

*Criminal Code*

The people are overtaxed, their purchasing power is inadequate and the unemployment rate has reached its maximum level. It is more than ever advisable to take our responsibilities and to ask ourselves whether a national lottery can truly improve financial conditions in Canada.

Even if we have nothing against lotteries, we have to ask ourselves whether they can still improve the situation. I feel, Mr. Speaker—

● (3:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to be allowed one more minute.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the house agree to let the hon. member carry on his remarks?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Fortin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think that if it is logical and rejects the proposal of the hon. member for Winnipeg-North-Centre, not because lotteries are immoral and a bad thing as such, but because they fail to provide an answer to the major problem facing Canada at present, the government would be wise to seriously consider the possibility of making use of the Bank of Canada, which is a tool which should be of use to the Canadian people. In fact, one could resort to the Bank of Canada to finance the public sector, the construction of roads, bridges, schools, and help the provinces.

It is obvious that municipalities and governments both federal and provincials are in a financial state of stagnation. This should prompt us to assume our responsibilities, instead of being satisfied with a makeshift solution, such as lotteries. Let us tackle the real problem and particularly let us make use of the Bank of Canada.

**Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to add a few words to what the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) just said.

First of all, I must say that I agree with him about the advisability of a bank reform. In fact, many years ago, I was advocating the establishment of banks which would be the counterpart of those which now exist in Europe, under the name of "communal funds" and which are designed to assist municipalities and school boards.

[Mr. Fortin.]

Of course, the hon. member for Lotbinière would have to show me how that can be carried out but I recognize in principle the merits of the solution he proposes.

However, I might bring some clarification concerning his arguments against lotteries.

By this bill, the government wishes to relinquish exclusive control over lotteries and to stop prohibiting them as it used to, giving the provinces the power to allow charitable organizations especially to conduct lotteries, that is to levy taxes without it being too painful, as the mayor of Montreal is now doing.

As long as our friends of the Ralliement Crétitiste fail to reform the monetary system, that could be useful. However, I would remind the hon. member for Lotbinière that during conventions of the Union of Quebec Municipalities and of the Canadian Federation of Mayors, the Quebec mayors have moved, for a great many years, resolutions requesting the provincial and federal governments to transfer control over lotteries to the provinces.

Naturally, if the federal government gives the provinces control of the lotteries in their territory, it can reserve the right to establish a national lottery, but that is unlikely for the time being. It does not seem to be its desire, but we cannot stop it from doing what we authorize the provinces to do.

I believe that the hon. member for Lotbinière will admit that it is significant that the mayors of the province of Quebec, for at least 12 to 15 years, promoted the idea that the federal government should leave the control of the lotteries to the provinces, that would operate them for purposes they would deem acceptable.

I remember that, in 1963, when the Canadian Federation of Mayors held its annual conference in Toronto, the mayors of the province of Quebec brought forward this idea which has been discussed now for at least twelve years and which has always been rejected. In 1963, the majority of the Canadian mayors present accepted the proposition of the mayors of Quebec to recommend that the federal government hand over to the provinces control of the lotteries established for charitable or other purposes.

Of course, I do not think it necessary that we discuss the morality or the advisability of lotteries. It will be each province's responsibility to decide if it can be done.