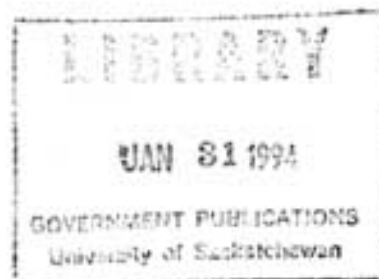


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REPORT
on
OPPOSITION TO VIDEO GAMBLING
in
NEW BRUNSWICK



Prepared
by
Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition
Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick
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Ed Allen, MLA

Bev Brine, MLA

Danny Cameron, MLA

Greg Hargrove, MLA

Ab Rector, MLA

Brent Taylor, MLA

Max White, MLA

Gordon Willden, MLA

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INTRODUCTION

In New Brunswick, the government has become involved, as a partner, in the activity of Video Gambling. The government's reason for this experiment is that there were too many illegal machines in operation here, and that the only option the government had for controlling the Video Gambling activity was to become a partner in the operation. It appears that the real motive driving the government was the desire to obtain a new source of revenue, one that was not affected by the deteriorating economic situation.

For a government to say that it must participate in Video Gambling activity because they could not otherwise control it, is a total abdication of policy and common sense, and makes a mockery of the provincial judicial system.

The ultimate result of this government's interest in Video Gambling has been a ground-swell of public opinion in opposition to that policy.

Since the government has turned a deaf ear to the people, it has become necessary for the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition of New Brunswick to determine the extent of discontent with the government position on this matter, and to put forward viable alternatives to remedy the situation.

1.0 Sources of Information

1.1 Solicited Information

1.1.1 Municipalities

The incorporated municipalities of New Brunswick were polled by letter asking them to join the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition in opposing the proliferation of government sanctioned video gambling machines and their being utilised as a source of government revenue.

1.1.2 Churches

Many of the religious organizations and leaders serving the New Brunswick people were contacted by telephone in order to determine their stand on the moral and sociological issues associated with government use of video gambling machines as a source of government revenue.

1.1.3 Citizens Groups

As soon as the Citizens Against Video Gambling held their first news conference announcing their action against this government, this office maintained a constant liaison so as to coordinate a concentrated effort in opposition to video gambling.

1.1.4 Other Governments

The Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition liaised with members of the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia (at that time the Official Opposition of Nova Scotia) so as to benefit from the findings of their Interim Report of the Standing Committee on Community Services on the subject of Video Gambling and Gaming Policies in Nova Scotia (April, 1993). This report has considerable worth because the people of New Brunswick share many principles and values and have very similar demographic characteristics to the people of Nova Scotia. Through this report we were also able to gain insight into a similar report carried out in Alberta.

1.2 Unsolicited Information

1.2.1 Letters

This office has been in receipt of many letters from citizens, religious organizations and businesses of New Brunswick that have shown their opposition to video gambling.

1.2.2 Editorial Comment

Editorial comment, in opposition to video gambling, has been observed in local papers, national papers and on television programs brought into the province via cable.

1.2.3 Media Reports

There have been many media reports mentioning real life cases of the effects of video gambling on our New Brunswick society.

1.3 What We Heard / Their Position

1.3.1 Municipalities

Letters were received from several municipalities which were totally opposed to video gambling machines. Following are statements from some of them:

"Please be advised that at the regular meeting of Council held on Thursday, July 22, 1993 a resolution was duly passed that a letter be sent stating Council's decision to oppose video gambling machines within the Town of Newcastle ... "
(Town of Newcastle)

"Stanley Village Council are in complete agreement to have these machines barred from every Municipality in our Province, and we are certainly supportive to any measures that can be taken to have them restricted and removed."
(Village of Stanley)

"While we are fundamentally in agreement with your position on this matter, we are also of the opinion that these machines are but one method in which gambling is available to the citizens of the province. It is also our opinion that the availability of various lottery and bingo venues constitute an equal opportunity for gambling, complete with their inherent risk of addiction. We believe these concerns should be addressed on an equal basis with all forms of gambling."
(L.S.D. of Keswick Ridge, Advisory Council)

"At the regularly scheduled council meeting on February 11 my council and I discussed the gambling machines in our community and the toll they are extracting on our residents.

As I member of the SPOT (Support People of Today) I see enough children in desperate need of food and clothing from unemployment, welfare, alcoholism and now we can add the evils of gambling machines that suck every last dollar from the weakest of our society. There are those who can walk away but on the other hand there are those who cannot walk away. In the short time since video gambling machines have been allowed in every corner store we have seen these machines eat up the money that should be putting the food in the mouths of their children, a roof over their heads and it is taking its toll on marriages and family life.

Surely the strength of a society is in its principles and a society that thrives off of the shortcomings of its weakest members is not the society that the people of New Brunswick envision for our future generations.
(Mayor, Village of Petitcodiac)

"The municipal councillors of Village de Saint-Andre agree with Mr. D. E. Cameron, Leader of the Official Opposition, on banning video gambling devices. Lives of New Brunswickers are increasingly affected by these devices because of the day-to-day increase in the number of families torn apart and because of those who believe that these devices are the solution to money problems and who eventually become addicted to gambling. These devices have become a major problem in the lives of New Brunswickers. Therefore, the government has a duty to act now and ban these video gambling devices across the province."
(Michel Rioux, Mayor, Village de Saint-Andre Inc.)

