

*Criminal Code*

until the federal government, under that same kind of pressure, will resort to this retrogressive way of raising money for the state or of helping people put more money into their own pockets. That is the reason we urge very strongly that this house vote for my amendment and delete these two subparagraphs from clause 13 of this bill.

We have had a good deal of correspondence about Bill C-150. I should like to say that I am particularly proud of the kind of letters and submissions that have reached my desk from the churches and church organizations which have written me. I have some of them here on my desk tonight, but I shall refer to only one of them. I am picking one that is typical and also one which I think states the case very well. Normally, one can expect churches to take a careful position on these matters of social concern. It has interested me that the major churches that have been in touch with me—I admit that most of them are churches on the Protestant side but in these ecumenical days that distinction does not matter—have taken a progressive stand on questions such as abortion, homosexuality and so on. But we are not now discussing those subjects. The thing that interests me is the stand that most of the churches have taken on the question of lotteries and I find myself in agreement with them. They admit their general dislike for lotteries in any form. They admit that in their view games of chance as a way of making economic progress for the individual or anybody else are not good. But they are realistic enough to admit that it is just about impossible to legislate against every game of chance there is.

Nevertheless, these churches have come down strongly and said that in the name of all that is decent, sensible, economic and just they cannot agree with the provision in Bill C-150 in respect of state lotteries, either federal or provincial. I said I have a number of letters and that it is my intention to pick up and read only one of them. This happens to be from the Charleswood Mennonite Church, situated in metropolitan Winnipeg. This is a church other than the one I happen to belong to and Charleswood is not in my constituency. I thought this letter was one of the best which came to me and it sums up the position stated in most of the letters from churches and church organizations. It came over the signature of Mr. Rempel, the pastor of the church, and Mr. Keyler, the chairman of the church organization. I was told in this letter, as no doubt was the member for Winnipeg

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

South Centre (Mr. Osler) because I believe since this church is in his constituency he would have received the same letter, that the members of this church were anxious to submit their comments on the various matters in respect of the Criminal Code but before they did so their congregation spent five Sunday mornings during December and January discussing the issues of lotteries, abortion and homosexuality.

The members of this congregation went over the matters very carefully with experts and finally decided to submit their comments to various members of parliament. They made it clear that the letter they submitted to us in its final form was approved unanimously by the members of that church congregation. I should like to read what this church said on the question of lotteries. It is brief, to the point, and I think we should pay attention to it:

We recognize that office pools, raffles, bingos, and other forms of lotteries are widely used. Although these types of "games of chance" appeal basically to people's weaknesses, their discontinuance cannot be effectively legislated. It is our opinion, therefore, that privately operated lotteries should be legalized, but they should be strictly controlled by the Government, as is wisely proposed in Bill C-150.

That is one paragraph. I think it is well stated. I think the Charleswood Mennonite Church is to be commended for its position.

• (8:30 p.m.)

The letter continues with this one short paragraph:

We are strongly opposed, however, to the federal and provincial governments using lotteries to raise revenue. We feel that this method of fund-raising has been shown to be both inefficient and unjust. It is primarily a tax on the weak and the poor.

I commend this particular congregation on that statement in respect of lotteries. This congregation has dealt with the whole broad question including private and state lotteries, and I think its position in both respects is realistic. I am sure, in fact, that there are many members of this house who take this position, and I hope they will so indicate either in the speeches they make on this amendment or in their votes when the time for voting on this amendment arrives.

In that connection, I hope we will demonstrate at some point during the report stage that this bill is not all cut and dried. I was pleased that the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs made a number of changes to Bill C-150. This demonstrates the