

Criminal Code

is something entirely different. In our democracy the government is the constituted organization which carries on the business of the people. The government has ways of raising money by means of various forms of taxes. The government has access to the fields of taxation set out in the constitution of Canada.

Why does the government need the power to raise money by lotteries? Does it envisage that the provincial governments and the federal government itself are now going to seek to raise part of their revenue by lotteries? Will they endeavour to discharge some of their responsibilities not by taxation based on ability to pay but by means of lotteries, which is raising money on the basis of human credulity?

Mr. Woolliams: Will the hon. member answer a question?

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): As soon as I finish this sentence. If the government is going to be fair, democratic and just, surely it ought to be endeavouring to raise its revenue on the basis of people's ability to pay, not on the basis of selling tickets to the most credulous. The hon. member wanted to ask a question?

Mr. Woolliams: I am not being critical, Mr. Speaker. I am most interested in what the hon. member is saying. I take it he is really against the kind of lottery being run in the city of Montreal. After all, cities are creatures of the jurisdiction of the province so far as their powers are concerned. That is what I think is being legalized here.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Yes. I am suggesting that any level of government has at its disposal certain areas of taxation. If they are not adequate, then we need some readjustment in our constitutional apportionment of tax fields and sources of revenue. To substitute lotteries based on credulity for taxation based on ability to pay is to reverse the whole process of social justice. I do not know whether the minister has visited any of the countries that have state lotteries, but it is an education to do so. If you go to countries operating state lotteries and which receive a considerable portion of their revenue from that source, you will find that a major part of their revenue is coming from the poorest and most desperate people. These people probably have one hope in a million of striking it rich. They are spending money they can ill afford to buy tickets in state lotteries.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

Surely that is not the basis on which we ought to be inviting the provinces or the federal government to finance the requirements of this country. If governments in Canada need more revenue, then that revenue ought to be collected from people on the basis of their ability to pay and according to the size of their income. It ought not to be obtained by appealing to the avarice of individuals or holding out hopes to people who have very little chance of improving their lot by buying lottery tickets. This is a complete reversal of the whole idea of fiscal policy in Canada.

There is nothing in the constitution about governments raising revenue by means of lotteries. The constitution sets out the various areas in which the respective levels of government may levy taxes. I admit readily that the municipalities and the provinces, whose responsibilities have grown whereas their access to sources of revenue has not grown, face very serious financial difficulties. To solve these difficulties we ought to re-allocate the tax fields or reassess the fields of jurisdiction for which the different levels of government are responsible. We are not going to solve our fiscal problems by allowing provinces to embark upon lotteries. In the long run it will be self-defeating. As more and more cities and provinces get into it, they will be taking in each other's washing. They will be selling tickets to each other in order to solve their municipal and provincial problems.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): It is a pretty unsavoury thought.

Mr. Dinsdale: It is a pretty dirty wash.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I am really surprised that an administration which has talked so much about the just society, social justice and economic equity should now suggest that it is prepared to permit the governments of Canada, provincial and federal, to replenish their coffers by selling lottery tickets.

The explanation given by the minister for including the federal government is even more nebulous and irrational than the one for including the provinces. The minister said he had included the federal government because he wanted the bill to be symmetrical. That is not a very good reason. I can assure the minister he is more symmetrical than the bill.

The minister says that the government has no present intention of entering this field. I hope hon. members will take a look at the bill we are being asked to pass because not only does it state that the federal government will