"At the regular meeting of Council held on April 21, 1993, the topic of video gambling was discussed and the following motion was duly passed by Council.
'Moved by Deputy Mayor Brown and seconded by Councillor van Groenewoud that Council support the removal of video gambling machines from public establishments and that correspondence be forwarded to the Hon. Allan Maher, Minister of Finance. Motion carried.'
This decision was made after careful consideration of the financial implications and the devastating effects that these machines have caused too many New Brunswick families. It was the overwhelming belief that the price that must be paid is not justified."
(David Wiezel, Mayor, Village of New Maryland)

Letters were also received from several municipalities that advocated that severe restrictions be placed on the accessibility to video gambling machines. Included were:

- Village of Plaster Rock,
- Village of Douglastown,
- Conseil municipal de la Ville de Shediac,
- Town of Nackawic, and
- D.S.L. de Haute Riviere-du-Portage.

1.3.2 Religious Organizations

Several religious organizations, as well as individual clergy, have taken a public stand against government's involvement in video gambling through resolution and letters sent to the Premier and Leader of the Official Opposition, as follows:

"We endorse the policies adopted by the General Council of the United Church of Canada.

- Governments should withdraw support of organized gambling and oppose it in Canada;

- It is immoral to offer gambling as the source of economic security to people on low incomes, poor communities, and poorly financed sectors of life, such as culture and sports

Government revenue raised through gambling suggests a general malaise and absence of belief in the capacity of ourselves and the institutions of society to create adequate opportunity and well-being for large segments of our society. The promotion of gambling by governments as a means of raising money is totally unacceptable. Governments should not encourage or participate in activities which may lead to addictive and injurious life styles. Governments should have the courage to be leaders for the good of the people, not to lead them astray. Gambling is not a solution to our economic problems."

(The Maritime Conference, The United Church of Canada)

"WHEREAS, Casino and Video Gambling cause severe tension and hardship to families and may lead to compulsive addiction for those who take part in these forms of gambling;

AND WHEREAS, there are serious ethical and moral questions about governments that seek to raise public revenue by preying on the weaknesses of some of its citizens;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the delegates of the 147th Assembly of the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces renew its opposition to Casino Gambling;

RESOLVED, that we oppose the availability of video gambling machines in public areas;

RESOLVED, we oppose the use of gambling as a means of securing government revenue"

(United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces)

"WHEREAS the Government of the Province of New Brunswick has agreed to regulate and monitor video gambling; and, WHEREAS the accessibility of these video gambling machines has undoubtedly led to increased stress of affected family units both financially, emotionally and socially; and,

WHEREAS studies have shown a correlation between the use of these machines and an increase in acts of crime; and, WHEREAS social service groups, church associations and individuals have expressed great concern over the effect of these machines on the people and families of New Brunswick,

BE IT RESOLVED that this Sixty-Fourth Annual Maritime District Conference express its strong disapproval of video gambling machines to the Premier, Leaders of the Opposition, and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick."

(The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Maritime District)

"We were pleased to hear the government's decision not to allow casino gambling within the province. However, we remain concerned about the proliferation of video lottery machines in convenience stores, service stations, and restaurants, and recognize the temptation posed for many by the easy access to legalized gambling that these machines provide.

Quite apart from our opposition on biblical and moral grounds to gambling in any form, we believe that the ultimate social and economic costs of video lotteries far exceed any short-term benefits which accrue to the operators and to the provincial government through the use of these machines. The cost of recovery for gambling addicts, the loss of family income, and the negative impact on youth in regards to the formation of their values outweigh the pleasure and freedom so championed by those eager to have these machines available and in use. Economic and social responsibility on the part of the government requires that other sources of provincial revenue be found.

Therefore, we request that you reconsider the present policies of this province's government which permit video lottery machines to be widely available."

(Rev. Daphne Blaxland, Convenor, Committee on Evangelism, Social Action and Missions, The Presbytery of St. John, the Presbyterian Church in Canada)

".... we are particularly alarmed at the devastation which video gambling and video poker causes in the lives of individuals and families.

.....
We are disappointed that government has embarked upon a programme to legalize gambling.

.....
At a recent meeting of clergy I was shocked to hear account after account of persons throughout this Province who are in serious trouble because of their addiction to gambling. One recognizes that addiction can take many forms, but we are only playing into it when we allow it

so freely. One priest told of an individual who embezzled money from his employer because of the amount of money he had spent on gambling. Another told of a person on welfare who had used their welfare cheque in a vain effort to win more money. Another told of abuse that occurred within the family and towards the wife and children because of the financial pressures put upon them through gambling. And the record goes on.

The Executive Committee of the Diocese of Fredericton is unanimous in requesting that this government remove gambling machines from Corner Stores."

(The Right Reverend George C. Lemmon, Bishop, Diocese of Fredericton)

"..... it appears that video gambling machines are among the most addictive forms of gambling. For this reason we are of the opinion that allowing virtually unlimited access to all and sundry is an encouragement of the abuse of gambling addiction. It is well known that the victims of this disorder are those who have less of the share of our society's riches. It seems to us shameful that the poorer people's longing for a better life is fed upon by those offering the illusion of instant money. When these people are the leaders of our government entrusted with the responsibility of enhancing the quality of life for our citizens it is doubly disturbing.

