in the lottery game.

There is one other aspect of this, and I am quite serious about it. The minister changed the legislation here so that there is a much greater degree of administration of legislation under regulation at his discretion. We have seen this shift from legislative control into regulatory control to a much greater extent recently. We saw the minister enacting the telephone betting through order in council. In this bill we have seen that he has taken a large chunk of the legislation and switched it so that it will be done by regulation.

I pointed out some of the problems that the industry is concerned about. It is now subject to his regulatory capability and to the guidance that his department will give him on how the regulations should be administered. Bureaucratic control here again is taking over another industry to a greater extent.

We saw in Bill C-48 last year that the minister of energy said time and again: "This is the way we will administer this act." Now, less than a year having passed since that legislation was enacted by Parliament, we have seen the minister changing the direction that he had told us originally was the way in which he was going to administer the discretionary elements of Bill C-48. It is a very serious matter that we are considering here, the shift from legislative to regulatory control. I will not get into a great debate on this today but I just comment to the House that this is something that we on this side take very seriously. We feel that there must be a reversal of this trend. I encourage the minister to take that message to his cabinet colleagues.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I believe, we should be going ahead with this legislation. I recognize that there are some problems on the moral side. People are concerned that this will increase betting. I am satisfied it will not increase betting but will control it to a greater extent.

• (1520)

I repeat my request to the minister. I think it would be helpful to us in voting on this legislation if the minister would be somewhat more forthcoming about how he proposes to regulate those protective elements to which I referred earlier in my remarks. If the minister is able to satisfy our concerns, I believe we should be able to pass this bill quickly.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Deniger (La Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief. The few comments that I want to make in this House are in fact in support of this bill, and I must admit first of all that I am prejudiced in favour of the bill as I have owned racehorses in the past and, as soon as I can afford it, in other words as soon as my political career is over, I intend to buy more amblers and trotters to take part in this sport which is really exceptional and important for the economic life of our country.

I therefore believe that it is important to recall, Mr. Speaker, that in Quebec, for instance, over 4,000 workers are directly employed because of horseraces and that there has been a problem these last few years because the purses have