

Criminal Code

In Montreal, a lottery has been created, even though it was given a structure which is more acceptable than a lottery as such. It can be useful, until such time as our hon. friends of the Ralliement Cr ditiste manage to reorganize the international monetary system, which will provide us with banks, provincial or municipal, designed to help finance municipalities and school boards.

Is it justified to prevent the federal government from giving control of lotteries to the provinces? My hon. friend must have noted that I did not try to make fun of him and did not even mention the opinions he has expressed on the reorganization of the monetary system, because I support them to the extent that they are feasible.

However, I want to say that if most mayors in Quebec, within the Union of municipalities and the Canadian Federation of Mayors have seen fit during the last 12 years or so to exert pressure on the federal government to bring it to transfer the control of lotteries to the provinces, I think this recommendation should be supported.

[English]

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the amendment before us is extremely important. I was surprised and shocked last night to hear the minister give a very inadequate explanation for the proposal to amend the Criminal Code to authorize the federal and provincial governments to establish lotteries if they see fit to do so. Instead of the cavalier way the minister dealt with this matter last evening I should have preferred to hear convincing arguments, if they exist, in support of his proposition. The only explanation the minister gave, I believe, appears at page 7780 of *Hansard* where he is reported as having said:

It seemed logical to the government that if the criminal law were to be withdrawn from lotteries managed by private organizations, charitable and religious, or by agricultural fairs, an option should also lie with the provincial government itself or with an agent of a provincial government, and, since this was being done, that the criminal law should be totally withdrawn in its application to the federal government in this area as well.

It was most illogical of the minister to talk about lotteries, raffles and bingoes conducted by charitable organizations and then make a transition in his argument and ask the house to legalize the entry by the federal and provincial governments into lotteries. Most of us know that when we buy raffle tickets or take part in various innocent games of chance we are really making contributions to charities.

Added to our contribution is the extra excitement of knowing that someone, somewhere, will win a prize—very often one he does not need and does not want. But the excitement makes it easier to sell these raffle tickets. While these innocent games of chance cannot be construed as any form of crusade for the carrying out of charitable work, I doubt that we can stop them and I do not think it is wise to try. But saying that we are willing to allow charitable organizations, religious bodies and agricultural fairs to conduct small games of chance is totally different from saying that we will permit lotteries in general—

Mr. Mongrain: Will the hon. member permit a question? Is he convinced that the raffles conducted by charitable organizations are legal now? As they are now operated in Canada, do they come within the law?

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty well conceded that many of them are not legal. I presume that is why the code is being liberalized, if I may be pardoned for using that word. We want to put a stop to a great deal of misunderstanding that has surrounded this question. The administration of the law affecting games of chance, lotteries and bingoes has been left almost exclusively with the provincial attorneys-general. In many cases they have simply shut their eyes to these small games of chance, especially where they have been convinced that they are being carried on for charitable purposes and that someone is not trying to make a quick profit or get rich quickly. I do not complain about liberalizing the Criminal Code to allow people, within proper limitations, to conduct raffles, bingoes and small games of chance. But saying that we will allow charitable organizations, religious bodies and agricultural affairs to conduct lotteries and bingoes is a far cry from saying that we must also give the federal and provincial governments the option of entering into lottery schemes.

• (3:10 p.m.)

What is the purpose in giving provincial governments and the federal government the power to operate lotteries? It is understandable in the case of a charitable organization. Its purpose is to try to get money and to do so on a voluntary basis. These organizations have no other way of raising funds except by donations from people interested in the cause they are seeking to promote. The government