There is none of us who is not aware of the tremendous challenge of financing the programs which provide the quality of life we value in this province. Taking advantage of people's attraction to gambling is certainly an alluring source of large income. However, to do so to the degree that it encourages abuse, takes food out of children's mouths and disrupts family life, would be terribly irresponsible.

The government of Nova Scotia has clearly taken action to deal with this problem in a responsible manner. We encourage our own government to do likewise and add our voice to those who are advocating a more limited and controlled access to video gambling machines."

(Rev. Ernest Leger, Vicar General, Chairman, Moncton Archdiocesan Council of Priests)

"We need to remove the temptation as much as possible from those who are addicted and to make access to the temptation difficult for our young people.

I am convinced that allowing video lottery machines in convenience stores and other establishments frequented by young people is a grave mistake."

(Rev. Calvin E. Ginn, United Church, Florenceville)

"I am deeply concerned about any activity which can adversely affect the well-being of any individual or family group.

Recently, many news stories have shown the suffering of individuals and families in New Brunswick because of the easy access to government sponsored video gambling machines. Therefore, I am opposed to the existence of these video gambling machines in public places."

(Rabbi David Spiro, Sgoolai Israel Synagogue, Fredericton)

"Is the provincial government willing to let the innocent suffer because of the availability of the machines? Are you willing to accept the responsibility, when jobs, homes, family life, and even lives are lost as a result of untreated addiction to gambling, which was encouraged and exacerbated by the readily available gambling machines? Is the high human price worth the revenue which your government receives from the Video Lotto machines? We think not!

.....

Many people are beginning to realize that gambling addiction is a serious social problem and that the promotion of gambling by our government is unacceptable." (Jodie Morehouse, Social Action Committee, Rothesay Baptist Church)

"I want to express my grave concern about the allowance of video gambling machines in places like our local convenience stores. I believe this is going to be a detrimental step in the lives of many people. It may generate huge amounts of easy revenue for the government, but it will also exact a huge toll on hundreds and hundreds of people.

.....

This is a serious matter with far reaching consequences for a lot of people. Please look beyond monetary considerations and use your influence as an elected official to change our present policy as it relates to video gambling machines."

(David W. LeRoy, Senior Pastor, First Wesleyan Church, Fredericton)

"I would also like it to be known that I am opposed to gambling machines of any type being placed in public areas where children view them with awe. I also believe these machines undermine the work ethic and create more problems for our Canadian society and homes."

(Rev. Donald J. Wright, Cornerstone Ministries, Fredericton)

"It seems that of all individuals, Sir, with such a strong work ethic, you would understand that the gambling basis upon which the video lotto games operate does much to undermine the "work ethic", and is definitely creating in impressionable young children the accessibility and the real possibility of becoming addicted to a lifestyle that can do nothing but hurt and harm the future economy and work force in the province of New Brunswick that I am convinced we all love and appreciate but are taking for granted.

.....

Sir, you are also aware that gambling breeds decay and corruption, permeates all levels of society, feeds off greed, the misery of the weak, and seeks to hook the young. I believe it immoral for our province to encourage and condone profit from immorality and promote gambling which brings with it crime, both organized and unorganized, and vice "

(John Hoag, New Brunswick Bible Institute, Victoria, N.B.)

"We understand how weakness in lifestyles of people rise to almost uncontrollable levels. I ask that you take into consideration a scripture from the Bible that says, 'Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.' Proverbs 14:34. Already it has been proven that gambling is addictive and the end result many times leads to immoral, violent and irresponsible behaviour." (Pastor Paul Smith, Senior Pastor, Burnam Road Cathedral, Florenceville)

"The results of gambling on society are very serious. As with all addictions, money which is supposed to go on rent and groceries gets wasted, resulting in children and spouses suffering for the gambler's habit. With increased gambling comes an increase in crime as money is needed to keep the habit going.

.....
Please consider this matter very seriously and do all you can to put a stop to this threat to the social well-being of our province."

(Rev. Stephen Franklin, Fredericton First Church of the Nazarene)

"Gambling, with its false promises of fortune, can become an addiction for many players. Ultimately, such an addiction destroys an individual's financial and spiritual freedom. All thoughts and actions become governed by a passion to win wealth. Responsibilities are forgotten. The effects of a gambling addiction go beyond the player in ever widening circles. Too many New Brunswick families know hardship because monies have been squandered on the false hopes of gambling. We deplore the negative values that legalized games of chance instil in our province's young people.

For these same reasons we regret your government's use of video gambling machines and lotteries to augment the province's General Revenue. They are enormous temptations to addicted gamblers. We believe they cause more problems than their revenue can ever balance. We strongly urge the Department of Finance to develop other sources of income."

(Rev. Brian DeLong, Chairman, Saint John Presbytery, United Church of Canada)

1.3.3 Business

A major significant portion of the business sector in New Brunswick has gone on record in opposition to government involvement and preoccupation with video gambling machines.

"Last week we made a corporate decision to not allow video lottery machines in any of our convenience stores, service stations or restaurants in Atlantic Canada. This decision was reached after a great deal of study on the issue and a lot of soul searching by all of us.

