

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 18, 1990

The House met at 1 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS — BILLS

[*English*]

#### CRIMINAL CODE

##### MEASURE TO AMEND

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre)** moved that Bill C-255, an act to amend the Criminal Code (lotteries), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to have won the lottery which permits Bill C-255 to be dealt with at this time. I do not know how many Canadians are aware that the order in which bills appear for debate is chosen by lottery. It is something of an irony that the subject of the bill, which I am pleased to be able to address now, is lotteries, not the kind which chooses bills for debate in the House of Commons, but the lotteries which take a dollar or two away from ever-growing numbers of Canadian citizens with a very small likelihood of them winning or making any return at all.

I am not rising to oppose the principle of lotteries, although I do oppose them. All the studies show that lottery contributions constitute for the poorest in society a larger proportion of their income than of the average person or certainly of the well-to-do.

I have recently seen interesting studies which show that of all forms of gambling, including slot machines and horse racing, a person has the least likelihood of winning and the smallest return from a lottery. The provinces of our country and the states of the United States, where a lot of these statistics come from, take an

ever-growing portion of the proceeds, amounting on the average to 49 and 50 per cent of all the proceeds while administrative costs amount to 35 per cent.

I am not putting forward a bill to prohibit lotteries. The purpose of this bill is to prohibit the advertising of lotteries. I am hoping to be able to demonstrate to the House in the next few minutes that this second best way of dealing with the social problem would really go a long way to putting lotteries and gambling back into the place to which they should be limited to in our society.

There is no better way to tell the story than to tell the House about my own experience as a member of Parliament when I was first elected in the days when all forms of lotteries were illegal in Canada.

[*Translation*]

It was during the 70s. There were two kinds of gambling in our society, at a time when lotteries were illegal. There was the Irish Sweepstakes, which was very successful. We had a network of ticket vendors—at least one in each community—who sent the money to Ireland, and we had a percentage of the winners. It was common knowledge at the time that the Irish government used the money to finance hospitals in Ireland.

[*English*]

That was one of the great forms of gambling that we had in the days before lotteries became legal. The other is the illegal numbers racket which plays a very small part, if any part at all, in Canadian society today. I remember when I had something to do with policing in Canada, taking a more than average interest in how the numbers racket was progressing. I learned that organized crime no longer looked to it as a great source of funds any more. In other words, the introduction of the lottery had achieved two very good purposes which were the evils that I addressed as a legislator when I was persuaded to support the idea of a state-run Canadian lottery.