

¶Another eternal question.

## ARE YOU A GAMBLER?

"You can have alcohol and the booze rackets," said Al Capone when he was outlaw lord of Chicago's underworld. "The big dough is in gambling."

We are an idealistic nation. A moral one, we believe. Yet America's biggest industry is the gambling industry! You don't believe it? What about money won or lost in a friendly game of golf, at the bridge table, in football pools, baseball pools, prizefights, horse-racing, sweepstakes, and what is called the policy racket? Taking them all in all, America is the greatest gambling country in the world.

Many of us feel, apparently, that there no longer is a moral issue involved in certain forms of gambling and betting. Even though it may be purely nominal, betting is almost the universal custom. In California there now are two hundred and fifty-eight days of horse-racing each year, and it is estimated that each day a quarter of a million dollars goes through the pari-mutuel machines. Newspapers headline stories of sweepstake ticket-holders who win fortunes, and these lucky ones are envied by all. One hundred million dollars is said to go out

of the country in each Irish sweepstake race.

"Why not keep that money here?" argues a citizen in favor of legalized gambling. "Let the Government tax it and reap the benefit. Gambling breeds crime when it's outlawed. It wouldn't if it were legalized. A man has a right to do what he chooses with his own money—gamble, buy merchandise, put it in the bank, or give it away. It's better to pour legal revenue into Government coffers than to hand it to the vultures of the underworld."

Others contend that gambling robs the family purse of money better spent for necessities of life. That it often strips the home of every means of existence, snatches bread from children's mouths, ruins families that otherwise might be independent and happy. "It's all wrong," these argue, "and what is wrong should be suppressed. It is a menace to the life of the nation, to its business structure, to its prosperity, just as counterfeiting is a menace. Federal laws should be enacted to wipe it out."

In some states this has been done. Maryland defeated a pro-

posed constitutional amendment to legalize a state lottery, even though it was intended to provide funds for the relief of the unemployed. Oregon voters killed measures to legalize gambling and approved a law for the seizure and destruction of all gambling equipment within the state borders.

The issue is important to all of us. It involves public and private morals. It touches the purses and pay envelopes of millions of us. Shall we continue to support America's biggest industry illegally? Shall we legal-

ize it, and provide the Government with revenue now going into the hands of racketeers? Or shall we enforce present laws to stamp it out completely? Outlaw the thing that blights and wrecks the home, the bulwark of our civilization?

The answer to these questions affects every man, woman and child in this land. Will our children be safer under legalized gambling or under gambling operated under cover, in the control of racketeers? Shall we be a nation of gamblers?—  
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