The decision to not allow the machines in our premises will cost Irving Oil and our dealers literally millions. However, the issue is not about money, the issue is about our youth the pressures facing the youth of today are enormous We don't think our society needs to add to these pressures by exposing our children to the temptation that video lottery machines bring to bear We've all heard of many cases where accessibility to these machines has already caused much damage to individuals and families in our province. Suicides, family break ups, financial ruin are unfortunately a fact of life.

This government has said it has made a commitment to an enhanced education system for our children, but yet they allow them to be exposed to video lottery machines daily. Something does not add up.

Unless all of us concerned about our children take a stand on this issue; tell the public what it is doing to our families and particularly our youth, the problem will persist and the consequences will be frightening."

(Rod Adams, Regional Manager, Southern N.B., Irving Oil Limited)

"It is our opinion, our Provincial government should make a careful study of implications on the lives of those using such machines. This should not be considered a 'quick' source of revenue for the Prov."

(Vivian Cummings, Cummings Construction Ltd., Upper Woodstock)

"As a retailer, it is my feeling that these machines should be disallowed. Certainly, they should not be made available in locations where they may be used by minors. I do not believe these machines were put in place to promote gambling, but this has been the inevitable result. When otherwise responsible parents spend hard-earned money on a gambling machine, it is time to rethink our strategy."

(Stacey DesRoches)

1.3.4 Individuals

So many letters in opposition to video gambling were received from individuals that it is impractical to include excerpts from all them in this report. These letters echoed the concerns of the religious organizations, municipalities and business mentioned previously in this report.

Several letters sent to the Leader of the Opposition must be highlighted, however, because they explicitly show the personal devastation inflicted in one case of video gambling addiction.

"I am engaged to a gentleman who was and I believe still is addicted to Video Gambling. And due to this obsession, he is now serving a four year term in Dorchester Penitentiary. This sentence was imposed because of an armed robbery he committed to support his gambling habit. Jim first became involved with video gambling about three years ago, while living in Halifax. At this time this type of gambling had not been legalized, but the availability was there. After a few times of trying his luck out, Jim hit it big a couple of times. \$250.00 one time around and \$300.00 another time, which put him ahead of the game - for awhile. Then he began to lose. But the thought stuck in his head that he would win again. After all he had before. Within a three year period Jim feels he lost about \$60,000.00 to Video Gambling. His marriage had failed, he could no longer see his children, and his gambling habit was completely out of control. It was then he called a good Christian friend, Monty Lewis, Cons for Christ, and asked for help. Monty arranged for Jim to move to Fredericton, where Jim felt he would be able to start fresh and kick his habit. But the move to Fredericton only furthered his addiction. It seemed that everywhere he turned, the enticement for Video Gambling stared him in the face. One day, in November 1992, it all got to be too much for him. He had gone into a small convenience store in downtown Fredericton. He played and played until the point of reaching into his pocket for another looney and only finding his pocket knife. All commonsense disappeared with the need to play just one more game. He went to the cashier and demanded all their money. From there he proceeded to another store to try his luck again. But Jim knew at this point his luck had run out and that he needed help. Neither one of us realized then, that there was or is a Gamblers Anonymous group in Fredericton. He realized he had to get help, but just did not know where to get it. He knew one thing for sure and that was that he had done wrong and he had to face the piper. He turned himself in to the City Police and made a complete

confession in hopes that 1. he could right his wrong and 2. he could get the help he needed.

.....
Although our government states that a large amount of revenue from Video Gambling is being put towards funding programs geared towards helping the problem gambler, Jim has yet to see any evidence of this. Since his incarceration in November, we have both been trying to have someone go into Dorchester to counsel him. Whether it be through a resident psychologist or a member of the Moncton Branch of Gamblers Anonymous, we have just run into a lot of brick walls preventing him from getting the help he needs and I might add, the help he was told by the judge, that he must receive as a part of his sentence. It also seems strange that the government would put these machines in the different outlets, let people get addicted to them and then offer to counsel them on the addiction that the government put in their face. Jim's incarceration has turned my world upside down and inside out. Plans for our future are put on hold. My financial situation has deteriorated, I am attending university full time, plus raise my two children and run a house, etc., etc. If these machines remain so easy to get at, I am afraid that when Jim gets out, he will be drawn right back to them, and to tell the truth, I don't think I can go through this again. Besides what it has done to my home life, having someone you love incarcerated places many other hardships on the family. That is personal embarrassment, stigmatization, loss of contact with family and friends, social isolation and financial hardships.

Like I stated earlier and I stress now - these machines must be removed. If not for the ones already addicted and serving time, financially bust, or for the ones who found it too much to handle and committed suicide, then at least for the ones that can become easily addicted down the road and mostly for the children. IT IS TIME TO TAKE SOME SERIOUS ACTION!"
(Sharon Fullerton)

"I have personally watched friends sit down and waste large portions of their weekly income on mini poker and slot machines.

I find it very irresponsible for the New Brunswick Government to support the continuation of video gambling when it has always condemned gambling issues."
(Kevin MacKay, Fredericton)

"I have witnessed a couple of instances where the individual has lost his home and/or job due to the addictive hold gambling had on this person(s).
I truly believe that these gambling machines should not

be allowed to remain in our communities, and necessary steps should be taken to have them removed all together."
(Kevin Dickinson)

"Within the area in which I live there have been people who developed addictions to these machines and have gambled their savings away. One person even sold a vehicle to obtain money which they wasted on the Video Gambling Machines.

