

Games of Violence

● (1752)

Mr. D. M. Collette (York East): Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to talk on the bill this afternoon. However, after hearing some of the remarks of my colleagues, the hon. member for Niagara Falls (Mr. Young) and the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt), I thought I should add a few words.

Looking at the bill in the narrow sense, it has much to commend it. The game known as "Death Race" is to be abhorred. As a new parent, I would hate to think of my child participating in or deriving any pleasure from it. In that sense, I completely agree with the sentiments of the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger). He has done the House a service by bringing the issue forward for debate this afternoon.

One problem when discussing the banning of a game such as "Death Race" is that we open ourselves up to serious criticism about the civil liberties of society. The fact that someone enjoys the game called "Death Race", which others may feel is obscene, perverse or twisted, is in no way a reason for society to condemn that game. That is what bothers me about this bill.

The Conservative party, of which the hon. member is a prominent member, has made a lot of hay in the last few years to the effect that governments intrude too much in the lives of individual Canadians. However, we have here a private member's bill which would, in a sense, eliminate the option of some people enjoying a particular game. It does not matter how abhorrent we may feel it or how much effect it would have upon the person enjoying it. If someone wants to play poker, enjoy horse racing, bet on horses or even play the game of "Death Race"—and I hate to put them all in the same category—it would be unfair that the government or parliament should limit the choice of individual Canadians.

If we are talking "Death Race", we should also talk about other forms of subliminal advertising such as we see in consumer advertising over television. I am not an expert on that subject. The hon. member for York West (Mr. Fleming), who is in the chamber this afternoon, is an expert on broadcasting. I am sure he would have something to say on subliminal advertising.

When you talk about banning and the psychological ramifications and implications of banning something such as "Death Race", you have to deal with a lot of other questions in a broader scope. Take for example some of the brainwashing or subliminal techniques employed by religious groups.

In most of the big cities, such as on Yonge Street in Toronto, you have the so-called religious freaks who panhandle. They try to lure young kids who are perhaps a little mixed up into their religious sect. One group in particular that comes to mind is the Moonies. We have heard a lot about the Moonies and how very responsible people meet someone on Yonge Street, for example on a Friday night, and ask them to get together for a coffee. They are a little bit down. The Moonies start talking about their philosophy, whatever it is. My reading of the subject is that these people are hooked very quickly.

[Mr. Young.]

It has been alleged that Moonies use techniques akin to the brainwashing used in the Korean War. Should we as a society outlaw the Moonies? I have received a lot of correspondence, believe it or not, from the hon. member's province of Alberta. I cannot remember the name of the church that was recently burned down on Avenue Road in Toronto. I believe it is the Church of Scientology. The children of many Albertans have been taken into that sect.

I do not know whether society should make rules and regulations to cover every aspect of human behaviour. An individual has certain inalienable rights. He should have free choice as to what he wants to do. Hopefully parents raise their children, in such a way that they will realize that "Death Race" is not a good thing and that it has a bad effect. But really, it is up to the individual to choose.

I am not trying to throw in a red herring, but prostitution is illegal under the Criminal Code. We have prostitution in all our major cities. What has been the effect of banning prostitution? It is still with us. Perhaps I should not be making the case that every city has a sin-strip or red light district. However, there are people in society who express themselves in what we might call abnormal behaviour. This is something not generally followed by all members of society. As long as these people are not infringing upon the rights of others, I cannot see why this parliament should pass laws to ban a particular game, for example.

There are other comments I would like to make, Mr. Speaker, but there are members who wish to speak before six o'clock.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak more in terms of speaking to other members of the House. I strongly support the intent of this bill and commend the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) for bringing it to the attention of hon. members. This is a very serious problem. We are increasingly seeing activities, games and so on being put before young people which indicate to them that the use of violence can be effective. We should reject that concept.

As there has been such strong support from members on both sides, including two parliamentary secretaries and other members, I hope there will be agreement to let the bill go to committee where it can be effectively studied and amended in accordance with some of the good suggestions made here, rather than talked out. I hope government members will allow that to happen. That seems to be the prime purpose of the introduction of the bill by the hon. member.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I support the bill. Let's send it to committee.

Mr. Ed Lumley (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, obviously I do not want to be the spoil sport. Like all hon. members of this House, I extend my congratulations to the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) for bringing forward this bill. As my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice