

For my part, I hope to be able to attend the meetings of the agriculture committee. Although I am not the agriculture critic for my Party, I am the justice critic and this is an amendment to the Criminal Code. I am also interested to know why it is that a number of provinces including the Province of Ontario are objecting to this Bill. I would like to hear their points of view. As well, I would like to hear why the United Church of Canada objects to this Bill. To view these objections and the process implied by these objections as somehow being an obstruction is totally unworthy.

We are parliamentarians here. We ought to recognize that there is a right way and a wrong way to deal with legislation. We know that there are serious voices like at least one or more provincial Government and a very important religious institution that wish to be heard. We should not urge each other to try to rush the Bill through without giving it the minimum amount of debate.

We in Canada have reasonable procedures and I think we should follow those reasonable procedures. Normally, a Criminal Code amendment would go to the justice committee, but that is a technicality. I intend to participate in the process of the Bill as it goes through the agriculture committee, and I would urge all Hon. Members, particularly new Members, to take our rules seriously. Let us not depart from them. Let us not seek unanimous consent to try to depart from procedures that have been established and tested by time without a very good reason for doing so.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, I suppose almost everyone has his or her favourite story relating to the sport of kings. I do not know if I can proffer a story as colourful as that of my Hon. friend from Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). I certainly cannot match his colourful oratory.

I live very near Assiniboia Downs in the City of Winnipeg. It is located in my riding of Winnipeg—St. James. I have visited Assiniboia Downs many, many times, being about only five minutes from there. I have at times zipped out to Assiniboia Downs after dinner in the evening to catch a couple of races.

I recall a number of years ago being at Assiniboia Downs with a friend of mine. He and I were having a chat between races and we were set upon, as it were, by a young boy of I would say about ten years old, and he turned to my friend whose name was Joe, by the way, and asked him: "Who is going to win the next quinella?"

My friend Joe did not have much patience, but the young boy persisted. Finally Joe sort of shooed him away and said: "Oh, go away, it will be one and ten."

You probably know the end of the story, Mr. Speaker. One-In-Ten did come in and the boy collected hugely while on the other hand, my friend Joe did not collect a nickel because he did not bet on one and ten.

I am sure that that does not match the story told by my friend from Nickel Belt. I do not know whether his story is true or apocryphal, but mine is true.

I rise this afternoon in support of this initiative perhaps because my closeness to Assiniboia Downs which is of course the major race track in the Province of Manitoba. I support this initiative and the proposed legislation. I certainly would not want to hold it up, but I agree with my hon. friend from York Centre (Mr. Kaplan). We should take our parliamentary business seriously. We should take the democratic process seriously, and we should not rush this through.

I listened to my hon. friend from Mississauga West suggest quite seriously and sincerely that this Bill should be put through all stages this afternoon. I think that that would be moving much too quickly. The Government did have its time to do this earlier. For some reason, it neglected its business. We can wait a few more days before this piece of legislation is enacted.

After all, people are entitled to express their views, to bring forward their opinions and to ask questions. I was speaking to one of my colleagues from Prince Edward Island this afternoon and he told me how important the racetrack in Charlottetown is. In that relatively small city within that relatively small community, last year alone, wagering amounted to some \$6 million at that race track. That is a lot of money and that is a lot of jobs. It is a significant industry in the area. I am sure the people from that area would have some questions, views and opinions, and we should afford them the opportunity to make a presentation at the agriculture committee if they so choose. Surely, as parliamentarians, we should afford them that opportunity. That is the least we can do, even though there is all-Party agreement that this Bill should go forward to its conclusion.

• (1650)

The Bill is important to the industry. It is certainly important to Assiniboia Downs and to the racing industry in the Province of Manitoba. For example, it is a vital tourist attraction. Our city is only a few miles from the United States border. There is no major league racing, if I can put it that way, in the State of North Dakota. Thousands and thousands of visitors and tourists flock