.....
These machines should be declared illegal and removed from public access."
(David E. Thomas, Stanley)

"I can only speak for the situation on the Miramichi, Sir, but I can honestly say that things are definitely not under control.

.....
I know two people personally who have lost their homes as a direct result of video gambling. I realize that as individuals we are all responsible for our own predicaments, but there is something very unsettling and disheartening about a government raising revenue as a result of its citizens addictions and sicknesses."
(Stephen Connell, Douglastown)

"In past experience as an employee at local establishments in the Fredericton area I have witnessed obsessive gambling of amounts larger than \$1,000.00. The people that are playing gambling machines are family people whose family are the ones suffering for this addiction. What begins as a few coins, more times than not results in several rolls of coins being wasted on gambling."
(Bob Brown)

"Personally, I know two businessmen in my small area who lost their business and homes because of gambling big-time. These machines may only be the beginning, but if our business community and the government need these to make a profit, it is time we looked at what our objectives really are."
(Dale G. Perkins, Fredericton)

1.3.5 Editorial

Editorial comment has, in a number of instances, been critical of the government's experiment in Video Gambling and has also pointed out that criminal activity exists as a direct result of addiction to Video Gambling. Some pertinent excerpts follow:

"A disturbing new dimension has been added to the concerns over video gambling in New Brunswick. In Fredericton, Police Chief Mac Carlisle confirmed this week, 'Our preliminary findings would indicate that we have a number of fairly major crimes that have been perpetrated... with a direct link back to gambling addiction - to video games.' What it comes down to is people stealing money to play the machines.

.....
That this is happening is not new. In recent weeks we have seen a number of tragic reports in the Maritimes of people being charged with stealing from their employers to finance their gambling addiction, one of the latest being a 44-year-old Moncton man. However, the Fredericton police findings would suggest the problem is of greater magnitude than might have been assumed."

(Editorial, Telegraph Journal, March 19, 1993)

"In comments which go right to the heart of the matter, the Mayor of New Brunswick's capital city has called upon Premier McKenna to pull video gambling machines out of non-licensed establishments in Fredericton, or give the city the authority to do so.

We whole-heartedly support Mayor Woodside's appeal, and would go one step further, get rid of them altogether. Simply put, video gambling machines have become a curse on today's society, and when Premier McKenna speaks about 'the quality of life' in New Brunswick, surely this is not what he has in mind.

Day after day, the horror stories linked to these gambling devices are becoming known, and despite numerous pleas and petitions from various individuals, groups and organizations for their removal, the provincial government has failed to act."

(Editorial, The Daily Gleaner, May 21, 1993)

"More and more people continue to fall victim to video gambling's addictive lure.

The latest include the former president of the Moncton District of the Boy Scouts of Canada who has been sent to jail for pumping \$32,000 of Scout money into the machines and a Saint John woman who took \$1,300 from her employer

and gambled it away.

The court was told the Moncton woman was a compulsive gambler. The Saint John woman, on the other hand, said she had played the machines before and wasn't addicted. 'I don't know what happened,' she said, 'It just went out of control.'

.....
More than 20,000 New Brunswickers have signed their names to petitions calling for curbs on the availability of the machines. People want them out of every corner store and restaurant where they wait in growing numbers to tempt the weak-willed.

There is no question that the proliferation of the machines has to be curbed."

(Editorial, Telegraph Journal, July 5, 1993)

"We at TV2 continue our opposition to legalized gambling in Michigan.

Video Gambling, especially, will rob the already poor of money they need to even put food on the table.

And placing them in an environment where alcohol is served adds an even more insidious issue.

Casinos and Video Gambling have proven to be negative economic factors in other states and we think it's crucial to keep them out of Detroit."

(Editorial, TV2, carried by Fundy Cable Ltd., Fredericton, September 3, 1993)

"The McKenna government made much ado this week about its plans to counter the problems caused by legalization of video gambling machines.

.....
For all that, however, there was far less than meets the eye.

.....
The McKenna government's response is little more than a token gesture.

.....
Anything that would make the machines less accessible and less tempting should be done. But nobody is going to believe that simply changing the location of the machines is going to help much.

.....
The government is pocketing lucrative profits from gambling - \$33-million a year alone from the video machines and granted, that provides badly-needed budget revenues. But what kind of price are we going to end up paying when the human consequences are tallied?"

(Editorial, Telegraph Journal, September 4, 1993)

"Video gambling not only breeds addicts. Sadly, in all too many cases, it also turns otherwise honest people into criminals.

We've seen increasing evidence of that in New Brunswick in the number of people who have resorted to theft and fraud to feed their addiction.

In Saint John the other day, a 33-year-old woman, described as decent and hardworking, was arraigned in court on charges of passing \$1,000 in forged cheques for money to play the video machines.

.....
Unfortunately, the McKenna government still seems blind..."

(Editorial, Telegraph Journal, October 26, 1993)

2.0 General Commentary

The fact is that New Brunswickers do not know very much about the damaging effects of wide spread gambling. We have not had that kind of long-term experience in this province. What we know is anecdotal. But more people are becoming informed as a result of studies and the observation of recent local events as well as observations of events in other jurisdictions. As a result we can determine what the future will be for New Brunswickers if wide spread easily accessible video gambling continues here.

