

*Private Members' Business*

• (1320)

Why should we export gambling money out of Canada for the purpose of building hospitals in other countries when the money could be kept in Canada and used for our own social purposes?

Second, knowing of a human weakness that leads certain people to gamble, why should we drive them to the underworld for the expression of that personal weakness, allow organized crime to profit from it and foster a criminal lifestyle for all the people who are involved in that illegal way of gambling?

I supported the bill which was presented to the House of Commons. There were lots of moral arguments for and against gambling. In the city of Toronto where I come from, I would say that most people, and I am talking now about a community which is probably more Christian than any other religion, consider gambling wrong. Yet there is no unanimous opinion about that even within the Christian faith.

Since my interest in this subject has come forward I have had arguments with Catholic theologians who want to make the point, if I get them correctly—and I certainly invite them to speak for themselves—that whether gambling is moral or immoral depends on what is done with the proceeds. If the proceeds are used for moral purposes, it is moral. If they are used for immoral purposes, it is not.

For me there is a larger question. In the culture of Toronto, there is a work ethic associated with earning and a sense, which I must say I share, that the best way to make money is to work for it. Societies where that is a value, benefit from the work ethic. In a society where gambling is an equally available way of making money, you find more and more, as I do in my own community, that if you ask the young kids how you can get rich nowadays, the only two things they will suggest are winning a lottery or becoming a rock star.

Part of that comes from the tremendous amount of advertising that lotteries now enjoy in Canadian society. I want to make the point that the level of advertising is just too high and invite the House, which enabled the provinces to run these state lotteries, to change the law so that they will no longer be able to advertise them.

I do not think it is the responsibility of the state to stop people from doing foolish things with their money. It is a free country. If people want to waste their money, if they want to gamble with it, it should be up to them. But I do not think the state should encourage people to do foolish things with their money.

I want to talk about some of the forms of advertising that I have seen. It becomes obvious that having the state encourage people to express a character weakness, encouraging them to spend money on lotteries which have odds that are not usually disclosed to the people who buy lottery tickets, there is really no other conclusion but to say that a small investment, a small gamble by someone who can afford it, is not a very big problem. But as we see the statistics which show who gambles, how quickly it is increasing, and how much is being spent on gambling, what a substantial percentage of some of the low incomes in Canadian society, I really feel we have a responsibility, not to stop people from foolishly wasting their money, but at least, as I have said, not to encourage them to do so.

The advertisement that inspired me to put this resolution together and bring it forward is one from my own province of Ontario. It is an advertisement which asks people who are thinking of gambling to always bet the same number. They tell you to pick your lucky number and run with that number. I have checked with the officials and apparently this works by encouraging people day after day, week after week to always pick their same lucky number and to bet it every time and that they will have a better chance of winning than if they just bet a different number every time.

A mathematician can tell you that the odds of any number winning are exactly the same, whether it is the same one you bet yesterday, or a new one. So in a sense it is a measure of false advertising to tell people directly or indirectly that they have a better chance of winning by betting the same number every single day.

The insidious purpose of having people pick a number and then bet the same number every day is that they then feel beckoned to bet every time a lottery comes along. The next phase of that advertising campaign was that now you have a number, don't let a day go by with a lottery for which you did not buy a ticket because that could be the day that your number came up. If you bet a different number every day, they would not have that argument. It is a powerful argument and one to which