

Criminal Code

This is the shortest speech I have made. It is because I recognize the importance of getting the Bill through very quickly. I would have preferred to see it go through all stages, as I proposed, but I have to settle for second best. Sometimes one bets to win, but one has to cover one's bets by betting to place and sometimes to show. I will accept the Bill going to the Agriculture Committee. Hopefully we can expedite it back here and have it passed, because Sudbury needs the Bill.

Let me say to the owners of the track in Sudbury that if they read this debate they will see that there is a commitment on the part of all Parties to support the principle of the Bill. All the Parties are prepared to work to get the Bill through the House.

The owners have an assurance that this Bill will be passed, and now I hope they will not delay any longer but will make provisions to open the track so that those trainers and drivers who are waiting on the grounds for this decision can begin getting some income from their labour.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to stand here today and agree with my friend from the right and my friend from the left. I am sure it is fairly unusual. As the Hon. Member for Sudbury, I wholeheartedly support the Bill. I certainly would like to see it passed as quickly as possible.

The Hon. Member for Mississauga West (Mr. Horner) stated that this is a sport of kings. I have known people interested in this sport. Even some Members of Parliament own horses and are very interested in the sport. There are those as well who benefit from the sport such as veterinarians, and I believe that the Hon. Member to my right is one of them. A member of my own caucus is a member of that same profession, and they certainly benefit from the sport. All kinds of people enjoy the benefits of horse racing, particularly horse owners and track owners. The people who attend race tracks, if they can take away a few winnings, enjoy it. It certainly provides for a very enjoyable evening.

• (1640)

It was with great sadness that I heard earlier this year that Sudbury Downs was not planning to reopen its doors. Today I am told that because this Bill has been tabled and there is hope that it will move forward quickly, it will reopen its doors this year. Everyone in Sudbury is very happy about that. It means the preserva-

tion of a number of jobs. We in Sudbury and area all appreciate jobs, believe me.

I would like to correct one Hon. Member. The Hon. Member to my left said that the Sudbury area has a small population. Small is only small in terms of how it is qualified. I always resent people telling me that I come from a small population base when that population base is 150,000. It is nice to tell people that it really is not that small. When it is compared to a population base in the millions such as that of southern Ontario, I suppose it is small.

I do take some offence to being told that Sudbury is remote. The Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) realizes that even though we live in northern Ontario, we do not consider it to be remote. I invite everyone to come there and enjoy what we have to offer and to spend their money, to visit Science North and to enjoy our great tourist attractions including Sudbury Downs.

I am certainly happy to support this Bill and I would hope it passes as quickly as possible.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the whole of this debate. All speakers from all Parties are in favour of the Bill. However, I am glad that the Bill is to go through the normal process that should apply to all legislation except in the case of dire emergencies.

If this Bill were truly as urgent as the Government says it is and as high a priority as it portrays it to be, it could have brought the Bill forward in the last Parliament. The Government could have brought it forward a year and a half or even two years ago and it could have been law long since. The reason the Bill is not now the law of the land is because the Government has given it a low priority. Instead of seeking to deal with it the way legislation is normally dealt with which is to say through parliamentary channels, the Government has tended to adopt a last minute strategy. Bills are presented as being urgently needed to be passed within hours or all opportunity to see them become law will be lost.

The Government should get serious about this Bill. It should encourage it to go through the normal process with at least one hearing so that we can hear about other aspects of the Bill than the main focus of the agriculture committee which is to ensure that the agricultural industry in every sector is healthy, and I wish the committee well in that goal.