*(**** The remainder of this section was taken verbatim from The Interim Report of the Standing Committee on Community Services: Video Gambling and Gaming Policies in Nova Scotia, April, 1993)*

A report prepared for Alberta Lotteries and Gaming titled "Compulsive Gambling: General Issues, Treatments, and Policy Considerations" (Garry J. Smith, University of Alberta, February, 1992) contains interesting and useful information.

Generally speaking, there is little public awareness of compulsive gambling due to the subtle nature of the disorder. Since you can't smell lottery tickets on someone's breath or see poker chip stains on their fingers, the phenomenon tends to be concealed. Yet up to 3% of those who gamble may become afflicted by compulsive behaviour. Inevitably, as gambling opportunities expand, so too will the incidence of compulsive gambling behaviour. The powerful but largely undisclosed effects of compulsive gambling have yet to register with the public and tend not to be given full consideration wherever gaming opportunities are expanded.

While compulsive gambling is hidden to some extent because it does not involve the use of a substance, scholarly research has noted its similarity to other addictive behaviours. Compulsive gamblers, like alcoholics and drug addicts, have a preoccupation with gambling activities; they gamble longer than intended and with more money than intended. There is also the equivalent of "tolerance" as when gamblers say that after they have bet hundreds or thousands, two dollar bets lost their significance. Compulsive gamblers also suffer withdrawal symptoms in recovery programs. While it is true that compulsive gambling is like other addictions, the main difference is that it does not by its nature directly attack the body. It is, however, equally capable of ruining lives and of wrecking havoc with relationships.

Compulsive gambling is a chronic and progressive failure to resist impulses to gamble and gambling behaviour that compromises, disrupts, or damages personal, family, or vocational pursuits.

Compulsive gamblers do not suffer in isolation, since their addiction creates a ripple effect that impinges on the lives of family members, friends, and employers. Besides fracturing relationships, compulsive gambling is also connected with criminal activities such as theft, embezzlement, loan sharking, tax evasion, and so forth. Moreover, compulsive gamblers tend to be more unproductive in their jobs and a drain on the social welfare system.

The majority of compulsive gamblers are addicted to legalized forms of gambling Video lottery terminals are not widespread yet, but they are thought to be one of the most addictive forms of gambling.

As legal gambling expands, juvenile gambling increases. The enforcement of gambling age limits tends to be ineffective, except in casinos where security personnel can usually spot underage gamblers.

The judicial process is tending to view compulsive gambling as a disease. This means the gamblers are not held totally accountable for their actions and that gambling operators are viewed as having some responsibility to protect compulsive gamblers from themselves.

There are no in-patient treatment centres for compulsive gamblers in Canada and very few health professionals who have the expertise to provide therapy to compulsive gamblers.

The recovery rate for Gamblers Anonymous members in Alberta is extremely low (estimated at 5%). With professional treatment and support network involvement (e.g. Gamblers Anonymous), the recovery rate could be increased as much as ten-fold.

Three terms are used interchangeably in gambling literature: compulsive gambling, pathological gambling, and problem gambling. Compulsive gambling is the most commonly used term and the one employed by Gamblers Anonymous. Some gambling scholars believe that compulsive gambling is labelled incorrectly because the behaviour differs from other compulsions in that most compulsive gamblers, at least in the initial stages, love to gamble. The American Psychiatric Association uses the term "pathological" gambling to

describe a disorder of impulse control. "Problem gambling" is the term used most frequently in recent literature to describe any form of gambling behaviour that negatively affects family, personal, or vocational pursuits. Problem gambling is a more all-encompassing term that includes, but is not restricted to, compulsive or pathological gambling. Reflecting this change in thinking is the recent renaming of the National Council on Compulsive Gambling to the National Council on Problem Gambling.

Some compulsive gamblers are as young as 16 and there are some in their 70's but there are not many found at these extremes. The majority are between the ages of 20 and 50, with the average around 35 years of age.

The majority have a background of traditional family life and a history of consistent achievement in school and work. Very few have had a problem with the law prior to the onset of their compulsive gambling.

Compulsive gamblers come from all walks of life but the majority are concentrated in the lower and middle class.

There are different phases of compulsive gambling: the winning phase, the losing phase, the desperation phase, the giving up phase. The following excerpts are of interest:

The losing phase - before the gambler was betting to win; now the gambler is in the frenetic pursuit of lost money. The gambler has lost the feeling of self-respect and invincibility and won't regain it until the lost money is recovered. The gambling is now driven by depression, anguish, and the overwhelming urge to quell these feelings. Symptoms of this stage include gambling alone, betting more heavily, and more frequently, lying about gambling, delaying paying bills, spending more time away from the family, and borrowing from friends and family. Eventually there is a crunch: borrowing is impossible. Faced with imprisonment (for fraud, forgery, tax evasion, etc.), physical harm from creditors, loss of job, or divorce, the gambler goes to the family and partially confesses. The result is often a "bailout". Family members or friends pay debts and extract a promise to cut down or stop gambling. This promise is not kept. Back on even terms and believing one can get away with anything, the gambler intensifies the betting and loses control altogether.

There is a lack of concern for others as attention is increasingly taken up with various scams for getting money. The gambler becomes irritable and quick tempered (and sometimes abusive to family members). The gambler eats and sleeps poorly and life holds little pleasure. In

the end, the compulsive gambler is gambling desperately. There are fears of the law, creditors, spouse, and others. Thoughts of suicide are common and many make suicide attempts.

