

Criminal Code

little early, especially when you consider we are sitting late—ten hours a day.

• (10:10 a.m.)

The committee which studied this bill was composed of members from all parties. The bill was thoroughly examined. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said, there was a vote on the bill. Without going into great detail I should like to point out why we agree with the bill. In respect of this matter some background was created by a decision of the Supreme Court of Ontario and other courts regarding off-track betting, which has caused what might be called a vacuum in the Criminal Code.

In fairness to the minister and the officials of his department, I would point out that the Attorneys General of the ten provinces asked that parliament approve an amendment which would plug this hole in the Criminal Code. There was in committee discussion as to whether the provinces should not be left in the position where they could draft rules and regulations controlling off-track betting, because on-track betting is allowed. The argument against this suggestion derived from letters many of the Attorneys General had received, some of which were read into the record of the committee proceedings. It was argued that if we adopted the suggestion we would make it easier for syndicated crime to move into Canada. There is some question whether that is correct and whether just as much crime moves into Canada because we drive bookmakers underground. We were told in committee that something like \$2 billion is spent illegally in Ontario on horse race betting. We were also told that probably just as much syndicated crime will move into Canada if this hole is plugged.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) took his responsibility in this matter very seriously. He undertook to study the matter further and review and discuss it with the Attorneys General of the provinces with the idea of reaching agreement on the question. If agreement is reached, the law may again be changed and off-track and other kinds of betting legalized; but it would be legalized with the proper rules and regulations drafted in order to control the movement of criminals into this field.

I have personal experience in this matter, gained through my legal practice. I have dealt with cases concerning bookmaking. Off-track betting is carried out in every part of Canada. We are like ostriches, sticking our heads in the sand, because even if we plug this hole in

[Mr. Woolliams.]

the Criminal Code I do not think it will reduce by one dollar the amount of money spent on off-track betting. This has been my personal experience. The Canadian people are divided into three sections in this respect; there are those who are against off-track betting and live up to their principles in this regard, there are those who are against it but still bet off-track, and there are those who believe we should have lotteries and horse race betting on and off track. I say with tongue in cheek that we are a little hypocritical when referring to our standards in this regard.

I conclude on this note, Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Justice has on behalf of the government undertaken to review the situation and discuss it further with the provinces with a view to coming forward with practical, realistic legislation. Because of this we agree that the bill should receive third reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Carried, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Baldwin: That is the best speech you have ever made.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

ATLANTIC REGIONAL FREIGHT ASSISTANCE ACT

MEASURE TO AMPLIFY RATES LEGISLATION, TO REMOVE CERTAIN STATUTORY REDUCTIONS, AND OTHER MATTERS

The house resumed, from Tuesday, June 17, consideration in committee of Bill No. C-207, to authorize assistance to transportation in the Atlantic region—Mr. Jamieson—Mr. Faulkner in the chair.

The Chairman: When the house rose on Tuesday, June 17, clause 2 was under consideration. Clause 1 was allowed to stand. Shall clause 2 carry?

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Chairman, I was unfortunately attending a committee—it may even have been the transport committee finalizing the report on this bill—and did not participate in the discussion under clause 1. As I understand it, we stood clause 1. I ask whether I have an opportunity to speak in a general way on clause 1 without getting into the specifics of clause 2. I ask the question because, as I say, I was not in the house when this matter was last discussed and