

*Organized Crime*

We are not dealing with peanuts; we are dealing with an industry which in Ontario alone deals in hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Think of private insurance companies, private loan companies. Think of one outfit alone which in the city of Toronto has a turnover of over \$100 million. There are in existence today foreign-controlled crime syndicates in metro Toronto alone which deal in that amount of money annually. One newspaper report which appeared the other day said that on the island of Montreal alone the total amount for loan sharking last year was over \$700 million. We are not dealing with peanuts; we are dealing with powerful, intelligent, but warped groups which can manipulate governments and ministers as well as law enforcement agencies.

I say that the initiative and leadership in combating these groups must come from Ottawa. We can no longer rely on the attitude we have seen here today, according to which law enforcement agencies, local or provincial, are considered paramount. They cannot be, because we are dealing with international crime. Although money lending is not an offence under the Criminal Code as yet, the setting up of unreasonable interest rates is a crime and is covered by the Small Loans Act. The minister said it is ineffective. I should like to know how in the world he knows that, since the department has not attempted a prosecution under that act for the last three years.

**Mr. Allmand:** We do not prosecute them.

**Mr. Lawrence:** I am speaking of crimes relating to the terrorizing of private citizens, as well as the rapid increase in spin-off crimes which often results when borrowers are unable to repay their debts.

How about gambling in this country? Again, the attitude we see frequently is that this is something that can be looked after at the local or provincial level. That is nonsense. Gambling is prohibited by the federal Criminal Code, and at least two provinces where the abuses really exist, in the last three years have requested this government to allow them to control betting and the bookie business. It is well known, and it is openly carried on. If you do not believe me, sir, ask the guard, if you do not believe me, ask our House of Commons elevator operator, if you do not believe me, ask our messenger service who or where the nearest bookie in this building is. He will tell you, because it is done. It is a business in Ontario alone that handles at least \$150 million annually, over one-half of which is bet on sports other than racing.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Lawrence:** Hon. members opposite can poke fun at it, but I say to you, sir, that this is one of the cash registers of organized crime in this country, and it can and should be prevented. I believe that it can be prevented very easily by the government itself taking over control. This has been requested by provincial governments, and it has been refused time and time again. I say that this internationally-financed ring cannot operate without its United States connections. Let me read to you a very short paragraph from a Canadian report—not a very old report:

Organized crime provides lay-off centres in Buffalo, in Atlanta, in Las Vegas, and in New Jersey, as well as betting information centres for the provision of odds and "point spreads" where necessary. A

[Mr. Lawrence.]

lay-off centre is apparently essential for most bookmakers to survive. They cannot afford to refuse bets or they will lose customers, while a pay-off on some large bets would put many out of business.

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This is a business that is carried on here. Today we did not hear a word about the gambling business from the minister. We did not hear a word about the new techniques, new procedures and new research that should be taking place. We did not hear that gambling and the bookie business could not carry on without some sort of co-operation from government and local officials. Nor could it carry on without the co-operation of the news media in this country, Mr. Speaker. I say that very clearly. Have you ever opened the newspaper at the sports page and seen, not just the race results but the betting odds and the amounts won in the previous day's races? I say to you that the radio stations and news media of this country somehow or other must be influenced daily to publish that type of information. I say to you there are not that many horse lovers on the North American continent who are wondering or worrying about what horse won; instead, they are worrying how much the horse won for them through their local bookie down the street. Government, at the federal, provincial and local level can and should control that, but they do not. They do not even know the problems, much less do anything about gambling.

I should like now to deal with the drug problem. We have heard some rather misleading statistics from the minister. I think he underrated the problem. Drug addiction has increased by 455 per cent in the last five years in British Columbia alone. In other words, the British Columbia total is approximately two-thirds of the national total. The minister told us that there had only been a five-fold increase in the number of investigators with federal law enforcement agencies on the west coast. I think he should be ashamed to come into this House with such information, and should not boast that he is doing something about the problem. The drug trade in British Columbia alone—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** Order, please. I regret having to interrupt the hon. member in the midst of his speech, but the time allotted to him in this debate has expired.

**Some hon. Members:** Continue.

**Mr. Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask if that includes the interruptions and the points of order?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** Order, please. I thank the hon. member for drawing that to the attention of the House. The Chair did take account of the fact that there was a point of order, and the hon. member was allowed the extra minutes that were taken up by it.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, during the hon. member's remarks I put a question to him and he said he would accept it at the end of his speech. Would he accept it now? It is a serious question, and I should like to know what he meant by some of his remarks.

**Mr. Lawrence:** May I continue for a moment, Mr. Speaker?