A study comparing compulsive gamblers to social gamblers found that compulsive gambler distinct from the social gambler in a number of categories.

	Compulsive Gamblers -----	Social Gamblers -----
- Did your gambling cause serious problems for your spouse	75%	0%
- Have you defaulted on debts or other financial responsibilities	63%	4%
- Did you make a suicide attempt	20%	4%
- Did you pass bad cheques	68%	5%
- Lost job due to absenteeism in order pursue gambling	23%	2%
- Borrowed money from illegal sources (loan sharks)	47%	8%
- Got a bailout (gambling debts paid by parents or friends)	70%	2%
- Bragged you were winning money gambling while you were actually losing	75%	5%
- Your big win was equal to 3 to 12 months salary	68%	0%
- Borrowing patterns at legal institutions was continuous and progressive in amounts and frequency	68%	0%

3.0 Observations

A number of observations result from the information gathered together in this report, as follows:

Engaging in the Video Gambling activities carries with it the real risk to players that they may become addicted to it; and,

Video Gambling is the most addictive of all forms of gambling; and,

Evidence increasing indicates that addiction to Video Gambling has been growing in New Brunswick; and,

Evidence shows that the financial and emotional stability of families is becoming more and more adversely affected by Video Gambling activities in New Brunswick; and,

Evidence exists showing that some New Brunswickers have committed suicide due to the results of their addiction to Video Gambling activities here; and,

Evidence exists showing the occurrence of criminal activity resulting from addiction to Video Gambling; and,

A growing number of citizens and organizations feel that government should not be promoting the activity of Video Gambling in this province; and,

A growing number of citizens and organizations feel that the accessibility of Video Gambling activities should be severely restricted; and,

A growing number of citizens and organizations feel that the government should not be using Video Gambling activities as a source of government revenue; and,

A significant number of citizens and organizations feel that government should ban Video Gambling activities from the province.

4.0 Conclusions

As a direct result of the observations drawn from the information gathered for this report, it has been concluded that:

- video gambling activity in New Brunswick has caused a significant number of addictions; and,
- video gambling addiction has resulted in a significant number of criminal acts in New Brunswick; and,
- video gambling activities has caused severe disruption and grief in a number of cases in New Brunswick; and,
- a large number of New Brunswickers are opposed to video gambling machines being readily accessible in public places throughout New Brunswick; and,
- many organizations and community leaders are opposed to government being involved in the promotion of the video gambling process; and,
- many organizations, community leaders and individuals are opposed to the utilization of video gambling machines by this government as a source of revenue; and,
- many organizations, community leaders and individuals believe that this government must accept some responsibility for the increase in video gambling addictions and related criminal activity; and,
- many organizations, community leaders and individuals want this government to properly and adequately fund and provide services for the treatment and rehabilitation of video gambling addicts in New Brunswick.

5.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the New Brunswick Government:

- ceases to utilize Video Gambling as a source of government revenue; and,
- searches for alternate means of replacing revenue coming from Video Gambling OR eliminate an equivalent amount of non-essential services being currently provided; and,
- severely restricts access to the availability of Video Gambling by removing them from general public areas; and,
- restricts access to Video Gambling to adults; and,
- requires that all approved machines be individually registered; and,
- implements a machine license fee, renewable yearly, of \$500.00 which will include a license sticker to be applied to the machine; and,
- imposes an automatic fine of \$10,000.00 per unlicensed Video Machine to the owner of the premises, or property, or vehicle in which such unlicensed machines are found, as well as automatic forfeiture of the unlicensed machines, and,
- uses all revenue produced by the above licensing fees and fines, less the administrative costs, for education and treatment of gambling addicts.

APPENDIX A: Official Opposition Statements on Video Gambling

This appendix consists of official statements and news releases from the Official Opposition on video gambling.

Member's Statement

Brent Taylor, MLA
(Southwest Miramichi)

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

17 March, 1993

Madam Speaker,

In the face of mounting opposition to the idea of legalized video gambling it is time that this government reconsidered its decision to allow the sanctioning of these machines as a source of revenue.

A group of dedicated citizens in Saint John is organizing opposition to these machines and they will certainly succeed in showing the government that public support is not there for their plans at revenue generation.

In a recent survey Corporate Research Associates determined that only 4% of New Brunswickers strongly approved the concept of video gambling and only 18% "somewhat approved."

It is clear that this government does not have the weight of public opinion behind them on this issue. I hope that the Minister of Finance reconsiders his decision to stay the course on video gambling. He would certainly be saving thousands of people the time and trouble over the next three or four months as they work to change his mind.

He may also save a few marriages and the great social costs associated with this questionable source of revenue.

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Member's Statement

Danny Cameron, MLA
(York South and Leader of the Official Opposition)

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

23 April, 1993

Madam Speaker,

Municipalities, secular organizations and the members general public are rallying together in fighting for the removal of video gambling machines from corner stores across New Brunswick.

The Bathurst Ministerial Association is the latest to voice it's concerns. They are trying to get a lobbying group formed that includes doctors, entrepreneurs, lawyers and other professionals to join the cause against video gambling.

Reverend John Ross of the Bayview Baptist Church summed up the gambling issue best in the April 10th Telegraph Journal saying -- quote -- "Some people are spending every last cent they have on these machines. Families are breaking up and lives are being destroyed." -- unquote --.

Since this government refuses to consult with the people of this province, I urge all municipalities to make their feelings known publicly on this question.

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LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NEW BRUNSWICK
P.O. BOX 6000
FREDERICTON, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Tel: (506) 453-3515
Fax: (506) 453-3617



CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION OFFICIELLE
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK
C.P. 6000
FREDERICTON, (N.B.)
E3B 5H1

Tel: (506) 453-3515
Fax: (506) 453-3617

PRESS RELEASE #81
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

JULY 17, 1992

In a statement from his Fredericton office today, Danny Cameron, Leader of the Official Opposition said that the recent 1990/91 Atlantic Lottery report makes for interesting reading. "In these times, to see \$268.6 million taken from the pockets of Atlantic Canadians, because "everybody's got a dream", as their motto goes, is staggering.

Video Lottery generated NET revenue of \$10.1 million in a four months' span, for the New Brunswick and Newfoundland areas." The COR Leader went on to state that "originally capped at \$20 million, during the Spring Session of the Legislature, we were advised that New Brunswick would place a cap of \$10 million on the "take" from gaming, and that would go to the Environmental Trust Fund. While that is funding a worthwhile effort, i.e., to clean up the outdoor environment, is it, at the same time, damaging the human environment?"

Cameron says there is a feeling by many that a large segment of the public is addicted to gambling, and also that money from welfare, income assistance and unemployment insurance, finds its way into this medium. He questions what the impact is on children who may be deprived, as a result of parental gambling.

"We are in possession of information that gaming machines are contributing to marriage break-ups, and there are indications that minors are seen playing machines, but obtaining written proof of the latter is difficult. There is no doubt in our minds that as time passes, the government will likely add to the flexibility of the program, to derive more and more revenue from this source, continuing to play on the weaknesses of those addicted".

The Opposition Leader feels that while gambling, as such, is not a drug, gambling abuse is equally as insidious as a destroyer of morals. "Gambling, to some extent, is a welcome leisure activity, but it should be limited, and not seized upon as a major fund raiser for government".

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LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NEW BRUNSWICK
P.O. BOX 6000
FREDERICTON, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Tel: (506) 453-3513
Fax: (506) 453-3627



CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION OFFICIELLE
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK
C.P. 6000
FREDERICTON, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Tel: (506) 453-3513
Fax: (506) 453-3627

PR #95
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 12, 1992

FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

Gordon Willden, COR MLA for Riverview stated today from his office in Fredericton that recent news items regarding expansion of gambling facilities, in addition to Lotto, Video Game Machines, etc., must lead to public concern of the moral direction in which this government is taking New Brunswick.

"We believe all this posturing represents a trial balloon, to gauge public opinion, preparatory to making an official announcement, without public consultation," said Willden.

"Sounds like another case of the McKenna government saying, <we know what we'll do, and you, (the public) will just have to like it>," concluded the COR Member.

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LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NEW BRUNSWICK
P.O. BOX 6000
FREDERICTON, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Tel: (506) 457-3515
Fax: (506) 453-3627



CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION OFFICIELLE
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DU NOUVEAU BRUNSWICK
C.P. 6000
FREDERICTON, (N.B.)
E3B 5H1

Tel: (506) 457-3515
Fax: (506) 453-3627

PRESS RELEASE #162
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 25, 1993

Fredericton, N.B.

"While we, in the C.o.R. Party, are not about to suggest outlawing some forms of gambling, such as bingo, horse racing and the like, we have repeatedly voiced our objections on video gambling", stated the Leader of the Official Opposition, Danny Cameron.

"We, specifically, have criticized the government's fascination for this expanded revenue source, as well as the addiction and grief associated with it. It has been refreshing, therefore, to read recently that the Irving Companies will no longer participate in their use and promotion. Good for them!"

Cameron added that C.o.R. agrees with the Irving decision. "There are other ways government can raise, or conserve, revenues. Ask the Irvings. Or, ask us - if government would only listen."

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LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

P.O. BOX 6000
FREDERICTON, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Tel: (506) 457-3515
Fax: (506) 453-3627



CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION OFFICIELLE
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK

C.P. 6000
FREDERICTON, N.B.
E3B 5H1

Tel: (506) 457-3515
Fax: (506) 453-3627

Press Release #180
For Immediate Release
February 16, 1993

Fredericton, N.B. - Commenting on the McKenna government's decision to commence the treatment of those addicted to gambling, Max White, Official Opposition Health critic indicated today that "this is the same government that, in 1992, abolished the Drug and Alcohol Commission. Now it's doing a complete 360 and attempting to redevelop the wheel!"

Addiction is addiction, whether it be alcohol, drugs or, in this instance, gambling, added the C.O.R. MLA. "The Drug and Alcohol Commission, over the years, developed programmes aimed at assisting addicts as well as counselling family members. Now we have the McKenna government, whose decision it was to disband a proven vehicle, and whose decision it was to expand the use of gaming machines in an attempt to increase revenues, announcing its dilemma at coping with those addicted."

Mr. White concluded his remarks by saying, "the gambling addict is a product of this government's greed. The cost of treatment could very well exceed any revenues that might have been realized. It is the responsibility of the McKenna government to expend as much money as needed to eliminate the monster it's created".

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